

### 2.1 OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

The project applicant, Harper Canyon Realty, LLC (hereinafter “project applicant”), has submitted to the County of Monterey Resource Management Agency - Planning Department (hereinafter “County of Monterey”) an application for a Combined Development Permit (PLN000696) for a Vesting Tentative Map in order to subdivide land pursuant to the Subdivision Map Act and the Monterey County Subdivision Ordinance (Title 19). The proposed project includes the subdivision of 344 acres into 17 lots on 164 acres with one 180-acre remainder parcel. The residential lots would have an average density of one dwelling unit per 9.64 acres within the subdivided area, as lots would range in size from 5.13 acres to 23.42 acres.

Improved lots would be sold individually for the construction of homes. The proposed project also includes Use Permits for grading on slopes greater than 30 percent and for the removal of 79 Coast Live Oak trees (*Quercus agrifolia*). The project site includes a 180-acre remainder parcel. The project applicant has committed to donating approximately 154-acres of the remainder parcel by deeding the property to the Monterey County Parks Department as an expansion of the adjacent Toro Park pursuant to Section 66428(a)(2) of the Subdivision Map Act. No development is proposed on the remaining 26-acres of the remainder parcel at this time.

Numerous studies have been prepared to evaluate the potential environmental effects that may result from implementation of the proposed project. These studies focused on biological resources, cultural resources, geology, water resources and traffic.

### 2.2 REGIONAL LOCATION

The proposed project is located along the State Route 68 corridor of Monterey County between the cities of Monterey and Salinas. The project site is approximately 12 miles east of the City of Monterey and five miles west of the City of Salinas and approximately 2,000 feet southeast of State Route 68 off of San Benancio Road. The regional location is shown in **Figure 2-1, Regional Location**.

### 2.3 PROJECT SITE AND IMMEDIATE VICINITY

The project site is located in the Encina Hills area of the *Toro Area Plan* planning area, approximately 2,000 feet southeast off State Route 68 and east of San Benancio Road. Access to the project site is located off San Benancio Road onto the existing Meyer Road. Meyer Road, Alta Lane and Sierra Lane would serve as the on-site circulation routes. The project site and vicinity are shown in **Figure 2-2, Vicinity Map**.

The project site is primarily used for grazing land and consists of approximately 344 acres on two existing irregularly shaped parcels, Assessor’s Parcel Numbers (APNs) 416-611-001-000 and 416-611-002-000. The terrain is somewhat varied with elevations ranging from 340 feet in the northern portion to approximately 1,020 feet in the southeastern portion of the project site. The area proposed for development contains approximately 97 acres with

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slopes in excess of 30 percent grade; 41 acres with slopes ranging from 20 to 30 percent; and 27 acres with slopes ranging from 0 to 20 percent slope. Existing improvements on the project site include dirt roads and trails, which meander through both parcels.

As shown by photographs in **Figures 2-3a and 2-3b, Project Site Photos**, annual grassland, coast live oak woodlands and savannas, coastal scrub, and maritime chaparral cover the undeveloped terrain. The level areas of the project site are covered primarily in grasslands with dense oak woodlands on the steeper slopes. There are several natural drainage areas and seven springs located on the project site, which drain north to El Toro Creek, the Salinas River and finally the Pacific Ocean near Moss Landing.

### SURROUNDING LAND USES

Surrounding land uses include similar vacant undeveloped land to the west; unimproved lands in the watershed area and grazing/rangelands to the north and east; Toro Regional Park to the east and south; and single-family residences located along Meyer Road and Rim Rock Canyon Road to the southwest. Surrounding land uses are shown in the aerial photograph provided in **Figure 2-4, Aerial Photo**.

## 2.4 PROJECT RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING PLANNING DOCUMENTS

The proposed project is located within the area known as Encina Hills, which is within the *Toro Area Plan* planning area of the *Monterey County General Plan*. The *Toro Area Plan*, together with the *Monterey County General Plan*, *Zoning Ordinance* and *Subdivision Ordinance*, are the primary land use documents regulating development in this geographic area.

According to the *Monterey County General Plan*, the land use designation for the project site is primarily "Rural Density Residential" with a small portion of the project site designated "Low Density Residential" in the southern portion of the project site. According to the *Monterey County Zoning Ordinance*, both parcels are zoned "Rural Density Residential" with portions located in a "Design Control District" (RDR (5.1-D)). A small portion of APN 416-611-002-000 is designated "Low Density Residential" (LDR/1). The "Low Density Residential" zoning designation provides for residential development at a density of one unit per one acre, whereas the "Rural Density Residential" designation provides for development at a density of one unit per every 5.1 acres. Section 21.44.010 of the *Monterey County Zoning Ordinance* requires specific design standards and additional design review prior to approval of new development within the Design Control District.

*Insert Figure 2-1, Regional Location*

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*Insert Figure 2-2, Vicinity Map*

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*Insert Figure 2-3a, Project Site Photos*

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*Insert Figure 2-3b, Project Site Photos*

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*Insert Figure 2-4, Aerial Photo*

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**2.5 PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15124(b), specifies that an EIR should include:

*“A statement of objectives sought by the proposed project. A clearly written statement of objectives will help the lead agency develop a reasonable range of alternatives to evaluate in the EIR and will aid the decision makers in preparing findings of a statement of overriding considerations, if necessary. The statement of objectives should include the underlying purpose of the project.”*

The objectives of the proposed project, as stated by the applicant, are as follows:

*“The objective of the project applicant is to secure approval for a Combined Development Permit to create the Encina Hills residential subdivision consisting of 17 lots ranging in size between 5.1 acres and 24.3 acres, with a 180-acre remainder parcel. The project site consists of approximately 344 acres. With applicable zoning at 5.1 acres per unit (which would allow a total of 67 parcels at maximum development) the project applicant’s objective, with its reduced density proposal is to maximize preservation of the property in its natural state in harmony with the limited residential development. In furtherance of that objective, the applicant has previously committed to donate approximately 154 acres of the remainder parcel by deeding it to the County of Monterey as an expansion of the adjacent Toro Park.”*

These objectives are critical in the evaluation of the comparative merits of the Project Alternatives in Section 4.0 of this EIR.

**2.6 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS**

As shown in **Figure 2-5, Vesting Tentative Map** the proposed project would subdivide two irregularly shaped parcels (APNs 416-611-001-000 and 416-611-002-000) into 17 parcels on approximately 164 acres with one 180-acre remainder parcel. **Table 2-1, Lot Acreage** provides a summary of the lot acreages. The approximate location of proposed residential home sites within each residential lot will be located on gentle to moderate terrain, predominantly in grassland areas shown as circles on the proposed vesting tentative map.

The proposed project will include grading of approximately 2,000 cubic yards of soil; removal of 79 coast live oak trees; and development on slopes greater than 30 percent. The proposed project will be served by two existing wells to be operated as a satellite system by California-American Water Company. California Utilities Service will provide public utility sewer service to the project site.

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**TABLE 2-1  
LOT ACREAGE**

<b>Lot Number/ID</b>	<b>Acres</b>	
1	23.42	
2	8.33	
3	12.26	
4	5.75	
5	5.34	
6	5.34	
7	16.50	
8	11.51	
9	8.03	
10	7.09	
11	9.91	
12	6.80	
13	8.40	
14	5.13	
15	5.57	
16	9.55	
17	14.98	
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>163.91</b>	<b>48 %</b>
Remainder Parcel	180.01	52 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>343.92</b>	

### INFRASTRUCTURE COMPONENTS AND OFF-SITE IMPROVEMENTS

#### **Tree Removal**

Approximately 79 Coast Live oak trees (*Quercus agrifolia*), approximately one percent of the total trees on the project site, would be removed primarily for road improvements.

#### **Site Preparation and Demolition**

The proposed project would involve grading of approximately 2,000 cubic yards of soil. A majority of the cut would occur at the road improvements. Excess material would be hauled off site or used for permitted uses on site.

*Insert Figure 2-5, Vesting Tentative Map*

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### **Site Access and On-Site Circulation**

State Route 68 would provide regional access to the project site. San Benancio Road off State Route 68 and Meyer Road would provide local access directly to the project site. Roadway improvements would extend Meyer Road along the general path of an existing dirt road on the project site and serve as the primary on-site circulation route. Near Lot #15, Meyer Road would become Alta Lane. Near Lot #11, Sierra Lane would provide access to Lots #8 through #10. Lot #7 will have an extended 12-foot wide driveway extending from Alta Lane between Lots #6 and #8.

### **Sewer System**

The proposed project includes extension of the existing sewer system within the right-of-way of proposed roadway improvements. All 17 of the proposed residential units will be connected to the existing sewer system and will be served by California Utilities Service. Three sewage pump stations would serve the proposed project. Two of the pump stations would be located on the project site near Lots #1 and #9 and the third pump station would be located at the end of the road and utility easement near Lot #17. The extended sewer system will tie into the existing main and effluent would be processed at the existing sewer treatment facility located at 16625 Reservation Road in Salinas.

### **Water Delivery & Treatment Facilities**

The proposed project will obtain potable water from two existing off-site wells. One well is located in the nearby Oaks Subdivision (hereinafter referred to as the "Oaks well") and the second well is located south of Harper Canyon Road (hereinafter referred to as the "New well"). The two wells will be joined to serve both the Oaks subdivision, a previously approved project, and the proposed project. This system will be transferred to the California-American Water Company (Cal Am) and operate as a satellite system. Each well shall have a treatment facility processing water to meet the Safe Drinking Water State Act requirements. Water will flow through water lines from the treatment facilities to each lot within the roadway right-of-way. In addition, two existing water tanks and two new water tanks will be located on the project site within the remainder parcel. A 20-foot wide water line easement is proposed between the two new water tanks.

### **Stormwater**

The proposed project includes a stormwater drainage system within the roadway improvements. The stormwater drainage system shall collect on-site surface water runoff in catch basins and route to on-site detention basins throughout the project site, where the stormwater would be dispersed and allowed to recharge the groundwater basin. The existing on-site natural drainages are ephemeral and carry flows from winter storms to El Toro Creek (which flows to the Salinas River).

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### **2.7 REQUESTED ACTIONS AND REQUIRED APPROVALS**

This DEIR provides the environmental information and analysis and primary CEQA documentation necessary for the County of Monterey Resource Management Agency – Planning Department to adequately consider the effects of the requested development proposal. The County of Monterey Resource Management Agency – Planning Department as lead agency, has approval authority and responsibility for considering the environmental effects of the proposed project as a whole. The EIR will be used for the following Monterey County approvals:

- Combined Development Permit (PLN000696), including
  - o Tentative Map
  - o Final Map
- Grading Permits;
- Building Permits;
- Occupancy Permits;
- National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Construction Permit;
- Use Permit for removal of approximately 79 coast live oak trees;
- Use Permit for development on slopes in excess of 30 percent;
- Use Permit for development in a Design Control zoned area;
- Sewer Extension Agreement with California Utility Services; and
- Water Extension Agreement with California Water Company.

### References

- Governor's Office of Planning and Research, State of California. *Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act*, as amended. 2007.
- County of Monterey, *Harper Canyon Realty Subdivision (Encina Hills) Environmental Initial Study*. July 16, 2003.
- Monterey, County of. *Monterey County Subdivision Ordinance. Title 19*. December 2000.
- Monterey, County of. *Monterey County Zoning Ordinance. Title 21*. October 11, 2000.
- Monterey, County of. *Monterey County General Plan*. August 1982 with Amendments through November 5, 1996.
- Monterey, County of. *Toro Area Plan*. September 1983 with Amendments through 1998.
- Whitson Engineers. *Vesting Tentative Map, Encina Hills Proposed Subdivision, Salinas California*. August 13, 2001.

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