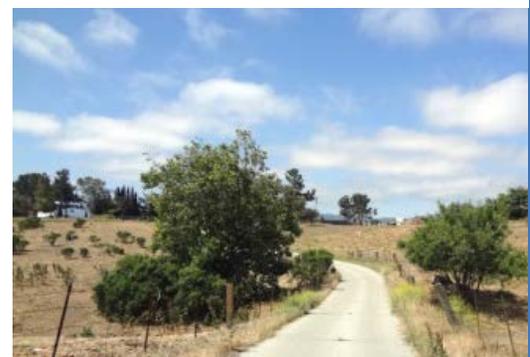


Initial Study

Ridgemark Assisted Care Facility

October 25, 2019



Prepared by
EMC Planning Group

INITIAL STUDY

RIDGEMARK ASSISTED CARE FACILITY

PREPARED FOR

County of San Benito

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October 25, 2019

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A. BACKGROUND

Project Title	Ridgemark Assisted Care Facility
Lead Agency Contact Person and Phone Number	County of San Benito Michael P. Kelly, Associate Planner (831) 902-2287
Date Prepared	October 25, 2019
Study Prepared by	EMC Planning Group Inc. 301 Lighthouse Avenue, Suite C Monterey, CA 93940 Teri Wissler Adam, Senior Principal Tanya Kalaskar, MS, Associate Planner Gail Bellenger, MA, Archaeologist Janet Walther, MS, Principal Biologist
Project Location	3586 Airline Highway, Unincorporated San Benito County
Project Sponsor Name and Address	Nader Javid 845 Fox Hill Circle Hollister, CA 95023
General Plan Designation	Residential Mixed (RM)
Zoning	Residential Multiple (RM)

Setting

The seven-acre project site is located at 3586 Airline Highway, southeast of the City of Hollister in unincorporated San Benito County. The project site has a *San Benito County 2035 General Plan* land use designation of Residential Mixed (RM). The Residential Mixed (RM) designation allows areas of unincorporated urban uses where circulation and utility services exist. The project site is zoned Residential Multiple (RM), which, in addition to allowing multiple-family dwellings, also allows for uses such as an assisted care facility.

The project site is comprised of one parcel: Assessor's parcel number 020-330-010. Existing uses on the project site include a single-family residence, animals (i.e., goats and horses), outbuildings, recreational vehicles, and a driveway. The rest of the project site is covered with non-native grasses. The existing residence is located approximately 200 feet from unnamed an intermittent stream. Access to the project site, including the existing residence, is provided by an existing driveway connecting the project site to Airline Highway.

The driveway also provides access to a rural residential lot, located immediately south of the project site and the Sunnyslope County Water District office, located immediately north of the project site. Other surrounding land uses include the Cielo Vista neighborhood across Airline Highway to the north, the approved, but not yet developed Roberts Ranch subdivision across Airline Highway to the northwest, vacant land to the east, the Ridgemark neighborhood to the southeast, and the Quail Hollow, Oak Creek, and Tyler Knoll neighborhoods to the west.

Figure 1, [Location Map](#), presents the regional and vicinity location of the project site. Figure 2, [Aerial Photograph](#), presents an aerial view of the project site and immediate surroundings. Figure 3, [Site Photographs](#), presents photographs taken at the project site in May 2019.

Description of Project

Assisted Care Facility

The proposed project includes demolition of the existing residence and outbuildings and construction of an assisted care facility for senior adults. The proposed assisted care facility will include a total of 155 rooms and 180 beds in two, three-story buildings with a combined area of 136,367 square feet. Figure 4, [Site Plan](#), presents the site plan of the proposed assisted care facility. The architectural plans are included as [Appendix A](#) and the civil plans are included as [Appendix B](#). The existing driveway divides the project site into Site A and Site B.

The portion of the project site west of the driveway, or Site A, will be developed with a 121,981-square foot main lodge building that includes 136 rooms and 159 beds. The main lodge consists of a grand lobby/reception area, staff offices, nurse room, staff lounge area, restrooms, grand dining room, private dining room, kitchen, exercise room, arts and crafts room, and a theater. Laundry facilities and lounge areas will be placed throughout the main lodge building on each level. Elevators will be provided in the building for easy access to all floors. The main access road on Site A will lead to a parking lot with 41 spaces, a Porte-Co-Chere (covered porch-like structure), and a roundabout.

The portion of the project site east of the driveway, or Site B, will be developed with a 14,386 square foot smaller building that consists of 19 rooms and 21 beds. The main entrance of the building will lead to a hallway and provide direct access to resident rooms, stairs, and the elevator. Elevator and stairs access will be provided on all three levels of the building. A laundry room and lounge will be located on the lower level of the building. The access road on Site B will lead to parking lot with 24 spaces at the south side of the building.

Access and Circulation

Vehicular access to the project site from Airline Highway will be provided by the existing driveway for the Sunnyslope County Water District office. The proposed project includes realignment of the existing driveway, which also includes replacement of the existing culvert directing flows from the unnamed intermittent stream. The proposed driveway will form a loop around Site A to provide a 20-foot wide fire access road. A retaining wall up to 293 linear feet and varying in height from 0.3 feet to 8.7 feet will be constructed along the looped driveway.

Grading Permit

The civil plans include a preliminary grading plan (Sheet 2 in Appendix B). The preliminary grading plan indicates the earthwork quantities required for development of proposed project as follows: total cut is 18,700 cubic yards and total fill is 7,100 cubic yards, resulting in an export of 11,600 cubic yards.

Tree Removal and Landscaping

The proposed project includes removal of 17 trees on the project site, including three Sycamore trees, one lemon tree, one oak tree, one olive tree, one capital pear tree, and a variety of other unknown species.

The preliminary landscape plan included as [Appendix C](#) indicates that 141 new trees will be planted on the project site.

Population and Employment

The proposed project will include a total of 180 beds. Therefore, the proposed project will accommodate a population of 180 persons.

The proposed project will have a maximum of three staffing shifts per day with a maximum of ten employees during any one shift. Therefore, the total number of employees on any day is 30.

Preliminary Utility Plan (Onsite and Offsite Improvements)

The proposed project will include a sewer lift station and force main to pump wastewater from the facility to an existing off-site collections system on Joes Lane, located within the Ridgemark neighborhood. Storm water from the proposed project will drain into three underground detention systems, and ultimately into the unnamed intermittent stream that traverses the northern part of the project site (Sheet 5 in Appendix B).

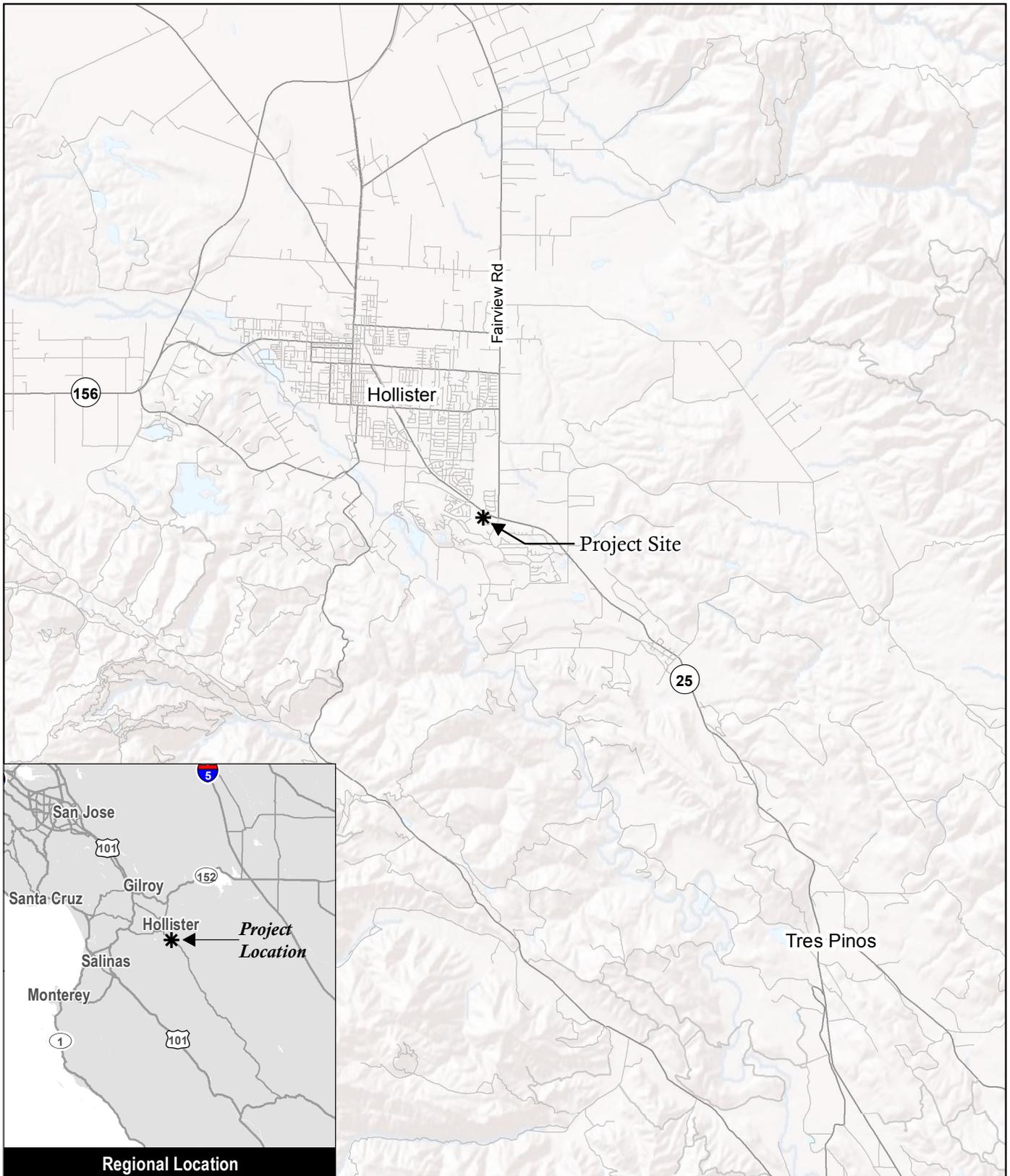
Other Public Agencies Whose Approval is Required

Regional Water Quality Control Board

Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1? If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.?

No California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1.

Note: Conducting consultation early in the CEQA process allows tribal governments, lead agencies, and project proponents to discuss the level of environmental review, identify and address potential adverse impacts to tribal cultural resources, and reduce the potential for delay and conflict in the environmental review process. (See Public Resources Code section 21080.3.2.) Information may also be available from the California Native American Heritage Commission's Sacred Lands File per Public Resources Code section 5097.96 and the California Historical Resources Information System administered by the California Office of Historic Preservation. Please also note that Public Resources Code section 21082.3(c) contains provisions specific to confidentiality.



Source: ESRI 2018



Figure 1
Location Map

This side intentionally left blank.



Source: ESRI 2019, San Benito County GIS 2016, US Fish and Wildlife Service 2019



0 275 feet



Project Boundary



Unnamed Intermittent Stream

Figure 2

Aerial Photograph

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① View of the project site from Airline Highway



② View of the existing driveway on the project site



③ View of the Sunnyslope County Water District office to the north



Project Site

Source: ESRI 2019

Photographs: EMC Planning Group 2019



④ View of the existing home on the project site



⑤ View northeast from the southern boundary of the project site

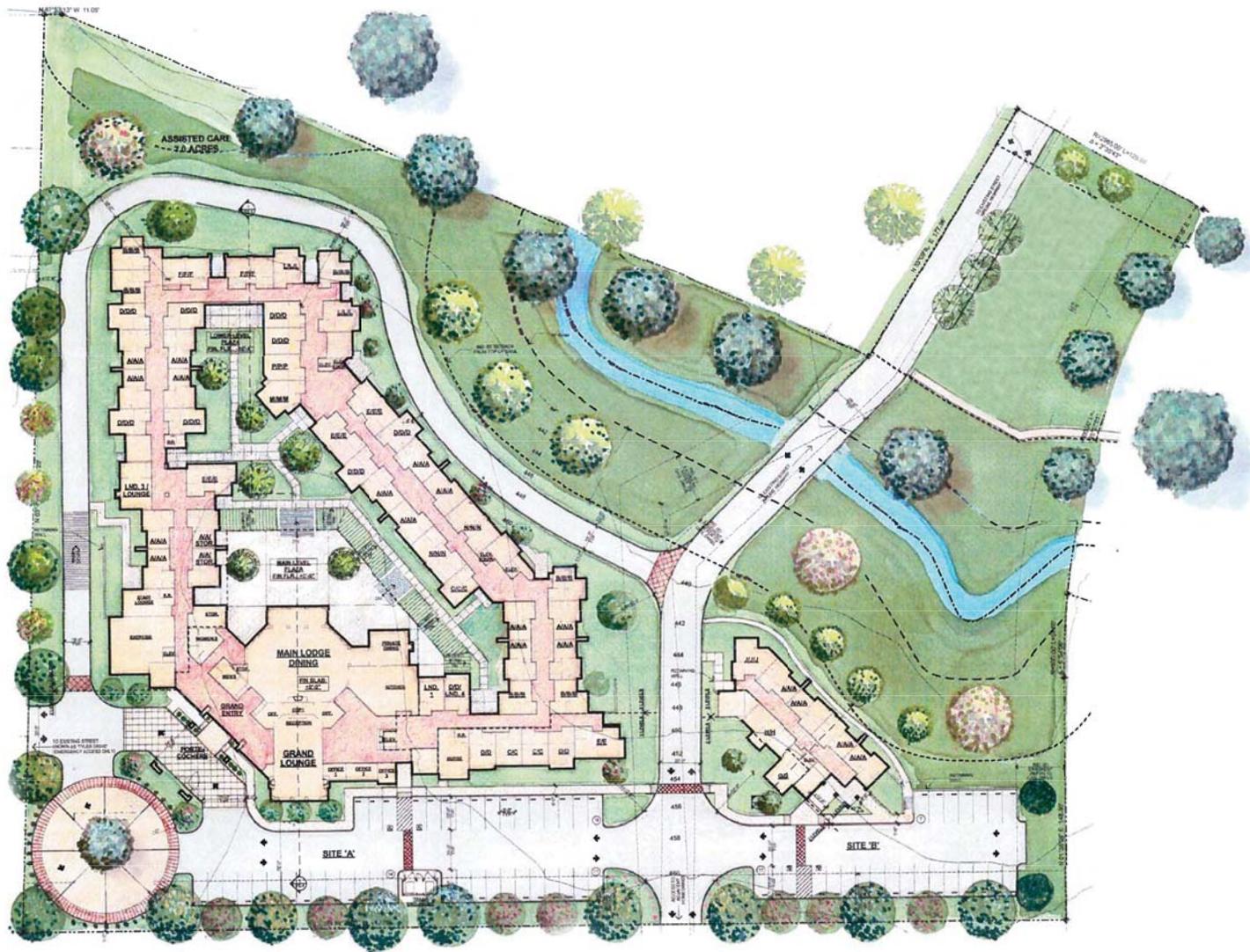


⑥ View of the Tyler Knoll neighborhood to the west

Figure 3 Site Photographs

Ridgemark Assisted Care Facility Initial Study

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Source: R.L. Davidson Architects 2017

Figure 4
Site Plan



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B. ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a “Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated” as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions | <input type="checkbox"/> Population/Housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture and Forestry Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air Quality | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hydrology/Water Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use/Planning | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildfire | <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal Cultural Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Service Systems |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Geology/Soils | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance |

C. DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a “potentially significant impact” or “potentially significant unless mitigated” impact on the environment, but at least one effect (1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and (2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (1) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (2) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Michael P. Kelly, Associate Planner

Date

D. EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Notes

1. A brief explanation is provided for all answers except “No Impact” answers that are adequately supported by the information sources cited in the parentheses following each question. A “No Impact” answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A “No Impact” answer is explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
2. All answers take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
3. Once it has been determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. “Potentially Significant Impact” is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more “Potentially Significant Impact” entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
4. “Negative Declaration: Less-Than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated” applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from “Potentially Significant Impact” to a “Less-Than-Significant Impact.” The mitigation measures are described, along with a brief explanation of how they reduce the effect to a less-than-significant level (mitigation measures from section XVII, “Earlier Analyses,” may be cross-referenced).
5. Earlier analyses are used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document or negative declaration. [Section 15063(c)(3)(D)] In this case, a brief discussion would identify the following:
 - a. “Earlier Analysis Used” identifies and states where such document is available for review.
 - b. “Impact Adequately Addressed” identifies which effects from the checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and states whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
 - c. “Mitigation Measures” – For effects that are “Less-Than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated,” mitigation measures are described which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.

6. Checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances, etc.) are incorporated. Each reference to a previously prepared or outside document, where appropriate, includes a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
7. “Supporting Information Sources” — A source list is attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted are cited in the discussion.
8. This is a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project’s environmental effects in whatever format is selected. This is the format recommended in the CEQA Guidelines as amended 2018.
9. The explanation of each issue identifies:
 - a. The significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
 - b. The mitigation measure identified, if any to reduce the impact to less than significant.

1. AESTHETICS

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista? (1, 5, 6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway? (1, 5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage points.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality? (1, 3, 5, 6, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area? (1, 3, 8)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

- a. A scenic vista is typically considered a location from which the public can experience unique and exemplary high quality views of an area. Prominent elements of the county’s scenic landscape include views of mountains, undeveloped rangelands, large agricultural fields and croplands, natural ridgelines along the Diablo and Gabilan mountain ranges, and annual grasslands (general plan, page 8-13). Views of the project site from Airline Highway include grassland, utility poles, and fencing in the foreground; grassland, shrubs, trees, and homes on rolling hills in the middle ground; and the Gabilan mountain range in the background. Views of the project site from Airline Highway can, therefore, be considered scenic.

The project site is visible from Airline Highway, which is not a County-designated scenic corridor (general plan, page 8-13). The proposed buildings would be located approximately 430 feet from the Airline Highway centerline. Landscaping associated with the proposed project would provide partial screening of the proposed buildings

from Airline Highway. Additional screening of the proposed buildings would be provided by the retaining wall along the looped driveway. Refer to [Figure 5, Potential View from Airline Highway](#), for an approximate representation of the views of the proposed buildings from Airline Highway, without the proposed landscaping. The proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact on scenic resources for the following reasons: the general plan does not identify the views from Airline Highway as a formal scenic vista; Airline Highway is not considered a scenic corridor; the buildings would be located approximately 430 feet from the centerline of the highway; and the proposed landscaping would partially screen the buildings.

- b. The project site is not located in the vicinity of a state scenic highway. The project site is located adjacent to Airline Highway, which is an eligible state scenic highway but not officially designated (general plan, page 8-13). Therefore, the proposed project would not damage scenic resources within a state scenic highway, or when viewed from a state scenic highway.
- c. The project site is in a non-urbanized area; however it is surrounded by residential and commercial development. Existing uses on the project site include a single-family residence, a driveway, animals (i.e., goats and horses), outbuildings, recreational vehicles, and grassland. Land uses adjacent to the project site include the Sunnyslope County Water District office immediately to the north, the Cielo Vista neighborhood across Airline Highway to the north, the approved, but not yet developed Roberts Ranch subdivision across Airline Highway to the northwest, a rural residence immediately to the south, vacant land to the east, the Ridgemark neighborhood to the southeast, and the Quail Hollow, Oak Creek, and Tyler Knoll neighborhoods to the west.

With a general plan designation of Residential Mixed (RM) and zoning district of Residential Multiple (RM), the project site was anticipated for residential development. Although development of the proposed project would change the existing visual character of the site, the proposed project would not be inconsistent with existing and proposed adjacent residential and commercial uses. Although the proposed project would change the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings, the visual impact would be less than significant.

- d. The proposed project would introduce new sources of nighttime lighting at the project site. New light sources would include, but are not limited to, parking lot lighting, interior building lighting, and security lighting. These new light sources could result in adverse effects to adjacent land uses due to light trespass and glare.



Note: 1. This figure does not show the landscaping associated with the proposed project.
2. This figure approximates the size and location of the proposed buildings.
Refer to Appendix B for details on building design

Source: RL Davidson Architects 2017, Google Earth 2019

Figure 5
Potential View from Airline Highway

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The new light sources could result in inconsistencies with the San Benito County Code Chapter 19.13, which was enacted to ensure good lighting practices, minimize nighttime light impacts, and preserve quality views of the night sky. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce the proposed project's light and glare impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure

- AES-1 Prior to issuance of a building permit, the developer shall submit a detailed outdoor lighting plan that indicates the location and type of lighting to be used, consistent with San Benito County Code Chapter 19.13. The lighting plan shall be subject to review and approval by County Resource Management Agency, and be implemented with development of the project.

2. AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES

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

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to nonagricultural use? (9)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract? (1, 7, 10)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))? (1, 7, 10)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use? (1, 7, 10)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use? (5, 6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

- a. The project site is predominantly identified as “Other Land” on the California Department of Conservation’s Important Farmland Finder. A small portion of the project site is designated “Urban and Built-Up Land”. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on prime farmland, unique farmland, or farmland of statewide importance.

- b-d. The project site is not under a Williamson Act contract. The project site is zoned Residential Multiple (RM). The project site is not zoned for forestland or timberland uses. There are no forest resources on or adjacent to the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract, conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land, or result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

- e. The project site consists of single-family residence, a driveway, animals (i.e., goats and horses), outbuildings, recreational vehicles, and grassland. Land uses adjacent to the project site include the Sunnyslope County Water District office immediately to the north, the Cielo Vista neighborhood across Airline Highway to the north, the approved, but not yet developed Roberts Ranch subdivision across Airline Highway to the northwest, a rural residence immediately to the south, vacant land to the east, the Ridgemark neighborhood to the southeast, and the Quail Hollow, Oak Creek, and Tyler Knoll neighborhoods to the west. Since surrounding lands are already developed with non-agricultural uses, the proposed project would not result in any impacts due to conversion of farmland or forest land to nonagricultural use.

3. AIR QUALITY

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

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan? (11, 12, 13, 14, 15)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. 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, 4, 11, 16)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations? (3, 4, 5, 11)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors adversely affecting a substantial number of people? (3, 4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

- a. San Benito County, including the project site, is located in the North Central Coast Air Basin, which is under the jurisdiction of the Monterey Bay Air Resources District (hereinafter “air district”). Regional air districts must prepare air quality plans specifying how state air quality standards will be met. The air district’s most recent adopted plan is *2012-2015 Air Quality Management Plan for the Monterey Bay Region* (hereinafter “air quality management plan”). The air district specifies air quality management plan consistency for population-related projects only. Population-related emissions have been estimated in the air quality management plan using population forecasts adopted by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG). Population-related projects that are consistent with these forecasts are consistent with the air quality management plan. AMBAG updated its regional population forecast in June 2018, but the air district has not yet updated the air quality management plan. The air district recommends using the 2018 AMBAG regional population forecast to determine a project’s consistency with the air quality management plan (David Frisbey, email message, September 26, 2018).

The air district consistency determination spreadsheet was used to assess the proposed project's population in comparison to the AMBAG's 2018 population forecasts (using housing units as a proxy for population). The results of the evaluation are included as [Appendix D](#). With the proposed project, the county's cumulative housing stock would be 1,495 units below AMBAG projections for the year 2025. Since the project is within the population projections, the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the air quality management plan.

- b. An air quality standard defines the maximum amount of a pollutant averaged over a specified period of time that can be present in outdoor air without significant harmful effects on people or the environment. The project site is located in the North Central Coast Air Basin (hereinafter "air basin"), which is currently in non-attainment status with state standards for ozone and suspended particulate matter (PM₁₀). Under federal criteria, the air basin is at attainment (8-hour standard) for ozone and particulates. The air district is responsible for monitoring air quality in the air basin. The air district has developed criteria air pollutant emissions thresholds, which are used to determine whether or not the proposed project would result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of criteria air pollutants during operations and/or construction. Based on the air district's CEQA Air Quality Guidelines, a project would have a significant cumulative air quality impact if it would:
- Emit 137 pounds per day or more of direct and indirect volatile organic compounds (VOC);
 - Emit 137 pounds per day or more of direct and indirect nitrogen oxides (NO_x);
 - Directly emit 550 pounds per day or more of carbon monoxide (CO);
 - Emit 82 pounds per day or more of suspended particulate matter (PM₁₀) on-site and from vehicle travel on unpaved roads off-site; or
 - Directly emit 150 pounds per day or more of sulfur oxides (SO_x).

Health effects of criteria air pollutants include, but are not limited to, asthma, bronchitis, chest pain, coughing, throat irritation, and airway inflammation. As discussed in the amicus briefs submitted on the *Sierra Club v. County of Fresno* (2014) 226 Cal.App. 4th 704, currently available modeling tools are not equipped to provide a meaningful analysis of the correlation between an individual development project's criteria air pollutant emissions and specific human health impacts. The air quality analysis for criteria air pollutants is not really a localized, project-level impact

analysis but one of regional, cumulative impacts. Therefore, it is not the norm to conduct an analysis of the localized health impacts associated with a project’s criteria air pollutant emissions as part of the CEQA process.

Operational Impacts. The proposed project would result in new sources of mobile and area source emissions. The criteria air pollutant emissions generated during operation of the proposed project have been estimated using California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) version 2016.3.2. The results are summarized in [Table 1, Unmitigated Operational Criteria Pollutant Emissions](#). Refer to [Appendix E](#) for the CalEEMod modeling results and a memorandum describing the CalEEMod modeling assumptions and methodology, *Ridgemark Assisted Care Facility – Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Modeling Assessment*.

Table 1 Unmitigated Operational Criteria Pollutant Emissions^{1,2}

Emissions	Reactive Organic Gases (ROG)	Nitrogen Oxides (NO _x)	Sulfur Oxides (SO _x)	Suspended Particulate Matter (PM ₁₀)	Carbon Monoxide (CO)
Summer	4.95	5.90	0.04	3.02	25.26
Winter	4.88	6.21	0.04	3.02	25.75
<i>Air District Thresholds</i>	<i>137</i>	<i>137</i>	<i>150</i>	<i>82</i>	<i>550</i>
<i>Exceeds Thresholds?</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>

SOURCE: EMC Planning Group 2019

NOTES:

1. Results may vary due to rounding.
2. Expressed in pounds per day

As summarized in Table 1, the proposed project would not result in operational emissions that exceed the air district thresholds for VOC, NO_x, SO_x, PM₁₀, or CO, resulting in a less-than-significant cumulative air quality impact.

Construction Impacts. Emissions produced during demolition, grading, and construction activities are considered short-term as they occur only during the construction phase of the project. Construction emissions include mobile source exhaust emissions, emissions generated during the application of asphalt paving material and architectural coatings, as well as emissions of fugitive dust associated with earthmoving equipment. Worst case construction phase emissions typically occur during initial site preparation, including grading and excavation, due to the increased amount of surface disturbance that can generate dust and due to construction equipment emissions with the use of heavier equipment used at this phase.

Air district CEQA Guidelines Table 5-2, Construction Activity with Potentially Significant Impacts, identifies the level of construction activity that could result in significant temporary fugitive dust impacts if not mitigated. Construction activities with grading and excavation that disturb more than 2.2 acres per day and construction activities with minimal earthmoving that disturb more than 8.1 acres per day are assumed to be above the 82 pounds of particulate matter per day threshold of significance. The proposed project includes grading and excavation on the seven-acre project site, and is likely to result in soil disturbance that exceeds the air district's threshold of 2.2 acres per day for construction activities with grading and excavation, resulting in a significant impact on air quality. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce this impact to less than significant.

Mitigation Measure

AQ-1 To reduce dust emissions from demolition, grading, and construction activities on the project site, the following language shall be included in all grading and construction plans for the project prior to issuance of demolition or grading permits:

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

- a. Use recycled water to add moisture to the areas of disturbed soils twice a day, every day, to prevent visible dust from being blown by the wind;
- b. Apply chemical soil stabilizers or dust suppressants on disturbed soils that will not be actively graded for a period of four or more consecutive days;
- c. Apply non-toxic binders and/or hydro seed disturbed soils where grading is completed, but on which more than four days will pass prior to paving, foundation construction, or placement of other permanent cover;
- d. Cover or otherwise stabilize stockpiles that will not be actively used for a period of four or more consecutive days, or water at least twice daily as necessary to prevent visible dust leaving the site, using raw or recycled water when feasible;
- e. Maintain at least two feet of freeboard and cover all trucks hauling dirt, sand, or loose materials;

- f. Install wheel washers at all construction site exit points, and sweep streets if visible soil material is carried onto paved surfaces;
- g. Stop grading, and earth moving if winds exceed 15 miles per hour;
- h. Pave roads, driveways, and parking areas at the earliest point feasible within the construction schedule;
- i. Post a publicly visible sign with the telephone number and person to contact regarding dust complaints. This person shall respond and take corrective action within 48 hours of receiving the complaint. The phone number of the Monterey Bay Air Resources District shall also be visible to ensure compliance with Rule 402 (Nuisance); and
- j. Limit the area under construction at any one time.

Therefore, the cumulatively considerable construction impact of the proposed project would be less-than-significant with mitigation.

- c. According to the air district CEQA Guidelines, a sensitive receptor is generally defined as any residence including private homes, condominiums, apartments, and living quarters; education resources such as preschools and kindergarten through grade twelve (k-12) schools; daycare centers; and health care facilities such as hospitals or retirement and nursing homes. The nearest sensitive receptor is a rural residence, located approximately 130 feet south of the project site. Residences to the east and west of the project site are located within a distance of 500 feet from the project site.

Operation of the proposed project is not expected to cause any localized emissions that could expose sensitive receptors to unhealthy air pollutant levels, because no significant operational sources of pollutants are proposed onsite. Construction activities would result in localized emissions of dust and diesel exhaust that could result in temporary impacts to adjacent land uses that include sensitive receptors. The short-term air quality effects related to dust emissions during project construction would be avoided with implementation of the Mitigation Measure AQ-1 under checklist item "b" above. However, the diesel construction equipment required for the proposed project could expose these sensitive receptors to toxic air contaminants from heavy equipment diesel exhaust. Implementation of the following mitigation measures would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measures

AQ-2 The developer shall prepare a Construction Staging Management Plan to be reviewed and approved by the County, prior to issuance of grading or demolition permits. The plan shall include the following restrictions:

- a. Heavy-duty diesel vehicles shall be required to have 2010 or newer model year engines, in compliance with the California Air Resources Board's Truck and Bus Regulation, and shall not be staged within 500 feet of nearest sensitive receptors; and
- b. Construction equipment and heavy duty diesel trucks idling shall be avoided, where feasible, and if idling is necessary, it will not exceed five minutes.

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

- d. The proposed project is not anticipated to produce any objectionable odors during its operation. Construction activities associated with the proposed project, such as paving and painting, may temporarily generate objectionable odors. Since odor-generating construction activities would be localized, sporadic, and short-term in nature, this impact would be less than significant.

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or US Fish and Wildlife Service? (25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 34, 35)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or US Fish and Wildlife Service? (27, 31)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.), through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means? (31, 33, 36)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites? (31)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance? (1, 32)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan? (1, 32, 61)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

A biological reconnaissance survey was conducted by EMC Planning Group biologist Janet Walther on July 26, 2019, to document existing habitats and evaluate the potential for special-status species to occur on the project site. Prior to conducting the survey, Ms. Walther reviewed site maps, aerial photographs, database accounts, and relevant scientific literature describing natural resources in the project vicinity, including the *Nader Senior Assisted Living California Tiger Salamander Assessment, Part One: 2018-19 Winter Upland Drift Fence Survey* (Appendix F, Bryan Mori and Associates 2019a) and the *Nader Senior Assisted Living California Tiger Salamander Assessment, Part Two: 2019 Spring Aquatic Sampling* (Appendix F, Bryan Mori and Associates 2019b)(collectively referred to as the “protocol surveys”).

Biological resources were documented in field notes, including species observed, dominant plant communities, and significant wildlife habitat characteristics. The project site is approximately seven acres and is situated on the Tres Pinos U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) quadrangle map, with an approximate elevation of 440-460 feet above sea level. Adjacent land uses include the Sunnyslope County Water District office, Airline Highway, and residential development to the north, residences to the west, a rural residence with undeveloped land to the south, and the Ridgemark neighborhood to the east.

A review was conducted of the National Wetlands Inventory (USFWS 2019) and the Geographic Information System (GIS) data for wetlands and water features maintained by San Benito County (San Benito County 2019) to identify the closest jurisdictional aquatic features adjacent to the property site. Results showed an unnamed intermittent stream transecting the site, which was verified in the field. Five ponds are known within the immediate project vicinity, approximately 440, 600, 1,400, 1,900, and 2,250 feet from the project site (Bryan Mori Biological Consulting 2019a). The San Benito River is approximately 0.8 miles southwest of the site.

The project site includes one rural residence and two fenced horse pastures. Heavily grazed, non-native grassland with scattered coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*) is the dominant plant community present. Plants present include field mustard (*Brassica* sp.), wild oat (*Avena fatua*), curly dock (*Rumex crispus*), bull thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*), and start thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*). Trees present include ornamental species planted adjacent to the rural residences and blue gum eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus globulus*), western sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), and coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*). The intermittent stream corridor is also heavily grazed and dominated by coyote brush and the non-native species listed above.

Domestic dog, cat, and horse likely preclude most larger native wildlife species from the project site, however common species such as raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), striped skunk (*Mephitis*

mephitis), Virginia opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*), and California ground squirrel (*Otospermophilus beecheyi*) area likely to occur. Species of small rodents including mice (*Mus musculus*, *Reithrodontomys megalotis*, and *Peromyscus maniculatus*) and California vole (*Microtus californicus*) are also likely to occur. Small burrows were observed along the access road edges. Several birds were observed flying near or over the site including northern mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*), red-winged blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*), California scrub jay (*Aphelocoma californica*), Eurasian collared dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*), and house finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*).

- a. **Special-Status Species.** A search of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) was conducted for the Tres Pinos, San Felipe Three Sisters, Mariposa Peak, Hollister, Quien Sabe Valley, Mount Harlan, Paicines, and Cherry Peak USGS quadrangles to generate a list of potentially occurring special-status species in the project vicinity (Appendix G, CDFW 2019). Records of occurrence for special-status plants were reviewed for those nine USGS quadrangles in the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants (CNPS 2019). A U.S Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Endangered Species Program threatened and endangered species list was also generated for San Benito County (USFWS 2019). Special-status species are considered those listed as Endangered, Threatened, or Rare, or as Candidates for listing by the USFWS and/or CDFW, Species of Special Concern or Fully Protected species by the CDFW, or as Rare Plant Rank 1B or 2B by the CNPS.

Critical habitat is a designation used by the USFWS for specific geographic areas that contain features essential to the conservation of an endangered or threatened species and that may require special management and protection. The project site is not within a critical habitat area; however California tiger salamander Critical Habitat Unit 15A, Ana Creek Unit, San Benito County, 2,722 acres is located approximately 1,200 feet to the northeast. Threats to Critical Habitat Unit 15A identified in the final rule include erosion and sedimentation, pesticide application, non-native predators, development, and road construction (70 FR 49379 49458).

Given the existing level of disturbance on the project site, special-status plants are not expected to occur on the site due to lack of suitable habitat.

Special-status wildlife species with low potential to occur on site include San Joaquin kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*), California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*), California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*), western spadefoot toad (*Spea hammondi*), western pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*), burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*),

prairie falcon (*Falco mexicanus*), western red bat (*Lasiurus blossevillii*), and western mastiff bat (*Eumops perotis californicus*). Figure 6, [Special-Status Species in the Project Vicinity](#), presents CNDDDB results, as well as water features in relation to the project site. Other special-status wildlife species recorded as occurring in the vicinity of the property include state-listed threatened bank swallow (*Riparia riparia*), and state-listed species of special concern American badger *Taxidea taxus*). These species are not likely to occur on the property site due to lack of suitable habitat.

Special-Status Amphibians and Western Pond Turtle. The following species occur in the project vicinity and were assessed for the potential to occur on the project site:

- California tiger salamander, federally and state-listed Threatened;
- California red-legged frog, federally listed as Threatened and a California Species of Special Concern;
- Western spadefoot toad, California Species of Special Concern; and
- Western pond turtle, California Species of Special Concern.

The potential for these species to occur on the project site was assessed in the aquatic and winter pitfall trap protocol-level surveys conducted in 2018 and 2019. No California tiger salamander larvae were observed during aquatic sampling at any of the five study ponds or during the winter upland study. Four of the ponds did not support suitable breeding conditions during the sampling period, despite above-average rainfall the preceding winter. These findings suggest that California tiger salamander did not breed at any of the ponds in 2019 and may be extirpated from the study area, due to loss of upland habitat and habitat fragmentation. Additionally, no other aquatic special-status species were observed, including California red-legged frog, western spadefoot toad and western pond turtle (Bryan Mori Biological Consulting 2019a, 2019b). No measures for the protection of these species are proposed.

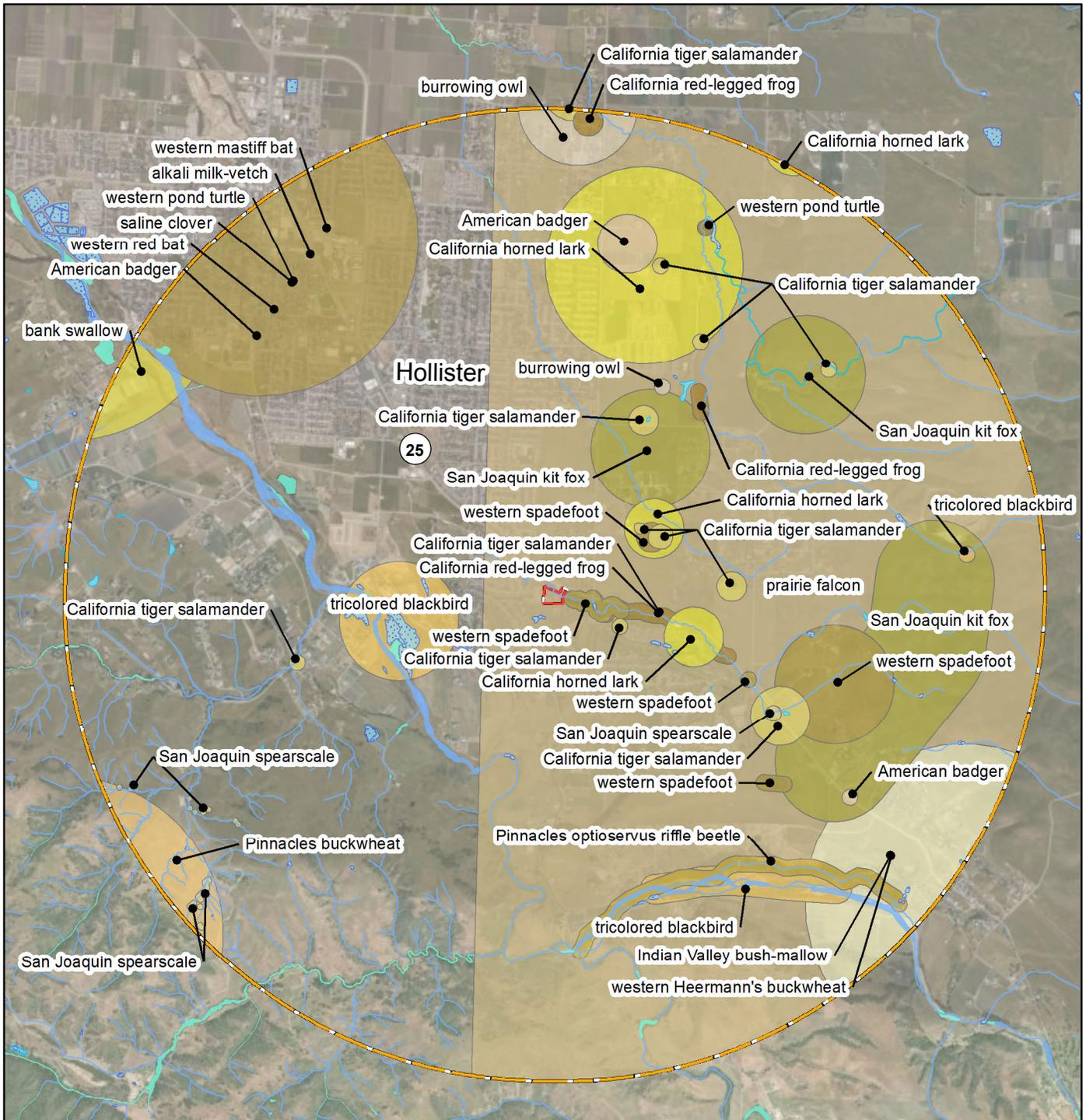
San Joaquin Kit Fox. The San Joaquin kit fox is a federally-listed endangered species and a state-listed threatened species. The present range of the San Joaquin kit fox extends from the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley, north to Tulare County, and along the interior Coast Range valleys and foothills to central Contra Costa County. San Joaquin kit foxes typically inhabit annual grasslands or grassy open spaces with scattered shrubby vegetation, but can also be found in some agricultural habitats and urban areas. This species needs loose-textured sandy soils for burrowing, and they also need areas that provide a suitable prey base, including black-tailed hare, desert cottontails, and California ground squirrels, as well as birds, reptiles, and carrion.

The reconnaissance-level survey conducted at the project site did not observe San Joaquin kit fox and found no indication of the presence of this species on the project site. Although the project site supports a prey base, the site is considered only marginal breeding and foraging habitat for the kit fox due to its location in an area adjacent to rural residential and urban development. Heavy grazing also diminishes habitat suitability for the kit fox. Therefore, if this species uses the site, it likely uses it only for foraging or dispersal on rare occasions and in low numbers. San Joaquin kit fox is known from the region, however most occurrences were last recorded in the late 1970s. The nearest and most recent observation of this species was documented approximately 3.8 miles northwest of the project site in 1992. In the off-chance that a migrating kit fox is found in the region, the marginal quality of the project site suggests that this species would not choose this site for denning or breeding. Therefore, the likelihood of this species occurring on the project site is considered low. Loss of or harm to individual kit foxes could result if they are present on the site or seek shelter during construction within artificial structures, such as stored pipes or exposed trenches. Loss or harm to kit fox is a significant adverse environmental impact. Implementation of the following mitigation measures would reduce this potential, significant impact to San Joaquin kit fox to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measures

BIO-1 The applicant shall pay the mitigation fee per County Ordinance 541 (San Benito County Code, Chapter 19.19), which would pay towards the preparation of the San Benito County HCP that is being developed to mitigate impacts for all federally-listed species, including the San Joaquin kit fox. The fee shall be paid prior to issuance of a building permit.

BIO-2 The *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Standardized Recommendations for Protection of the San Joaquin Kit Fox Prior to or During Ground Disturbance* (USFWS 2011) shall be implemented prior to initiation of and during any construction activity on the project site to avoid unintended take of individual San Joaquin kit foxes. Preconstruction/pre-activity surveys for San Joaquin kit fox shall be conducted no less than 30 days prior to the beginning of ground disturbance and/or construction activities or any project activity that may impact San Joaquin kit fox. The surveys shall include all work areas and a minimum 200-foot buffer of the project site. The preconstruction surveys shall identify kit fox habitat features on the project site, evaluate use by kit fox and, if possible, assess the potential impacts of the proposed activity. The status of all dens shall be determined and mapped.



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

Source: ESRI 2019, San Benito County GIS 2016, California Department of Fish and Wildlife 2019, US Fish and Wildlife Service 2019



Figure 6

Special-Status Species in the Project Vicinity

Ridgemark Assisted Care Facility Initial Study



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If a natal/pupping den is discovered within the project area or within 200 feet of the project boundary, the applicant shall consult with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to establish an appropriate avoidance buffer. The avoidance buffer shall be maintained until such time as the burrow is no longer active and/or an incidental take permit is determined to be required and is obtained.

Project-related vehicles shall observe a 20-mph speed limit in all project areas; this is particularly important at night when kit foxes are most active. To the extent possible, night-time construction shall be minimized. Off-road traffic outside of designated project area shall be prohibited.

To prevent inadvertent entrapment of kit foxes or other animals during the construction phase of the project, all excavated, steep-walled holes or trenches more than two feet deep shall be covered at the close of each working day by plywood or similar materials, or provided with one or more escape ramps constructed of earth fill or wooden planks. Before such holes or trenches are filled, they shall be thoroughly inspected for trapped animals. If at any time a trapped or injured kit fox is discovered, the procedures under number 11 of the Construction and Operational Requirements in the Standardized Recommendations must be followed.

Kit foxes are attracted to den-like structures such as pipes and may enter stored pipe becoming trapped or injured. All construction pipes, culverts, or similar structures with a diameter of four inches or greater that are stored at a construction site for one or more overnight periods shall be thoroughly inspected for kit foxes before the pipe is subsequently buried, capped, or otherwise used or moved in any way. If a kit fox is discovered inside a pipe, that section of pipe shall not be moved until the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been consulted. If necessary, and under the direct supervision of the biologist, the pipe may be moved once to remove it from the path of construction activity, until the fox has escaped.

All food-related trash items such as wrappers, cans, bottles, and food scraps shall be disposed of in closed containers and removed at least once a week from a construction or project site.

No firearms shall be allowed on the project site during construction activities.

To prevent harassment, mortality of kit foxes or destruction of dens by dogs or cats, no pets shall be permitted on site during construction activities.

Use of rodenticides and herbicides on the project site during construction shall be restricted. This is necessary to prevent primary or secondary poisoning of kit foxes and the depletion of prey populations on which they depend. All uses of such compounds shall observe label and other restrictions mandated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, California Department of Food and Agriculture, and other State and Federal legislation, as well as additional project-related restrictions deemed necessary by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. If rodent control must be conducted, zinc phosphide shall be used because of proven lower risk to kit fox.

In the case of trapped animals, escape ramps or structures shall be installed immediately to allow the animal(s) to escape.

Any contractor, employee, or agency personnel who inadvertently kills or injures a San Joaquin kit fox shall immediately report the incident to San Benito County, who will contact the CDFW and USFWS as needed.

The developer shall submit weekly reports on construction monitoring activities. An occupancy permit shall not be issued without receipt of the weekly reports.

Burrowing Owl. Burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) is a California Species of Special Concern. Burrowing owls live and breed in burrows in the ground, especially in abandoned California ground squirrel burrows. Optimal habitat conditions include large open, dry and nearly level grasslands or prairies with short to moderate vegetation height and cover, areas of bare ground, and populations of burrowing mammals. This species is known to occur approximately 1.4 miles north of the site. The project site's non-native grassland provides marginally suitable foraging habitat for burrowing owl, and a few scattered small mammal burrows on the site could be utilized for nesting habitat, but burrowing owl has low potential to occur on the site. If burrowing owl is present on or adjacent to the project site, construction activities could result in the loss or disturbance of individual animals. This would be a significant adverse environmental impact. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-3 would reduce this potential, significant impact to less than significant.

Mitigation Measure

BIO-3 To avoid/minimize impacts to burrowing owls potentially occurring on or adjacent to the project site, the applicant shall retain a qualified biologist to conduct a two-visit (i.e. morning and evening) presence/absence survey at areas of suitable habitat on and adjacent to the project site no less than 14 days prior to the start of construction or ground disturbance activities. Surveys shall be conducted according to methods described in the Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation (CDFW 2012). If these pre-construction “take avoidance” surveys performed during the breeding season (February through August) or the non-breeding season (September through January) locate occupied burrows in or near construction areas, consultation with the CDFW shall occur to interpret survey results and develop a project-specific avoidance and minimization approach.

Bats. Trees and/or buildings or structures on the project site could provide roosting habitat for state-listed species of special concern western mastiff bat (*Eumops perotis californicus*), Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*), and hoary bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*). Western mastiff bat prefers crevices in cliff faces, high buildings, trees, and tunnels for roosting and tight rock crevices or crevices in buildings for nesting. Townsend's big-eared bat prefers roosting and nesting found in caves, tunnels, mines, and buildings. Hoary bat is a solitary species that generally prefers dense foliage of medium to large trees. These species have been identified west of Hollister. Construction activities at the project site could result in the disturbance of roost and natal sites occupied by special-status bats on or adjacent to the project site, if present. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce this potential, significant impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure

BIO-4 Approximately 14 days prior to tree removal or construction activities, a qualified biologist shall conduct a habitat assessment for bats and potential roosting sites in trees to be removed, in trees within 50 feet of the development footprint, and within and surrounding any structures that may be disturbed by the project. These surveys shall include a visual inspection of potential roosting features (bats need not be present) and a search for presence of guano within the project site, construction access routes, and 50 feet around these areas. Cavities, crevices, exfoliating bark, and bark fissures that could provide suitable potential nest or roost habitat for bats shall be surveyed. Assumptions can be made on what species is present due to observed visual

characteristics along with habitat use, or the bats can be identified to the species level with the use of a bat echolocation detector such as an “Anabat” unit. Potential roosting features found during the survey shall be flagged or marked.

If no roosting sites or bats are found, a letter report confirming absence shall be prepared and submitted to San Benito County and no further mitigation is required.

If bats or roosting sites are found, bats shall not be disturbed without specific notice to and consultation with CDFW.

If bats are found roosting outside of the nursery season (May 1 through October 1), CDFW shall be consulted prior to any eviction or other action. If avoidance or postponement is not feasible, a Bat Eviction Plan will be submitted to CDFW for written approval prior to project implementation. A request to evict bats from a roost includes details for excluding bats from the roost site and monitoring to ensure that all bats have exited the roost prior to the start of activity and are unable to re-enter the roost until activity is completed. Any bat eviction shall be timed to avoid lactation and young-rearing. If bats are found roosting during the nursery season, they shall be monitored to determine if the roost site is a maternal roost. This could occur by either visual inspection of the roost bat pups, if possible, or by monitoring the roost after the adults leave for the night to listen for bat pups. Because bat pups cannot leave the roost until they are mature enough, eviction of a maternal roost cannot occur during the nursery season. Therefore, if a maternal roost is present, a 50-foot buffer zone (or different size if determined in consultation with the CDFW) shall be established around the roosting site within which no construction activities including tree removal or structure disturbance shall occur until after the nursery season.

Nesting Birds. Various bird species, including California horned lark (*Eremophila alpestris actia*), may nest throughout the study area, including in buildings, on open ground, or in any type of vegetation. Future construction activities including ground disturbance may impact nesting birds protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code, should nesting birds be present during construction. If protected bird species are nesting adjacent to the project site during the bird nesting season (January 15 through September 15), then noise-generating construction activities could result in the loss of fertile eggs, nestlings, or

otherwise lead to the abandonment of nests. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce potential, significant impacts to nesting birds to less than significant.

Mitigation Measure

BIO-5 To avoid impacts to nesting birds during the nesting season (January 15 through September 15), to the extent feasible, construction activities that include any vegetation removal or ground disturbance (such as grading or grubbing) shall be conducted between September 16 and January 14, which is outside of the bird nesting season. If construction activities commence during the bird nesting season, then a San Benito County-approved consulting biologist shall conduct a pre-construction survey for nesting birds to ensure that no nests would be disturbed during project construction.

If construction activities are scheduled during the nesting season (February 15 to August 30 for small bird species such as passerines; January 15 to September 15 for owls; and February 15 to September 15 for other raptors), a qualified biologist shall conduct nesting bird surveys. Two surveys for active nests of such birds shall occur within 10 days prior to start of construction, with the second survey conducted with 48 hours prior to start of construction. Appropriate minimum survey radius surrounding the work area is typically 250 feet for passerines, 500 feet for smaller raptors, and 1,000 feet for larger raptors. Surveys shall be conducted at the appropriate times of day to observe nesting activities.

If the qualified biologist documents active nests within the project site or in nearby surrounding areas, an appropriate buffer between each nest and active construction shall be established. The buffer shall be clearly marked and maintained until the young have fledged and are foraging independently. Prior to construction, the qualified biologist shall conduct baseline monitoring of each nest to characterize “normal” bird behavior and establish a buffer distance, which allows the birds to exhibit normal behavior. The qualified biologist shall monitor the nesting birds daily during construction activities and increase the buffer if birds show signs of unusual or distressed behavior (e.g. defensive flights and vocalizations, standing up from a brooding position, and/or flying away from the nest). If buffer establishment is not possible, the qualified biologist or construction

foreman shall have the authority to cease all construction work in the area until the young have fledged and the nest is no longer active. This measure shall be implemented by the developer prior to start of construction activities.

- b. **Riparian Habitat or Sensitive Natural Communities.** There were no sensitive natural communities observed at the project site. Although an unnamed intermittent stream crosses the site, it is heavily grazed and dominated by coyote brush and non-native species. No riparian or wetland vegetation was present along the portion of the channel within the project boundary at the time of the survey. Therefore, impacts to riparian habitat or sensitive natural communities are not anticipated.
- c. **Wetlands and Waters of the U.S.** An unnamed intermittent stream crosses the project site. The project plans show contouring of the existing driveway, a retaining wall, replacement of a culvert, and landscaping within the stream. Based on a review of historical aerial photographs, NWI maps, and USGS topographic quadrangles, this feature does not appear connected to a feature considered “navigable” by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), however this determination is preliminary and must be verified by the USACE to determine if a regulatory permit is necessary. The lack of riparian or wetland vegetation make it unlikely a permit from CDFW is required, however the feature may be considered jurisdictional by the RWQCB. If considered jurisdictional, the loss of wetlands/waterways under CDFW, USACE, and/or RWQCB regulatory agency jurisdiction due to project implementation would be a significant impact. Implementation of the mitigation measures below would reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measures

BIO-6 Based on the current proposed plans, if the unnamed intermittent stream is considered jurisdictional by the CDFW, USACE, and/or RWQCB the project may require one or more regulatory permits. To determine whether the stream is considered jurisdictional, the applicant shall retain a qualified biologist/wetland regulatory specialist to initiate discussions with the USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW for this purpose.

If impacts to a federal jurisdictional feature may occur, a Clean Water Act Section 404 Nationwide Permit may be needed. As part of the permit application, a wetland delineation report must first be completed and submitted to the USACE for a jurisdictional determination.

If impacts to a feature not subject to federal jurisdiction but subject to state jurisdiction may occur, fill authorization will be sought from the Regional Water Quality Control Board and/or the CDFW if determined necessary through the wetland assessment and subsequent regulatory agency consultation process.

If a permit is required, the permit shall be obtained prior to issuance of a grading permit. If a permit is not required, the developer shall provide evidence that the permit is not required.

BIO-7 Native plant species typical of the natural communities present shall be used in landscape planning where features provide connectivity off-site, including (but not limited to) creeks, drainage channels, and rivers. Species from the California Invasive Plant Council's (Cal-IPC) *Invasive Plant List* (Cal-IPC 2019) shall be removed if present and not included in any new landscaping.

- d. **Wildlife Movement.** Wildlife movement corridors provide connectivity between habitat areas, enhancing species richness and diversity, and usually also provide cover, water, food, and breeding sites. The project site is not likely to facilitate major wildlife movement due to current active disturbance. There are small animal burrows on-site that could potentially provide habitat or facilitate movement corridors for commonly occurring, urban-adapted mammals such as California ground squirrel and Botta's pocket gopher (*Thomomys bottae*). However, because the habitat is marginal, the proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact on wildlife movement.
- e. **Local Biological Resource Policies/Ordinances.** Measures to protect sensitive biological resources within San Benito County are identified in the *San Benito County 2035 General Plan* as follows:

Section 8 Natural and Cultural Resources Element, Goal NCR-2 is "To protect and enhance wildlife communities through a comprehensive approach that conserves, maintains, and restores important habitat areas." The other goals in Section 8 include: coordination for habitat preservation, habitat protection, habitat conservation plan, maintain corridors for habitat, mitigation for wetland disturbance or removal, regeneration of oak woodland communities, mitigation of oak woodlands, pre-development biological resource assessment, mitigation funding and site protection, and invasive species.

The project site is composed of heavily disturbed soils, with non-native grasses, and ruderal (weedy) plants. Implementation of biological mitigation measures contained

in this section would reduce significant impacts to less than significant. With these considerations, the proposed project would not conflict with local regulations related to biological resources.

Trees. The San Benito County Code contains an Interim Woodlands Management Ordinance (Chapter 19.33) which is intended to control the removal of protected woodlands and maintain and enhance tree cover within unincorporated areas of the county. There are native trees on the property, however the percent cover does not meet the standards contained in the ordinance and does not apply.

The San Benito County Code includes Chapter 25.29, Article VII, Tree Protection, which regulates the removal and trimming of mature trees in Single-Family Residential (R1) and Residential Mixed (RM) zones. The project site is designated Residential Mixed (RM) under the county zoning code and this ordinance would apply to the site. However, Section 25.29.216(J) exempts the following: When trees are removed as part of a development project that has been considered under CEQA, and (a) the project considered the removal of designated trees, or (b) the removal of the trees is contained in a landscape plan submitted in compliance with a condition of approval for the approved project.

The proposed project includes the removal of 17 native and non-native trees. A landscape plan will be submitted in accordance with county standards and reviewed by the county in conjunction with the grading plans. No mitigation measures are necessary.

- f. **Conservation Plans.** There are no critical habitat boundaries, habitat conservation plans, natural community conservation plans, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plans applicable to the proposed project site. Preliminary habitat conservation planning had been underway for many years; however, outside of fee collection this effort is not currently active. San Benito County staff has indicated that habitat conservation planning will be re-initiated by the County as part of compliance with General Plan Policy NCR-2.3 and Implementation Program NCR-A.

5. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to section 15064.5? (23)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to section 15064.5? (23, 24)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries? (23, 24)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

Information for this section is derived from the cultural resource evaluation report by Archaeological Resource Management dated April 23, 2017. The project site is located at 3586 Airline Highway in San Benito County on the Hollister United States Geological Survey (USGS) quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) 10S 645835 easting, 75732 northing, with an elevation of approximately 400 feet MSL. An unnamed intermittent stream runs along the northern boundary and partially within the project site. Surrounding the project site are residential neighborhoods, with the Sunnyslope County Water District office immediately to the north.

- a. **Historical Resources.** There is one previously recorded historical resource within the project site. The resource was recorded in 1999 and is described as a portion of the historic alignment of Highway 25 (Airline Highway). This alignment runs along the northern boundary of the project site. This resource is no longer located within the project site.
- b. **Archaeological Resources.** There were six previous studies that include portions of the project site and seven studies within a quarter mile radius of the project site. A sacred lands record search that was conducted in April 2018 resulted in no sacred lands known within the immediate project site. As per the Native American Heritage Commission’s recommendation, local tribes were contacted for any additional information they might have regarding sacred lands or other information. There were no responses from the tribes.

A surface reconnaissance was completed and resulted in no significant cultural materials, prehistoric or historic, being observed. Therefore, no impacts to archaeological resources are expected. However, there is always the potential to encounter unknown subsurface unique archaeological resources. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would ensure this potential impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure

CR-1 Per the San Benito County Code of Ordinance Chapter 19.05, if archaeological resources are discovered during construction, then work shall be halted within 200 feet of the find until a qualified professional archaeologist can evaluate it. If the find is determined to be significant, then appropriate mitigation measures shall be formulated and implemented.

- c. **Accidental Disturbance of Human Remains.** Although no evidence of potentially sensitive cultural resources are associated with the project site, there is the possibility of an accidental discovery of archaeological resources or human remains during construction activities. Disturbance of Native American human remains is considered a significant adverse environmental impact. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure

CR-2 If human remains are encountered during construction, the county coroner shall be notified immediately. The San Benito County Code of Ordinances Chapter 19.05 and Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code require that construction or excavation be stopped in the vicinity of discovered human remains until the Coroner can determine whether the remains are those of a Native American. A qualified archaeologist will also be contacted immediately. If the county coroner determines that the remains are Native American, the coroner shall then contact the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), pursuant to Section 7050.5(c) of the California Health and Safety Code (see Section 1.2 Regulatory Setting).

The county coordinator of Indian Affairs shall also be contacted. There will be no further excavation or disturbance of the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie human remains until the county coroner has determined that no investigation of the cause of death is required; and, if the remains are of Native American origin.

The NAHC shall identify a Native American most likely descendant to make a recommendation with regards to appropriate treatment of human remains within 24 hours after being notified by the commission.

If the NAHC fails to make a recommendation, the descendants of the deceased Native Americans shall make a recommendation to the landowner or the person responsible for the excavation work for means of treating or disposing of, with appropriate dignity, the human remains and any associated grave goods as provided in the Public Resources Code Section 5097.98.

According to the California Health and Safety Code, six or more human burials at one location constitutes a cemetery (Sec. 8100), and disturbance of Native American cemeteries is a felony (Sec. 7052).

6. ENERGY

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation? (1, 3, 4, 16, 17, 18, 19)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency? (1, 3, 4, 16, 17, 18, 19)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

- a/b. Energy impacts are assessed based on the proposed project energy demand profile and on its relationship to California energy efficiency regulations. Both are summarized below.

Projected Energy Demand

The proposed project will result in increased demand for energy during its construction and long-term operation. Primary sources of energy use will be transportation fuels, electricity, and natural gas. A summary of projected energy demand is provided below.

Transportation Fuel. The proposed project will generate new traffic trips associated with residents, visitors, and employees that would increase vehicle miles traveled (VMT). New vehicle trips will result in increased demand for and consumption of transportation fuel.

CalEEMod results included in [Appendix E](#) show that the estimated annual VMT associated with the proposed project would be 1,259,237 miles. The Emissions Factor Model (EMFAC2017) version 1.0.2 was used to forecast annual transportation fuel use based on the projected annual VMT. According to the EMFAC2017 results included as [Appendix H](#), transportation fuel demand of the proposed project is forecast at about 69,212.61 gallons per year.

Electricity. According to the California Energy Commission Energy Consumption Data Management System, in 2018, total electricity consumption in San Benito County was 377,803,527 kWh. Section 5.3, Energy by Land Use – Electricity, in the CalEEMod results in [Appendix E](#) show that the total unmitigated electricity demand

from the proposed project would be approximately 696,919 kWh/year. Electricity consumption at project buildout would represent about 0.18 percent of the total 2018 San Benito County electricity consumption.

Natural Gas. According to the California Energy Commission Energy Consumption Data Management System, in 2018, total natural gas consumption in San Benito County was 13.827416 million therms. Section 5.2, Energy by Land Use – Natural Gas, in the CalEEMod results in [Appendix E](#) shows that at project buildout, the total unmitigated natural gas demand would be about 1,887,570,000 BTU/year or 18,880.21 therms/year. This represents about 0.14 percent of the total 2018 San Benito County gas consumption.

Regulatory Requirements

A multitude of state regulations and legislative acts are aimed at improving vehicle fuel efficiency, energy efficiency, and enhancing energy conservation. For example, in the transportation sector, the representative legislation and standards for improving transportation fuel efficiency include the Pavley I standards. The gradual increased usage of electric cars powered with cleaner electricity will also reduce fossil fuel usage associated with transportation. In the renewable energy use sector, representative legislation for the use of renewable energy includes, but is not limited to Senate Bill 350 and Executive Order B-16-12. In the building energy use sector, representative legislation and standards for reducing natural gas and electricity consumption include, but are not limited to Assembly Bill 2021 and California Building Standards Code.

The California Building Standards Code is enforceable at the project-level. The California Energy Code (California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 6), which is incorporated into the California Building Standards Code, was first established in 1978 in response to a legislative mandate to reduce California's energy consumption. The California Energy Code is updated every three years by the California Energy Commission as the Building Energy Efficiency Standards to allow consideration and possible incorporation of new energy efficiency technologies and construction methods. The current 2019 Building Energy Efficiency Standards are structured to achieve the state's goal that all new low-rise residential buildings be zero net energy. The California Green Building Standards Code or CALGreen (California Code of Regulations Title 24, Part 11) institutes mandatory minimum environmental performance standards for all ground-up new construction of commercial, low-rise residential uses, and state-owned buildings, as well as schools and hospitals.

Conclusion

For purposes of this analysis, the proposed project could be considered to result in significant environmental effects due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy if its energy demand is extraordinary relative to common land use types, its gross energy demand is excessive relative to total demand in the County and/or it fails to comply with California energy efficiency/conservation regulations that are within the applicant's control.

The project represents a common land use development type whose energy demand would not be excessive. As described above, the project energy demand would not be excessive relative to cumulative energy demand in the county. Further, the County of San Benito enforces the California Building Standards Code through the development review process. That enforcement is the primary mechanism through which the project will be required to implement energy efficiency/conservation measures that are within the control of the applicant and the county. Consequently, the proposed project would not result in inefficient, wasteful, and unnecessary consumption of energy.

7. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
(1) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42? (20)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(2) Strong seismic ground shaking? (21)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(3) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction? (21)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(4) Landslides? (21, 22)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil? (1, 4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse? (21)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Be located on expansive soil, creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property? (21)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater? (47)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature? (2, 6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

A geotechnical report titled *Geotechnical Engineering Investigation Proposed Ridgemark Assisted Care Community Airline Highway Hollister, San Benito County, California* was prepared for the proposed project by Krazan & Associates Inc., and is included as [Appendix I](#). The report presents the results of the geotechnical investigation to evaluate soil and groundwater conditions at the project site, geotechnical engineering recommendations for use in design of specific construction elements, and provides criteria for site preparation and engineering fill construction.

a. Potential impacts from exposure to geologic risks are as follows:

(1) Surface Fault Ruptures. The project site is not located in an Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone. There are no known faults that traverse the project site.

(2) Ground Shaking. San Benito County is a region of high seismic activity. Major faults showing evidence of earthquake activity within the past 200 years include the Calaveras fault, San Andreas fault, Quien Sabe fault, Zayante-Vergeles fault, and Ortigalita fault. The Calaveras fault is located more than 0.5 miles west of the project site and the Tres Pinos fault is located more than 0.6 miles east of the project site. It is reasonable to expect that the project area would be subject to intense ground shaking during an earthquake. The potential for damage during strong seismic shaking cannot be eliminated. Ground shaking and ground failure can result in structural failure and collapse, local damage to underground utilities, and the cracking of paved areas, presenting a hazard to people and structures. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure

GEO-1 The developer shall include the recommendations presented in the *Geotechnical Engineering Investigation Proposed Ridgemark Assisted Care Community Airline Highway Hollister, San Benito County, California* by Krazan & Associates Inc. in the project plans, and the recommendations shall be implemented during construction of the project.

(3) Liquefaction. Soil liquefaction is a state of soil particles suspension caused by a complete loss of strength when the effective stress drops to zero. Liquefaction usually occurs under vibratory conditions such as those induced by seismic event. The geotechnical report evaluated the potential for soil liquefaction at the project site during a seismic event and found that the soils at the project site are non-liquefiable.

(4) Landslides. The project site is located within gentle rolling hills with moderately sloping terrain. According to San Benito County's Landslide Susceptibility Map, the project site is located within an area with low landslide incidence, i.e. less than 1.5 percent of the area is involved in landslides. Therefore, the potential for the proposed project to result in adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving landslides is less than significant.

- b. Construction activities involving demolition, excavation, and grading, expose soils to wind, water, and other eroding elements. The proposed project includes demolition and grading at the project site, which could result in substantial erosion. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would ensure erosion impacts are less than significant.

Mitigation Measure

GEO-2 Prior to issuance of a grading permit, the developer shall prepare an erosion control plan indicating proposed methods for the control of runoff, erosion, and sediment control, subject to review and approval by the County Resource Management Agency. The erosion control plan shall be implemented during construction.

- c. According to the geotechnical report, the upper soils at the project site consist of 6 to 12 inches of very loose/soft silty clayey sand silty clay. These soils have low strength characteristics are highly compressible when saturated. Development of the proposed project on unstable soils could potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse. Implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-1 would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.
- d. Expansive soils shrink and swell with changes in water content. Shrinking and swelling are related to the clay content of soils, with clay rich soils being prone to swelling, and sand or gravel soils experiencing very little shrinking and swelling. The geotechnical report found that the on-site clayey soils have a moderate to high shrink/swell potential. The shrinking/swelling can lead to building foundations shifting and cracking, and ultimately damaging the structures they support. Implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-1 would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.
- e. The Sunnyslope County Water District will provide water and sewer services to the project site. There would be no septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems.

- f. There are no unique geologic features within the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not have an impact on a unique geological feature.

Paleontological resources, including a range of plant and animal fossil remains, have been encountered at many locations within the county, including Tumey Gulch, Griswold Hills, Lariaus Creek, San Carlos Creek, the Bolsa Valley, Tres Pinos Creek, the San Benito River Valley, and within formations, including the Moreno and Tremblor Formations and the Panoche Formation within the Panoche-Coalinga area (general plan EIR, page 9-25). There are no known paleontological resources within the boundaries of the project site; however, it is possible that undiscovered paleontological resources exist within the project site. Disturbance of paleontological resources would be considered a significant impact. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce impacts to paleontological resources to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure

GEO-3 Due to the possibility that buried paleontological resources might be discovered during construction, the following language shall be included on all construction documents and on any permits issued for the project site, including, but not limited to, grading and building permits associated with proposed project:

“If paleontological resources are unexpectedly discovered during construction, work shall be halted immediately within 50 meters (160 feet) of the find, and the Planning Department notified, until it can be evaluated by a qualified professional paleontologist. If the find is determined to be significant, an appropriate resource recovery shall be formulated, with the concurrence of the San Benito County, and implemented.”

8. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment? (3, 4, 11, 16, 37, 38, 39, 58)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases? (3, 4, 11, 16, 37, 38, 39, 58)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

a/b. The California Legislature has enacted a series of statutes in recent years addressing the need to reduce greenhouse (GHG) emissions across the State. In September 2006, the California State Legislature enacted the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, also known as Assembly Bill (AB) 32. AB 32 required that statewide GHG emissions be reduced to 1990 levels by 2020. AB 32 was amended by Senate Bill (SB) 32. Effective January 1, 2017, SB 32 requires that statewide GHG emissions be reduced to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. SB 32 represents the current state legislative framework commonly used by local and regional agencies across the state as guidance for reducing GHG emissions from activities within their respective jurisdictions.

The project site is located within the boundaries of the Monterey Bay Air Resources District (hereinafter “air district”). To date, the air district has not adopted CEQA guidance for analysis of GHG effects of land use projects (e.g. numerical thresholds of significance) nor has it prepared a qualified GHG reduction plan for use/reference by local agencies located within the air district. Further, San Benito County has not adopted a GHG reduction emissions plan or climate action plan that is applicable to new development within the county.

Given that neither a regional plan nor a local plan for reducing GHGs is available against which conformance of the project can be assessed, a GHG threshold of significance for the project’s assumed buildout year of 2022 has been developed based on the SB 32 statewide emissions reduction target described above. The threshold is a GHG efficiency metric that represents a rate of statewide emissions

generation from land use projects. It is the ratio of projected total 2022 statewide GHG emissions from the land use sector needed to achieve consistency with the SB 32 reduction goal, to the 2022 projected statewide service population, where the service population is the sum of the projected number of jobs and the projected number of residents in 2022. If the proposed project rate of emissions at buildout is equal to or below the threshold, project emissions would remain within the trajectory needed for the state to meet the SB 32 GHG reduction target of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030, and the project would not conflict with SB 32, the applicable plan for reducing GHGs.

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) stated in the *First Update to the Climate Change Scoping Plan* that an average statewide GHG reduction of 5.2 percent per year from the projected statewide year 2020 GHG emissions inventory volume will be needed to stay on a trajectory to achieve state reduction targets for 2030. The first step in deriving an applicable efficiency metric threshold for the project is to determine the projected volume of statewide GHG emissions from land use driven sectors in 2022 (assumed project buildout year) that must be achieved to stay on trajectory towards meeting the statewide 2030 reduction target of 40 percent below 1990 levels.

[Table 2, 2020 California Greenhouse Gas Inventory for Land Use Driven Emissions](#), shows the 2020 state emissions inventory for land use driven GHG emissions. Total land use driven emissions are projected at 286.70 million metric tons (MMT) CO_{2e}.

Applying CARB's 5.2 percent annual emissions reduction rate to the 2020 projected state inventory volume of 286.70 MMT CO_{2e} for two consecutive years yields a projected emissions volume of 257.66 MMT CO_{2e} in 2022 that must be achieved statewide. The 2022 service population is the sum of the projected statewide 2022 population and projected statewide 2022 employment. The projected 2022 statewide population is 41,110,032 (California Department of Finance 2019). The California Employment Development Department, California Occupational Employment Projections 2016-2026, show that the 2026 employment projection is 20,022,700 jobs (California Employment Development Department 2018). Projected 2022 employment is equivalent to 20,022,700 jobs minus the annual average rate of employment during the period 2016 to 2026, which equals 193,310 jobs per year or 773,240 for the four-year period 2022 to 2026. Therefore, 2022 employment is estimated at 19,249,460 jobs.

The projected 2022 service population is 41,110,032 (population) plus 19,249,460 (jobs), for a total of 60,359,492. The 2022 GHG efficiency threshold is 257.66 MMT CO_{2e} per year/60,359,492 or 4.27 MT CO_{2e} per year per service population. This value represents the threshold of significance for the proposed project.

Table 2 2020 California Greenhouse Gas Inventory for Land Use Driven Emissions

Land Use Type	Emissions (MMT CO ₂ e)
On-Road Transportation	
Passenger Cars	63.77
Light Duty Trucks	44.75
Motorcycles	0.43
Heavy Duty Trucks	29.03
Freight	0.02
Subtotal	138.00
Electricity Generation In-State	
Commercial Cogeneration	0.70
Merchant Owned	2.33
Transmission and Distribution	1.56
Utility Owned	29.92
Subtotal	34.51
Electricity Generation In-State	
Specified Imports	29.61
Transmission and Distribution	1.02
Unspecified Imports	30.96
Subtotal	61.59
Commercial	
CHP: Commercial	0.40
Communication	0.07
Domestic Utilities	0.34
Education	1.42
Food Services	1.89
Healthcare	1.32
Hotels	0.67
Not Specified Commercial	5.58
Offices	1.46
Retail & Wholesale	0.68
Transportation Services	0.03
Subtotal	13.86
Residential	
Household Use	29.66
Subtotal	29.66

Land Use Type	Emissions (MMT CO ₂ e)
Industrial	
Landfills	6.26
Domestic Wastewater Treatment	2.83
Subtotal	9.09
Total Emissions	286.70

SOURCE: California Air Resources Board. No date

The existing single-family residence on the project site generates GHG emissions. The proposed project would generate GHG emissions during its construction and operation. Construction GHG emissions would be generated by equipment used during demolition, site preparation, grading, and building construction. Operational GHG emissions would be generated primarily by vehicle trips of residents, employees, and visitors accessing the project site, and indirectly by use of electricity and natural gas on site, by use of electricity to pump water supply and treat wastewater, and from decomposition of solid waste generated by project residents and employees.

GHG emissions from existing uses, project construction, and project operations have been estimated using California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) version 2016.3.2. CalEEMod also estimates the changes in the carbon sequestration potential of the project site based on changes in natural vegetation communities and the net number of new trees that would be planted as part of the proposed project. Refer to [Appendix E](#) for the CalEEMod modeling results and a memorandum describing the CalEEMod modeling assumptions and methodology, *Ridgemark Assisted Care Facility – Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Modeling Assessment*.

Construction GHG Emissions. Total unmitigated construction GHG emissions are projected at 598.74 MT CO₂e. The air district recommends amortizing construction GHG emissions over a 30-year time period to yield an annual emissions volume. Annual amortized construction emissions would be approximately 19.96 MT CO₂e (598.74 MT CO₂e / 30 years).

Operational GHG Emissions. The proposed project would generate an estimated 864.30 MT CO₂e of annual unmitigated emissions during operations.

Carbon Sequestration Potential. The model estimates the net gain in carbon sequestration potential as 64.04 MT CO₂e over the lifetime of the project. Averaged over a 30-year lifetime, the annual gain in carbon sequestration potential would be equivalent to 64.04 MT CO₂e / 30 years or 2.13 MT CO₂e per year.

Baseline (Existing) GHG Emissions. The existing single-family residence on the project site generates approximately 17.76 MT CO₂e of emissions annually.

Regulatory Reductions. CalEEMod incorporates GHG emissions reductions that accrue from several state regulations and legislative acts such as the Pavley I standards and Low Carbon Fuel Standards. Adjustments were made to CalEEMod to account for other applicable regulations and actions. The model was adjusted to account for required compliance with state requirements for Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance and the 2019 Title 24 Building Energy Efficiency Standards. The regulatory reductions associated with the proposed project equal approximately 25.61 MT CO₂e annually.

Service Population. Project service population is the sum of the new population and employment it generates. The proposed project will accommodate 180 residents and be served by a total of 30 employees. Therefore, service population of the proposed project is 210.

Net GHG Emissions Attributable to the Proposed Project. [Table 3, Project GHG Emissions Summary](#), summarizes the net GHG emissions attributable to the proposed project at buildout in consideration of all components of its GHG inventory presented above.

Table 3 Project GHG Emissions Summary

Emission Source	Annual GHG Emissions MT/Year CO ₂ e
Amortized Construction	19.96
Annual Unmitigated Operational	864.30
Carbon Sequestration Potential (gain)	<2.13>
Total Annual Unmitigated	882.13
Annual Baseline	<17.76>
Regulatory Reductions	<25.61>
Net Annual GHG Emissions	838.76
Service Population	210
GHG Emissions/Service Population	3.99
Threshold of Significance	4.27
Project Emissions Exceed Threshold?	No

SOURCES: EMC Planning Group 2019

NOTE:

<Brackets> indicate deductions.

Conclusion. As summarized in Table 3, at buildout, the proposed project would generate approximately 3.99 MT CO_{2e} per year per service population (838.76 MT CO_{2e} per year / 210 service population). This is below the threshold of significance of 4.27 MT CO_{2e} per year per service population for the year 2022. Therefore, the proposed project would not generate GHG emissions that would have a significant impact on the environment. This impact is less than significant. No mitigation is required.

As discussed above, neither San Benito County nor the air district has prepared a qualified climate action plan or a GHG reduction plan that is applicable to the proposed project. Absent other local or regional plans for reducing GHG emissions, state legislative guidance included in SB 32 is considered to be the plan for reducing GHG emissions that is applicable to the proposed project. The GHG threshold of significance derived for the project is based on the rate of project emissions below which the project would not impede attainment of the SB 32 statewide emissions reduction goal for 2030. Since project emissions are below the threshold of significance, the proposed project would not conflict with SB 32 emissions reduction goals.

9. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials? (3, 4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment? (5, 6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school? (5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code section 65962.5 and, as a result, create a significant hazard to the public or the environment? (40)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. For a project located within an airport land-use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or a public-use airport, result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area? (5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? (4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g. Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires? (41)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

- a. Construction and operation of the proposed assisted care facility may involve use and storage of some materials that are considered hazardous. Hazardous materials used during construction may include fuels, oils, mechanical fluids, and other

chemicals. Hazardous materials associated with operation of the proposed project may include typical solvents, paints, chemicals used for cleaning and building maintenance, and landscaping supplies. Transportation, storage, use and disposal of hazardous materials during construction and operation of the proposed project would be required to comply with applicable federal, state, and local statutes and regulations. Therefore, the proposed project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.

- b. Existing uses on the project site include a single-family residence, a driveway, animals (i.e., goats and horses), outbuildings, and recreational vehicles. Based on historic aerial photographs, the project site appears to have been developed with the residence and outbuildings since at least 1998. Therefore, the proposed project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment.
- c. The proposed project would not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste.
- d. Government Code Section 65962.5 requires that the Department of Toxic Substances Control compile and regularly update a list of hazardous waste facilities and sites. A search of the Envirostor website (Department of Toxic Substances Control 2019) revealed that the project site is not on the list and there are no listed hazardous sites within one half mile. Therefore, proposed project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment.
- e. The nearest public airport to the project site is the Hollister Municipal Airport, located approximately 5.2 miles northwest of the project site. The project site is not located within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area.
- f. Circulation within the project site will be provided by a looped driveway. The proposed driveway, which will provide emergency access to the project site as well as evacuation routes from the project site, will be constructed to comply with relevant San Benito County Fire Department standards and other applicable requirements. Therefore, the proposed project will not interfere with any adopted emergency or evacuation plans.

- g. According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's map for Fire Hazard Severity Zones in State Responsibility Areas in San Benito County, the project site is not located within a fire hazard severity zone in a state responsibility area. Therefore, the proposed project would not expose people or structures to a risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires.

10. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality? (4, 52)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin? (47, 53, 54)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:				
(1) Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site; (4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(2) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site; (4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(3) Create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or (4, 52)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(4) Impede or redirect flood flows? (55)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation? (55)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan? (4, 52, 56, 57)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

- a. **Water Quality Standards or Waste Discharge Requirements Associated with Construction.** The State Water Resources Control Board has implemented a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program to control and enforce storm water pollutant discharge reduction per the Clean Water Act. The Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board issues and enforces the NPDES permits for discharges to water bodies in San Benito County.

Development of the project site with the proposed project has the potential to increase discharge of storm water pollutants during construction due to ground disturbance. Projects disturbing more than one acre of land during construction are required to file a notice of intent to be covered under the State NPDES Construction General Permit for discharges of storm water associated with construction activities. The Construction General Permit requires the development and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that details how water quality would be protected during construction activities. The SWPPP must contain a site map(s) that shows the construction site perimeter, existing and proposed buildings, lots, roadways, storm water collection and discharge points, general topography (both before and after construction), and drainage patterns across the project. Best Management Practices, which are detailed within each permit, are to be implemented to protect water quality.

The project developer would be required to obtain a State NPDES Construction General Permit for development on the seven-acre project site. By complying with the Construction General Stormwater Permit requirements, the proposed project would not violate any water quality standards or degrade water quality.

- b. **Groundwater Supplies.** Water service to the project site will be provided by the Sunnyslope County Water District (“water district”), which derives its supply from both groundwater and surface water purchased from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Central Valley Project. Groundwater remains a major source of water supply for the water district, particularly in the drought. As described in Section 19, Utilities and Service Systems, sufficient water is available to serve the proposed project.

Groundwater Recharge. The project site lies within the San Juan Bautista Subbasin, a subbasin of the Gilroy-Hollister Valley Groundwater Basin. The San Benito County Water District owns and operates two reservoirs along the San Benito River. Hernandez Reservoir (capacity 17,200 acre-feet) is located on the upper San Benito River in southern San Benito County. Paicines Reservoir (capacity 2,870 acre-feet) is

an off-stream reservoir between the San Benito River and Tres Pinos Creek. Water stored in the two reservoirs is released for percolation in Tres Pinos Creek and the San Benito River to augment groundwater recharge during the dry season. In addition, the City of Hollister and the water district percolate treated wastewater discharge to the groundwater basin.

Development of the proposed project could potentially interfere with groundwater recharge by increasing the area covered by impervious surfaces. The proposed project includes three underground detention systems to detain storm water runoff on-site and ultimately drain to the unnamed intermittent stream, thereby allowing for groundwater recharge.

Therefore, the proposed project would not contribute to a substantial depletion of groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge.

- c. **Post-Construction Water Quality Standards or Waste Discharge Requirements.** An unnamed intermittent stream traverses the northern part of the project site, as presented earlier in [Figure 2, Aerial Photograph](#), and in [Figure 4, Site Plan](#). However, the proposed project would not modify this stream. The proposed project would increase the amount of impervious surfaces due to construction of the buildings, driveways, and parking lots and therefore, would alter the existing drainage pattern of the site. Potential impacts from the increase in impervious surfaces are discussed below:

(1) Erosion. Development of the proposed project may lead to significant siltation and/or erosion on- or off-site. Implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-1 presented in Section 7, Geology and Soils would reduce this impact to less than significant.

(2) Flooding. The preliminary utility plan (sheet 5 in Appendix B) indicates that storm water from the proposed project will drain into three underground detention systems and ultimately into the unnamed intermittent stream that traverses the project site, thereby eliminating the potential for flooding on- or off-site. Therefore, this impact is less than significant.

(3) Runoff. Development of the proposed project would create storm water runoff. The preliminary utility plan (sheet 5 in Appendix B) indicates that storm water from the proposed project will drain into three underground detention systems and ultimately into the unnamed intermittent stream that traverses the project site.

To ensure that the proposed project does not provide additional sources of polluted runoff, the following mitigation measure shall be required.

Mitigation Measure

HYD-1 Prior to issuance of a grading permit, the developer shall prepare a drainage plan that complies with the San Benito County Best Management Practices and standards established for compliance with non-point discharge emissions for storm water. The drainage plan shall incorporate Low Impact Development strategies and Best Management Practices to reduce storm water runoff, encourage infiltration, and reduce pollutant transmission. The drainage plan shall be subject to review and approval by County Resource Management Agency, and be implemented with development of the project.

(4) Flood flows. As discussed under checklist item “d” below, the project site is located within an area of minimal flood hazard. Therefore, development of the proposed project would not impede or redirect flood flows.

- d. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Flood Map Service Center, the project site is located within an area of minimal flood hazard. The project site is located a significant distance from the coast or any sizeable lakes or ponds, thereby eliminating the potential for release of pollutants due to project inundation.
- e. The *Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coastal Basin* (hereinafter “Basin Plan”) shows how the quality of the surface and ground waters in the Central Coast Region should be managed to provide the highest water quality reasonably possible. The Regional Water Quality Control Board implements the Basin Plan by issuing and enforcing waste discharge requirements to individuals, communities, or businesses whose waste discharges can affect water quality. These requirements can be either State Waste Discharge Requirements for discharges to land, or federally delegated NPDES permits for discharges to surface water. As discussed under checklist item “a” above, the project developer would be required to obtain a State NPDES Construction General Permit for development on the seven-acre project site. By complying with the Construction General Stormwater Permit requirements, the proposed project would not conflict with the Basin Plan.

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act is a State law requiring groundwater basins to be sustainable. The act enables eligible local agencies to form groundwater sustainability agencies, develop groundwater sustainability plans for designated basins in their jurisdiction by 2020, and achieve groundwater sustainability within 20 years of plan implementation. The San Benito County Water District is the groundwater sustainability agency for the Bolsa, Hollister, San Juan Bautista, and

Tres Pinos groundwater basins. The San Benito County Water District has initiated the preparation of its groundwater sustainability plan, but the plan has yet to be completed and adopted. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with the sustainable groundwater management plan.

11. LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Physically divide an established community? (3, 4, 5, 6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Cause any 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? (1, 3, 4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

- a. The project site is located in unincorporated San Benito County, southeast of the Hollister city limits. Existing uses on the project site include a single-family residence, a driveway, animals (i.e., goats and horses), outbuildings, recreational vehicles, and grassland. Land uses adjacent to the project site include the Sunnyslope County Water District office immediately to the north, the Cielo Vista neighborhood across Airline Highway to the north, the approved, but not yet developed Roberts Ranch subdivision across Airline Highway to the northwest, a rural residence immediately to the south, vacant land to the east, the Ridgemark neighborhood to the southeast, and the Quail Hollow, Oak Creek, and Tyler Knoll neighborhoods to the west. Therefore, development of the project site with the assisted care facility would not physically divide an established community.
- b. The general plan policies addressing environmental resources were evaluated for consistency with the proposed project. Refer to [Appendix J](#) for project consistency with relevant *San Benito County 2035 General Plan* policies. The consistency analysis determined that the proposed project would not conflict with any applicable policies adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental impact.

12. MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Result in loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state? (1, 2, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated in a local general plan, specific plan, or other land-use plan? (1, 2, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

- a/b. The project site and adjacent lands are designated for urban uses in the general plan (figure 3-1, land use diagram). The project site is not zoned for mineral extraction. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in impacts to known mineral resources or result in the loss of availability of a locally important resource recovery site.

13. NOISE

Would the project result in:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or in applicable standards of other agencies? (1, 42)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground borne noise levels? (42)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land-use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public-use airport, expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels? (5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

The following discussion is based on the acoustical analysis prepared by WJV Acoustics to assess the potential noise impacts associated with the proposed project. The acoustical analysis is included as [Appendix K](#).

- a. The noise element of the general plan establishes land use computability criteria for transportation noise sources in terms of the Day-Night Average Level (L_{dn}) to describe noise exposure for noise compatibility planning purposes. The guidelines define an outdoor level of 60 dB L_{dn} as being “normally acceptable” for residential uses. The noise element requires that interior noise levels for all new residential construction not exceed 45 dB L_{dn}.

Construction Noise

The majority of construction activities within the project site would generally occur at distances of greater than 200 to 300 feet from nearby noise-sensitive land uses (residences). Construction noise could result in a short-term significant increase in ambient noise levels at nearby noise sensitive land uses. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure

- N-1 To reduce construction-related noise, the developer shall include the following measures in the project plans:
- a. Operation of construction equipment shall be limited to the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on weekdays and 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays. No construction shall be allowed on Sundays or federal holidays;
 - b. All internal combustion engine-driven equipment shall be equipped with mufflers;
 - c. All stationary noise-generating equipment, such as air compressors and portable power generators, shall be located as far away as possible from adjacent land uses;
 - d. Staging areas and construction material areas shall be located as far away as possible from adjacent land uses;
 - e. Unnecessary idling of internal combusting engines shall be prohibited; and
 - f. The days and hours of construction, as well as, the name and phone number of a designated representative to be contacted for noise-related concerns, should be posted at the perimeter of the project site.

Operational Noise

Long-term, permanent increases in ambient noise levels would be primarily associated with potential increases in vehicle traffic on nearby roadways; as well as, noise generated by parking lot vehicle movements, outdoor human activity, and mechanical systems.

Vehicular Traffic

Traffic noise modeling was used to quantify the expected project-related increases in traffic noise exposure along roadways in the project vicinity.

Project Site Traffic Noise Exposure. The noise exposures for existing plus project traffic and cumulative traffic conditions plus project traffic at 300 feet from Airline Highway were estimated at 56.5 dB L_{dn} and 57.9 dB L_{dn} respectively. This is below the county's exterior noise level standard of 60 dB L_{dn} for residential uses. The worst-case future noise exposure within the proposed buildings would be approximately 58 dB

L_{dn} . This means the proposed project must be capable of providing a minimum outdoor-to-indoor noise level reduction of approximately 13 dB (58 - 45). Compliance with the current building codes and requiring windows and doors to remain closed for sound insulation would reduce exterior noise levels by approximately 25 dB, thereby complying with the county's 45 dB L_{dn} interior noise standard.

Project Traffic Noise Exposure to Existing Nearby Noise Sensitive Land Uses. The acoustical analysis found that traffic noise exposure along roadways in the project vicinity would increase by approximately 0.0 to 0.2 dB L_{dn} as a result of the project. These increases do not result in an exceedance of the county's exterior noise level standard at existing noise-sensitive land uses in the project vicinity, and are not considered to be a significant impact.

Vehicle Movements

Human activity in parking lots that can produce noise includes voices, stereo systems and the opening and closing of car doors and trunk lids. It is typical for a passing car in a parking lot to produce a maximum noise level of 60 to 65 dBA at a distance of 50 feet. Noise levels associated with vehicle movements would not exceed any applicable noise level standards or result in an increase over existing ambient noise levels at nearby off-site sensitive receptors. Parking lot vehicle movement and human activity noise would not be considered a significant impact.

Additional On-site Sources

Other potential sources of project-related operational noise could typically include delivery truck movements and mechanical/HVAC systems. Noise levels associated with such sources would not be expected to exceed any applicable maximum noise levels standards or result in a substantial increase of current (without project) ambient noise levels, at existing off-site noise-sensitive land uses.

- b. Vibration from construction activities could be detected at the closest sensitive land uses, especially during movements by heavy equipment or loaded trucks and during some paving activities. The closest existing residences to construction activities within the project site are generally located at distance of 300 feet or greater. From tables III, IV, and X of the acoustical analysis, the vibration levels during construction are not expected to cause damage to any of the buildings and would be "barely noticeable" at the closest residence. Therefore, this impact is less than significant.

At project buildout, ongoing operational activities are not expected to result in any vibration impacts at nearby sensitive uses. Activities involving trash bin collection could result in minor on-site vibrations; however such vibrations are not expected to be felt at the closest off-site sensitive uses.

- c. The nearest public airport to the project site is the Hollister Municipal Airport, located approximately 5.2 miles northwest of the project site. The nearest private airstrip to the project site is Christenson Ranch Airport, located approximately 4.1 miles northeast of the project site. The project site is not located within an airport land use plan, within two miles of a public airport, or within the vicinity of a private airstrip. Therefore, the proposed project would not expose residents or workers to excessive noise levels from airport or airstrip operations.

14. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (e.g., by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (e.g., through extension of roads or other infrastructure)? (1, 3, 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere? (3, 4, 6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

- a. With a general plan designation of Residential Mixed (RM) and zoning district of Residential Multiple (RM), the project site was anticipated for residential development. The proposed assisted care facility will accommodate 180 residents in 155 rooms. Development of the project site with the proposed assisted care facility will be consistent with the general plan designation and zoning district. Therefore, the proposed project would not induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly or indirectly.
- b. The project site includes one house, located on the southwest portion of the site, which would be demolished with implementation of the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project would not displace substantial number of existing people or housing and would not necessitate the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

15. PUBLIC SERVICES

Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of or 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 following public services:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Fire protection? (2, 3, 5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Police protection? (2, 3, 5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Schools? (3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Parks? (2, 3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Other public facilities? (2, 3, 5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

- a. Fire protection services in unincorporated San Benito County, including the project site, are provided primarily by the City of Hollister Fire Department, which absorbed the San Benito County Fire Department in 2013. Other fire protection services in the County include the Aromas Tri-County Fire Department, San Juan Bautista Volunteer Fire Department, and CAL FIRE. The City of Hollister Fire Station 2, located at 2240 Valley View Road in Hollister, is the closest fire station available to provide fire protection services to the project site. This fire station is located approximately one mile from the project site.

The proposed assisted care facility will accommodate 180 residents. This incremental increase in population would result in an incremental increase in the demand for fire protection services. The proposed project would be subject to fire impact fees as calculated by the county. The developer would be required to pay the applicable fire impact fees, which would ultimately be programmed by the county, in combination with fees collected from other projects, to improve or expand fire facilities as may be necessary to accommodate cumulative development throughout San Benito County and Hollister. Payment of the applicable fire impact fees would reduce the proposed project's impact on fire facilities to less than significant. Any fire facilities proposed in the future would be required to undergo a separate environmental analysis.

- b. The San Benito County Sheriff's Department provides police protection services to unincorporated San Benito County, including the project site. The San Benito County Sheriff's Department is headquartered at 2301 Technology Parkway in Hollister, approximately six miles from the project site.

Development of the proposed 180-bed assisted care facility would result in an incremental increase in the demand for police protection services. The proposed project would be subject to police impact fees as calculated by the county. The developer would be required to pay the applicable police impact fees, which would ultimately be programmed by the county, in combination with fees collected from other projects, to improve or expand police facilities to serve cumulative development throughout San Benito County and Hollister. Payment of the applicable police impact fees would reduce the proposed project's impact on police facilities to less than significant. Any police facilities proposed in the future would be required to undergo a separate environmental analysis.

- c. The proposed project is an assisted care facility for senior adults. Therefore, the project would have no impacts on schools.
- d. San Benito County provides and maintains approximately 144,416 acres of parkland, including federal and state park and recreation areas (general plan EIR, page 18-24). The proposed assisted care facility will accommodate 180 residents and does not propose parkland. This incremental increase in population could result in an incremental increase in the use of existing recreational facilities and generate demand for additional park space. San Benito County requires that residential projects either dedicate land and/or pay park and recreation impact fees to offset the need for expanded park facilities. The proposed project would be subject to park and recreation impact fees as calculated by the county. The developer would be required to pay the applicable park and recreation impact fees that would be used to improve or expand existing park facilities. Payment of the applicable park and recreation impact fees would reduce the proposed project's impact on parks to a less-than-significant level.
- e. San Benito County contains one public library called the San Benito County Free Library. The San Benito County Free Library is located at 470 5th Street in Hollister, approximately 3.7 miles from the project site. The proposed project could result in an increase in the demand for public library services. The proposed project would be subject to library facility impact fees as calculated by the county. Payment of the applicable library facility impact fees would reduce the proposed project's impact on public facilities, such as libraries, to a less-than-significant level.

16. RECREATION

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated? (2, 3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment? (2, 3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

- a/b. As discussed in Section 15 Public Services, development of the project site with a 180-bed assisted care facility could increase the use of existing recreational facilities as well as generate demand for additional park space. San Benito County requires that residential projects either dedicate land and/or pay park and recreation impact fees to offset the need for expanded park facilities. The proposed project does not include parkland. The proposed project would be subject to park and recreation impact fees as calculated by the county. The developer would be required to pay the applicable park and recreation impact fees, to help with maintenance and operation of existing park facilities. Payment of the applicable park and recreation impact fees would reduce the physical impacts on recreational facilities to a less-than-significant level.

17. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit? (43, 44, 45, 46)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways? (43, 44, 45, 46)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks? (3, 4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)? (4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. Result in inadequate emergency access? (4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f. Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decreased the performance or safety of such facilities? (4, 59, 60)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

A traffic impact analysis titled *Ridgemark Assisted Care Community San Benito County, California Traffic Impact Analysis* was prepared for the proposed project by Pinnacle Traffic Engineering on August 3, 2018. On July 3, 2019, Keith Higgins, Traffic Engineer, peer reviewed the traffic impact analysis and provided his comments in the *Ridgemark Assisted*

Care Community Peer Review, San Benito County, CA letter. Pinnacle Traffic Engineering responded to Keith Higgins' comments in the *Ridgemark Assisted Care Community Project (PLN180004); San Benito County, California Project Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) – Response to Comments* letter dated July 15, 2019. In the *Ridgemark Assisted Care Community Peer Review, San Benito County, CA* letter dated July 25, 2019, Keith Higgins provided a final round of comments for the county's consideration and concluded that no revisions to the traffic impact analysis are necessary. The traffic impact analysis and peer review comment and response letters are included as [Appendix L](#).

a/b. The traffic impact analysis analyzed traffic operation during morning (AM) and afternoon (PM) commuter peak hours for existing conditions, existing plus project conditions, background conditions, and cumulative conditions at the following study intersections:

1. Airline Highway and Union Road;
2. Airline Highway and Project Access Road; and
3. Airline Highway and Fairview Road.

Traffic conditions at the study intersections were evaluated using level of service (LOS). LOS is a qualitative description of operating conditions ranging from LOS A, or free-flow conditions with little or no delay, to LOS F, or forced-flow with excessive delays. San Benito County has adopted the LOS D standard as the lower limit for acceptable operations. Caltrans endeavors to maintain a target LOS at the transition between LOS C and D on State highway facilities. Based on the traffic analysis presented in the general plan EIR, the LOS D threshold standard was used to evaluate operating conditions at the study intersections.

Existing Conditions

Under existing conditions, all study intersections operate within acceptable limits (LOS D or better) during the AM and PM peak hours. The signal warrant analysis for the Airline Highway and Fairview Road intersection indicated that existing peak hour volumes at the intersection do not warrant the installation of traffic signal control. In addition, the peak hour volumes on the stop sign controlled approach at the Airline Highway and Project Access Road intersection are well below the minimum peak hour volume warrant criteria.

Project Trip Generation

The project trip generation estimates were derived using trip rate data in the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) *Trip Generation Manual, 10th Edition*. The ITE trip generation rates and project trip generation estimates are presented in [Table 4, ITE Trip Rates and Project Trip Generation Estimates](#).

Table 4 ITE Trip Rates and Project Trip Generation Estimates

ITE Trip Rates and Proposed Use	Number of Weekday Vehicle Trips				
	AM Peak Hour		PM Peak Hour		Daily
	In	Out	In	Out	
ITE Trip Rates (Vehicle Trips/Bed)	0.12	0.06	0.15	0.19	2.60
Assisted Living (180 Beds)	21	11	27	34	468

SOURCE: Pinnacle Traffic Engineering 2018

Table 4 indicates that the proposed project will generate a total of approximately 468 daily trips (two-way trip ends), with 32 vehicle trips during the AM peak hour (21 inbound and 11 outbound) and 61 trips during the PM peak hour (27 inbound and 34 outbound).

Existing Plus Project Conditions

Under existing plus project conditions, all study intersections will continue to operate within acceptable limits (LOS D or better) during the AM and PM peak hours. The signal warrant analysis for the Airline Highway and Fairview Road intersection would not warrant installation of signal control under existing plus project conditions. In additions, the peak hour traffic volumes on the stop sign controlled approach at the Arline Highway and Project Access Road intersection will be below the minimum peak hour volume warrant criteria. Therefore, the project traffic will not significantly impact existing peak hour operations.

Background Plus Project Conditions

Background traffic conditions are typically comprised of existing traffic plus traffic generated by other known approved projects (developments with entitlements). The background traffic volumes were derived using the lists of approved projects provided by the county and City of Hollister. The intersection LOS analysis indicate that future background traffic volumes at the Airline Highway and Union Road intersection will result in LOS E operations during the AM and PM peak hours, with or without the addition of project trips. Average delays at the other study intersections will remain within acceptable limits during the AM and PM peak hours (LOS D or better). The Airline Highway and Fairview Road intersection would not warrant installation of traffic signal control and the peak hour traffic volumes on the stop sign controlled approach at the Arline Highway and Project Access Road intersection will be below the minimum peak hour volume warrant criteria.

Approved and future projects will be required to construct the necessary improvements at the Airline Highway and Union Road intersection to accommodate background peak hour traffic demands. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce the proposed project's contribution to impacts at the Airline Highway and Union Road intersection to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure

- T-1 The developer shall pay the applicable San Benito County Regional Transportation Impact Mitigation Fee (TIMF) prior to issuance of building permit.

Cumulative Conditions

Cumulative traffic conditions are comprised of existing traffic plus traffic generated by other known approved and pending projects. The cumulative traffic volumes were derived using the lists of pending projects obtained from the county and City of Hollister. The intersection LOS analysis indicate that future cumulative traffic conditions would result in LOS E-F operations during one or both peak hour periods (with or without the project trips) at the Airline Highway and Union Road and Arline Highway and Fairview Road intersections. Vehicle delays at the Airline Highway and Project Access Road intersection will remain within acceptable limits during both the AM and PM peak hours (LOS D or better). The signal warrant analysis indicated that future cumulative traffic conditions at the Airline Highway and Fairview Road intersection would meet the warrant criteria for installation of traffic signal control. The peak hour volumes on the stop sign controlled approach at Airline Highway and Project Access Road intersection will be below the minimum peak hour volume warrant criteria.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure T-1 would reduce the proposed project's contribution to cumulative impacts at the Airline Highway and Union Road and Arline Highway and Fairview Road intersections to a less-than-significant level.

- c. The proposed project does not include uses that generate air traffic or that have potential to affect air traffic patterns. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a safety risk associated with air traffic.

- d/e. Vehicular access to the project site from Airline Highway will be provided by the existing driveway for Sunnyslope County Water District office. The proposed project includes removal of the existing driveway to allow for vertical realignment. The proposed driveway will form a loop around Site A to provide a 20-foot wide fire access road. The proposed driveway will be designed to adhere to the San Benito County design guidelines and standards and would be subject to approval by the San

Benito County Public Works and San Benito County Fire Department. This would ensure that the proposed project is adequately designed to minimize hazards associated with design. Therefore, the proposed project would not increase hazards due to a design feature or result in inadequate emergency access.

- f. **Transit Service.** The *2040 San Benito Regional Transportation Plan* (hereinafter “RTP”) includes both long and short-range program of strategies and actions that lead to the development of an integrated intermodal transportation system that facilitates the efficient movement of people and goods.

The proposed project was reviewed against the transit-related goals and strategies in the RTP and was found to be consistent.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities. The *2009 San Benito County Bikeway and Pedestrian Master Plan* includes goals, policies, objectives, and standards regarding bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the county. According to the *2009 San Benito County Bikeway and Pedestrian Master Plan*, Class II bike lanes are planned on Airline Highway between Ridgemark Drive and Sunset Drive.

The project site is located along Airline Highway. The civil plans included as [Appendix B](#) show that the proposed project does not include any development within the State’s right-of-way. Further, the proposed project was found to be consistent with the RTP’s goals and strategies for pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

18. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, or cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
(1) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources code section 5020.1(k), or (61)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(2) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe. (61)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

- a. The CEQA statute as amended by Assembly Bill 52 (Public Resources Code Sections 21073 and 21074) define “California Native American tribe” and “tribal cultural resources.” A California Native American tribe is defined as a Native American tribe located in California that is on the contact list maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission. “Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1 outlines procedures for tribal consultation as part of the environmental review process. According to County staff, no California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1.

19. UTILITIES AND SERVICES SYSTEMS

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects? (1, 4, 47)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years? (2, 47)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider, which serves or may serve the project that it has inadequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments? (2, 47)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals? (48, 49, 50, 51)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste? (48, 49, 50, 51)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

As discussed in the project description, the preliminary utility plan is included in [Appendix B](#) (Sheet 5).

- a. The Sunnyslope County Water District will provide water and wastewater treatment services to the proposed project (see discussion in "b/c" below). The proposed project will include a lift station and force main in order to pump wastewater from the facility to an existing off-site collection system on Joes Lane. Storm water from the proposed project will drain into three underground detention systems, all of which will ultimately discharge into the unnamed intermittent stream that traverses the northern area of project site. Pacific Gas and Electric provides electricity and natural

gas to San Benito County, including the project site. Telecommunication services, including telephone, mobile phone, cable television, and broadband internet services, in the county are provided by companies like AT&T and Charter (general plan, page 7-13). The proposed project would not require relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, and telecommunication facilities.

- b. The Sunnyslope County Water District (“water district”) is a water purveyor whose service area includes part of Hollister and unincorporated areas of the county near Hollister. The project site is located within the water district’s service boundary. Rob Hillebrecht with the water district (letter to Taven Kinison Brown, February 16, 2018) stated that the water district’s system has sufficient water production, distribution capacity, and infrastructure to effectively serve the proposed project. Therefore, there are sufficient water supplies available to serve the project. No off-site water system improvements are necessary.
- c. The water district would also provide wastewater services to the proposed project. The letter from Rob Hillebrecht with the water district to Taven Kinison Brown (February 16, 2018) also stated that the water district has sufficient wastewater treatment capacity to serve the proposed project. Therefore, the water district has adequate capacity to serve the project’s projected demand. No off-site wastewater system improvements are necessary.
- d/e. State mandates such as AB 939, AB 341, AB 1826 and SB 1383 require all California jurisdictions to implement organics recycling programs, business/residential recycling programs, and meet mandatory diversion from landfill or face potential compliance schedules and/or fines. Recology San Benito County introduced new recycling and organics collection programs starting November 1, 2018 to help the cities of Hollister and San Juan Bautista, and San Benito County meet state waste diversion mandates. Solid waste is disposed of at the John Smith Road Landfill, which is the only permitted landfill within San Benito County and serves the entire county. The landfill is owned by San Benito County and is operated by Waste Connections Inc. According to the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (hereinafter “CalRecycle”), the John Smith Road Landfill has a remaining capacity of approximately 3.5 million cubic yards as of March 31, 2018. The landfill has a cease operation date of January 1, 2032. The maximum permitted throughput is 1,000 tons per day.

According to the CalRecycle’s Jurisdiction Diversion/Disposal Rate Detail report for the year 2017, San Benito County produced approximately 5.60 pounds of solid waste per person per day. The proposed project will accommodate a population of 180

persons. Therefore, the proposed project could generate approximately 1,008 pounds of solid waste per day (5.60 pounds per person per day x 180 persons) or 0.50 tons of solid waste per day. Chris Nottenkamper, Site Manager, John Smith Road Landfill (telephone communication, December 20, 2018) stated that the landfill receives a weekly average of approximately 353 tons of solid waste per day. The proposed project could increase that amount by 0.50 tons per day, which would not exceed the landfill's maximum permitted throughput of 1,000 tons per day. Therefore, the proposed project would not generate solid waste that would exceed the landfill capacity. Further, the proposed project would be required to comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste. No physical improvements would be necessary to serve the proposed project.

20. WILDFIRE

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? (41)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of wildfire? (41)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment? (41)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes? (41)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

- a-d. According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection’s map for Fire Hazard Severity Zones in State Responsibility Areas in San Benito County, the project site is not located within or near a fire hazard severity zone in a state responsibility area.

21. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
<p>a. Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment; substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species; cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels; threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community; substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare, or threatened species; or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory? (2, 6, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 34, 35)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>b. Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects) (3, 4, 11, 16, 43, 44, 45, 46)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>c. Does the project have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly? (3, 4, 5, 11, 16)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

- a. As discussed in Section 4, Biological Resources, special-status plants are not expected to occur on the project site due to lack of suitable habitat. No aquatic special-status species, including California red-legged frog, western spadefoot toad, and western pond turtle were observed on the project site. Special-status wildlife species with potential to occur on the project site include the San Joaquin kit fox, burrowing owl, bats, and nesting birds. Implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-5 would reduce the potentially significant impacts to special-status wildlife species to a less-than-significant level.

As described in Section 5, Cultural Resources, the project site is not known to contain any historic resources, archaeological resources, or human remains. However, it is

possible that these resources could be accidentally uncovered during grading and construction activities. In the event this should occur, Mitigation Measures CR-1 and CR-2 would ensure that the potential impacts would not be significant.

There are no known paleontological resources within the boundaries of the project site; however, it is possible that undiscovered paleontological resources exist within the project site. Disturbance of paleontological resources would be considered a significant impact. Implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-2 would reduce impacts to paleontological resources to a less-than-significant level.

- b. The proposed project has the potential to result in cumulatively considerable impacts in the areas of air quality (construction-related impacts) and traffic (operation of intersections). However, with the implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ-1 and T-1, impacts of the proposed project would not be cumulatively considerable.
- c. The proposed project has the potential to result in adverse environmental effects that could cause substantial adverse effects on human beings from construction-related fugitive dust emissions and construction-related emissions of dust and diesel exhaust. Implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ-1, AQ-2, AQ-3, would reduce potential impacts to a less-than-significant level.

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All documents in **bold** are available for review at the **County of San Benito, 2301 Technology Parkway, Hollister, CA 95023, (831) 902-2287** during normal business hours.