

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

Introduction. This section contains a discussion of the possible environmental effects of the proposed project for the specific issue areas that were identified as having the potential to experience significant impacts.

“Significant effect” is defined by the *State CEQA Guidelines* §15382 as “a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment, but may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant.”

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

Class I. Significant and Unavoidable: An impact that cannot be reduced to below the threshold level given reasonably available and feasible mitigation measures. Such an impact requires a Statement of Overriding Considerations to be issued if the project is approved per §15093 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

Class II. Significant but Mitigable: An impact that can be reduced to below the threshold level given reasonably available and feasible mitigation measures. Such an impact requires findings to be made under §15091 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

Class III. Not Significant: An impact that may be adverse, but does not exceed the threshold levels and does not require mitigation measures. However, mitigation measures that could further lessen the environmental effect may be suggested if readily available and easily achievable.

Class IV. Beneficial: An effect that would reduce existing environmental problems or hazards.

Following each environmental effect discussion is a list of recommended mitigation measures (if required) and the residual effects or level of significance remaining after the implementation of the measures. In those cases where the mitigation measure for an impact could have a significant environmental impact in another issue area, this impact is discussed as a residual effect. The impact analysis concludes with a discussion of cumulative effects, which evaluates the impacts associated with the proposed project in conjunction with other future development in the area.



Effects Found Not to Be Significant. Based on the initial review process for the proposed project, the City of San Luis Obispo determined that there was no substantial evidence that the project would cause or otherwise result in significant environmental effects in the resource areas discussed below. As indicated in the State CEQA Guidelines, no further environmental review of these issues is necessary for the reasons summarized in the following discussion. The substantiation for determining that these issues would result in no impact, or a less-than-significant impact is described in further detail in Appendix A, NOP, pursuant to § 15128 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

Air Quality

- *Odors:* The project would not be expected to generate substantial odors and is not located adjacent to any land use that generates substantial odors. Therefore, the project would result in less than significant impacts related to odors.

Biological Resources

- *Conflicts with Habitat Conservation Plans:* The project site is not located within an area subject to an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan. No impacts would result.

Geology and Soils

- *Fault Rupture:* No active faults are mapped across the site. There are no Alquist-Priolo earthquake fault zones mapped on or immediately adjacent to the site. Therefore, the proposed project would result in no impacts related to the rupture of a known earthquake fault.
- *Landslides:* The project site is flat (0 to 2 percent slopes) and does not contain any known landslide areas. The site does not contain and is not located immediately adjacent to any hillsides that could pose a hazard to future site occupants due to landsliding. No impacts would result.
- *Unique Geologic Features:* No unique geologic features are located on the project site. Therefore, the project would result in no impact to such features.
- *Soil Suitability for Septic Systems:* All project wastewater would be discharged to the City sewer system. No septic systems have been proposed. No impacts would result.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

- *Transport, Use, or Disposal of Hazardous Materials:* The proposed commercial, hotel, office/business park and open space uses would not involve the routine transport, use, or disposal of substantial quantities of hazardous materials. Any hazardous materials use or storage on the project site would require compliance with myriad local, state, and federal regulations regarding such materials. However, such use or storage of hazardous materials is not proposed as part of the project. Less than significant impacts would result.



- *Hazardous Materials Releases:* The proposed commercial, hotel, office/business park and open space uses would not be anticipated to use substantial quantities of hazardous materials that could result in reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions. Less than significant impacts would result.
- *Hazardous Materials Near Schools:* The project site is located within 1/2 mile of C.L. Smith Elementary School, which is located approximately 1/2 mile northwest of the site. However, the proposed commercial, hotel office/business park, and open space uses would not be anticipated to use or emit substantial quantities of hazardous materials. Therefore, less than significant impacts would result.
- *Private Airstrip Safety Hazards:* The project site is not located in the vicinity of any private airstrips. Therefore, the project would result in no impacts related to private airstrip safety hazards.
- *Emergency Response/Evacuation Plans:* Implementation of the proposed roadway improvements, including the Prado Road/U.S. Highway 101 interchange, would improve emergency response in the project area. The project would not conflict with an emergency response or evacuation plan. Refer to Section 4.11, *Public Services*, of this EIR for a discussion of police protection and fire protection emergency response to the site. Beneficial impacts would result.
- *Wildland Fires.* The project site is not located in a high fire hazard area. The site is surrounded by commercial, low density residential, government facilities, agriculture, and service and manufacturing uses. Therefore, the project site is located in an area not subject to wildland fires. No impacts would result.

Hydrology and Water Quality

- *Seiche, Tsunami, Mudflow Inundation:* The site is not located in the vicinity of any body of water that could result in a seiche or tsunami, and the site does not contain soils that could result in mudflow inundation. No impacts would result.

Land Use and Planning

- *Physical Divisions of Established Communities:* The project site is currently in use for agricultural production. The project would not remove or divide any existing residential community. No impacts would result.
- *Conflicts with Habitat Conservation Plans:* The proposed project would not conflict with any habitat conservation plan or natural communities conservation plan because none exist in the vicinity of the proposed project.

Mineral Resources

- *Loss of Known Mineral Resources and Resource Recovery Sites:* Mineral resources are not known to be present on the site. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in impacts to



mineral resources.

Noise

- *Exposure to Noise from Private Airstrips:* The project is not located in the vicinity of a private airport. No impacts would result.
- *Excessive Ground-Borne Vibrations and Noise.* As a means of determining the potential for vibration impacts associated with the U.S. Highway 101/Prado Road interchange portion of the project, Bollard & Brennan, Inc. conducted vibration measurements at the edge of the pavement adjacent to a similar major roadway. During the vibration measurements, peak particle velocity of less than 0.005 inch per second were measured. Based on research conducted by Caltrans, peak particle velocities of less than 0.005 inches per second are below the threshold of human perception and do not pose a threat to either people or structures. Based upon this analysis, it can be assumed that ground vibration due to traffic would not be detectable at adjacent land uses. Less than significant impacts would result.

Public Services

- *Fire Protection:* The project area is presently served by Station 4 of the San Luis Obispo City Fire Department. This station is located at the intersection of Madonna Road/Los Osos Valley Road, approximately ½ mile west of the site. Three staff are on duty at this station at all times. Fire Stations 1 and 3 are located east of U.S. Highway 101, approximately 1.5 and 2.5 miles northeast of the site, respectively. There are fifty-six full time employees of the San Luis Obispo City Fire Department. Eleven of these are administrative and fire prevention bureau personnel along with one radio technician, and one mechanic. The remaining forty-five are firefighters with emergency response capabilities. There are twelve Captains, eighteen Engineers, and fifteen Firefighters. Currently, personnel and equipment responding to calls on the opposite sides of Highway 101 use either the Madonna Road interchange overcrossing or the Los Osos Road interchange overcrossing of the freeway. The project site is within the Department's 4.5-minute response time zone, and the proposed development would not be expected to present any unique or atypical fire hazards. In addition, the implementation of the Prado Road/U.S. Highway 101 interchange and associated improvements would improve emergency response in the project area. All primary internal access ways were designed as fire lanes with adequate width, vertical clearance, and turning radii. These primary access ways would be painted red along the curbs and posted with signs that prohibit parking. The project would include a water system with adequate capacity and fire hydrants to meet the City's requirements for domestic and fire protection water needs. All buildings would be provided with an approved, automatic fire-sprinkler system per SLOFD requirements. The project would not alter the Department's staffing or equipment needs or service area (Bassford, Carrie, San Luis Obispo City Fire Department, Telephone Communication, February 12, 2003). The proposed project would not significantly impact present Fire Department service to the site or the area.



- *Police Protection:* The project site is presently served by the City of San Luis Obispo Police Department. The San Luis Obispo Police Department consists of 87 employees, 62 of which are sworn police officers (Rob Bryn, Neighborhood Services Manager, San Luis Obispo Police Department, Telephone Communication, February 12, 2003). The Department is divided into two police bureaus, with a Police Captain commanding each. The main offices of the Department are located at 1042 Walnut Street at Santa Rosa Street, approximately two miles north of the site. The Department maintains a response-time goal of three minutes for High Priority (i.e., life threatening) calls. Response time is measured from the time the first available patrol unit is dispatched to the call to the time the first patrol unit arrives on the scene. The project site is located within the Department's three-minute response time area. In addition, the implementation of the Prado Road/U.S. Highway 101 interchange and associated improvements would improve emergency response in the project area. The project applicant would be required to pay law enforcement development impact fees. Upon payment of these fees, impacts on police protection services would be less than significant.
- *Schools:* The project would not include housing units. Therefore, the project would not generate school-aged children that would utilize City school facilities. No impacts would result.
- *Parks:* The project would not include housing units. Therefore, the project would not generate park users that would utilize City parks and recreation facilities. No impacts would result.

Recreation

- *Use of Existing Parks:* Implementation of the proposed commercial, hotel, office/business park, and open space uses would not generate park users that would increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities. No impacts would result.
- *New Recreational Facilities:* The proposed commercial, hotel, office/business park, and open space uses do not include recreational facilities and would not require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities. The proposed open space area would be placed in an easement, with potential future dedication to the City in fee title. No impacts would result.

