6.1 IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

CEQA REQUIREMENT

Public Resources Code Section 21100(b)(2)(B) requires an Environmental Impact Report to include a detailed statement setting forth any significant effects on the environment that would be irreversible if a project is implemented. Examples of irreversible environmental changes, as set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(c), include the following:

- The project would involve a large commitment of nonrenewable resources such that removal or nonuse thereafter is unlikely;
- The primary and secondary impacts of a project would generally commit future generations to similar uses (e.g. a highway providing access to a previously inaccessible area);
- The project involves uses in which irreversible damage could result from any potential environmental accidents associated with the project; or
- The phasing of the proposed consumption of resources is not justified (e.g. the project involves the wasteful use of energy).

A proposed project would result in significant irreversible effects if it is determined that key resources would be degraded or destroyed to the extent that there is little possibility of restoring them. Irreversible environmental changes should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(c)).

ANALYSIS

The proposed project would result in increased intensity of development, with the subdivision of grazing land to rural residential uses. A variety of nonrenewable and limited resources would be irretrievably committed for project construction and maintenance, including, but not limited to, oil, natural gas, gasoline, lumber, sand and gravel, asphalt, steel, water, land, energy, construction materials and human resources.

An increase in the intensity of land uses at the project site would result in an increase in regional electric energy consumption to satisfy additional electricity demands from the proposed project. These energy resource demands relate to initial project construction, transport of people and goods, and lighting, heating and cooling of buildings.

Development of the project site to support residential uses may be regarded as a permanent and irreversible change. The project site historically consisted of vacant undeveloped land that is designated for rural and low density development in *Monterey County General Plan*. Grading, utility extensions, drainage improvements, new and improved roadways, and construction of buildings would permanently alter the character of the site to one that is more urbanized. The proposed project would generally commit

future generations to similar residential uses on the project site. However, the project site is designated for residential use and the project applicant has committed to dedicate approximately 154-acres to the Monterey County Parks Department.

6.2 GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS

CEQA REQUIREMENT

Public Resources Code Section 21100(a)(5) requires that the growth-inducing impacts of a project be addressed in the EIR. A project may be growth-inducing if it directly or indirectly fosters economic or population growth or additional housing, removes obstacles to growth, taxes community services facilities, or encourages or facilitates other activities that cause significant environmental effects (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(d)). Direct growth-inducing impacts result when the development associated with a project directly induces population growth or the construction of additional developments within the same geographic area. These impacts may impose burdens on a community or encourage new local development, thereby triggering subsequent growth-related impacts.

The analysis of potential growth-inducing impacts includes a determination of whether a project would remove physical obstacles to population growth. This often occurs with the extension of infrastructure facilities that can provide services to new development. Indirect growth-inducing impacts result from projects that serve as catalysts for future unrelated development in an area. Development of public institutions, such as colleges, and the introduction of employment opportunities within an area are examples of projects that may result in direct growth-inducing impacts.

CEQA provides no criteria for determining if induced growth is detrimental or beneficial. Induced growth is considered a significant impact only if it directly or indirectly affects the ability of agencies to provide needed public services, or if it can be demonstrated that the potential growth could significantly affect the environment in some other way.

The proposed project includes extending and widening Meyer Road and extension of the existing wastewater main to the wastewater collection system on the project site. The extended roadway and extension of the existing sewer main would only serve proposed project. Although infrastructure would be extended to the project site, the vacant land surrounding the project site is either already developed, approved for development, or has a general plan designation that limits development (i.e. "Resource Conservation," or "Public/Quasi Public"). No additional growth within the project site is anticipated beyond the proposed project. The project site, which is designated for "Rural Density Residential" and "Low Density Residential", would be developed with an average density of 9.64 acres per residential unit. This is approximately half of the development allowed for "Rural Density Residential" designation, which allows a minimum of 5.1 acres per residential unit and one tenth of the development allowed for "Low Density Residential" designation, which allows a minimum of one acre per residential unit. Therefore, the proposed project would not induce substantial growth in the surrounding area.

6.3 SIGNIFICANT UNAVOIDABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Public Resources Code Section 21100(b)(2)(A) requires an EIR to include a detailed statement setting forth any significant effects on the environment that cannot be avoided if a project is implemented. CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(b) states that such impacts include those that can be mitigated but not reduced to a level of insignificance. In addition, Section 15093(a) of the CEQA Guidelines allows the decision-making agency to determine if the benefits of a proposed project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental impacts of implementing the project. Monterey County can approve a project with unavoidable adverse impacts if it prepares a "Statement of Overriding Considerations" setting forth the specific reasons for making such a judgment.

Based upon the environmental analysis provided in **Section 3.0**, **Environmental Setting, Impacts and Mitigation Measures** most of the potential impacts associated with the proposed project can be avoided or reduced to a less than significant level through the application of mitigation measures that would be implemented in conjunction with the proposed project. However, there are several significant traffic impacts that cannot be feasibly mitigated to a less than significant level if the project applicant is unable to implement **Mitigation Measure MM-3.10-1.** These significant and unavoidable impacts of the proposed project are listed below:

- **Significant Impacts to Traffic and Circulation**
- **Significant Cumulative Impacts to Traffic and Circulation**

6.4 EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT

A significant effect on the environment is generally defined as a substantial or potentially substantial adverse change in the physical environment (CEQA Guidelines Section 15358). The term "environment", as used in this definition, means the physical conditions that exist within the area that will be affected by a proposed project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. The area involved shall be the area in which significant effects would occur either directly or indirectly as a result of the project. The "environment" includes both natural and man-made conditions (CEQA Guidelines Section 15360).

Detailed analyses and discussion of environmental topics found to have a less than significant impact are provided within **Section 3.0, Environmental Setting, Impacts and Mitigation Measures** of this EIR. Listed below are those environmental issues found to have absolutely no impact as a result of the project. This determination is based on the standards of significance contained within the CEQA Guidelines and the Notice of Preparation process for the proposed project. The completed NOP and responses from the public and affected agencies and organizations are included in **Appendix A**.

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

There is an abundance of prime agricultural resources within Monterey County including the Toro planning area. Although the project site has historically been used for grazing the project site is zoned for rural residential land uses; does not contain prime agricultural land; and is not under a Williamson Act contract. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not result in the loss of agricultural resources. Thus, there is **no impact** to agricultural resources.

MINERAL RESOURCES

According to the *Monterey County General Plan* the geologic formations in the County contain useful minerals however our complex geology due to extensive faulting and deformation makes locating minerals difficult and limits the size and extent of many of the deposits. Mineral extraction is mainly limited to oil, near San Ardo; dolomite, at Natividad; Sand and Gravel, at locations throughout the County; and limestone, at Pico Blanco. The *Toro Area Plan* identifies sand and gravel operations from stream channels in the El Toro Creek area and the Salinas River, a decomposed granite quarry operation in Pine Canyon, and a former lime quarry. The decomposed granite quarry in Pine Canyon, which is operated by Granite Construction, is the only mineral resource currently mined within the vicinity of the project site. Implementation of the proposed project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and residents of the state or that is delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan. Therefore there is no impact to mineral resources**.**

RECREATION

The project site is currently undeveloped land zoned rural density residential and its development into a subdivision would not conflict with any established recreational land uses. The proposed project is consistent with the *Monterey County General Plan* and *Toro Area Plan*. Implementation of the proposed project will increase the population due to the project consisting 17 residential units. The proposed project will not adversely impact local parks, trail easements, or other recreation areas. In addition, the project applicant has committed to dedicate approximate 154-acres of the 180-acre remainder parcel to Monterey County Parks Department. Since population increase anticipated is relatively minimal and there is open space areas planned within the project site, implementation of the proposed project shall not result in any significant demand for parks and recreation facilities. Therefore, there is **no impact** on recreation.

HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Miscellaneous hazards include pesticides, fertilizers, petroleum, natural gas, as well as radioactive, flammable, and explosive materials. The project will not transport, use, or dispose of these hazardous materials either during project construction or operation. No known hazardous materials exist on the project site. According to the *Toro Area Plan*, the

project site is located in moderate to high wildland fire zone. The Salinas Rural Fire District will require that the all access roads on the project site be in compliance with the most current fire codes. According Salinas Rural Fire District, compliance with fire codes would eliminate exposure of residents or structure to a significant risk of loss from wildland fires (Written correspondence from Salinas Rural Fire District. September 17, 2001). Therefore, there is **no impact** associated with hazards and hazardous materials.

ENERGY

Energy demands for the proposed project will be serviced by Pacific Gas & Electric. All roadway improvements will include utility easements within the right-of-way. Existing overhead lines will remain and all new lines extended to the project site will be placed underground in accordance with Monterey County policy and located within a common trench located in the right-of-way of the roads, easements and driveways wherever feasible. The demand on energy resources is not anticipated to impact the current utilities level of service.

PG&E has builder incentive programs to encourage energy efficient construction for new single- and multi-family housing however, due to the success of the programs funding has been completely depleted. Therefore, both programs have been closed and PG&E no longer accepts applications. However, energy efficient construction reduces the demand on energy source and promotes a healthier environment. Some simple design features that can be incorporated in the specifications may include tight construction and sealed ducts, energy saving windows, improved insulation, and super-efficient heating and air conditioning systems**.**

REFERENCES

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.

Salinas Rural Fire District. Written correspondence regarding access road requirements. September 17, 2001.