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4. CEQA CONSIDERATIONS

This section of the Recirculated Draft EIR discusses long-term growth implications of the proposed project as required by CEQA. The topics discussed include significant irreversible commitment of resources, growth-inducing impacts, significant and unavoidable environmental effects, and effects found not to be significant. Cumulative impacts to the proposed project are also discussed herein.

4.1 SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

For the purpose of this section, unavoidable adverse impacts are those effects of the proposed project that would significantly affect either natural systems or other community resources, and cannot be mitigated to a less than significant level. The proposed project, if implemented, would result in the following significant and unavoidable project impacts:

- **Historic Resources**: The nine Victorian-era cottages that were demolished in 2003 were considered historic resources for the purposes of CEQA and were determined eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources. Mitigation measures 3.5-1a through 3.5-1d incorporated herein, would reduce the impact, but not to a less than significant level. As the demolition of these historic resources cannot be mitigated to a less than significant level by reconstruction, this would be considered a significant and unavoidable impact.

4.2 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

Section 15126.2(c) of the State CEQA Guidelines requires an EIR to discuss the significant irreversible environmental changes that would be involved in the proposed project should it be implemented. Examples include the following: uses of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project, since a large commitment of such resources makes removal or nonuse thereafter unlikely; primary and secondary impacts of a project that would generally commit future generations to similar uses (e.g., highway improvements that provide access to a previously inaccessible area); and/or irreversible damage that could result from any potential environmental accidents associated with the project.

4.2.1 Analysis

The proposed project would result in an increased intensity of development at the project site over existing conditions as well as the former use. A variety of nonrenewable and limited resources would be irretrievably committed for construction and operation, including but not limited to oil, natural gas, gasoline, lumber, sand and gravel, asphalt, steel, water, land, energy, and construction materials. In addition, the proposed project would result in an increase in demand on public services and utilities over existing conditions.

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

Redevelopment of the planning area to support intensified urban uses including a hotel, spa and fitness center and timeshare units, is regarded as a permanent and irreversible change. Grading, utility extensions, new and improved roadways, and construction of additional structures at the project site would change the character of the project site to one that is significantly more urbanized than current site conditions. The proposed project would generally commit future generations to similar intensified urban uses within the project site.

4.3 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

CEQA requires that any growth-inducing aspect of a project be discussed in an EIR. According to CEQA, it must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental or of little significance to the environment. A project would have growth-inducing effects if it would:

- Foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing (either directly or indirectly) in the surrounding environment;
- Remove obstacles to population growth;
- Tax existing community services or facilities, requiring the construction of new facilities that could cause significant environmental effects; or
- Encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively.

As such, this section of the EIR analyzes the potential environmental consequences of the foreseeable growth and development of the surrounding area that could be induced by implementation of the proposed project and all entitlement actions.

4.3.1 Methodology

In assessing the growth-inducing impacts of a project, the lead agency is not to assume that growth in an area is necessarily beneficial or of little significance environmentally (Title 14 CCR §15126.2(d)). Typically, growth-inducing impacts result from the provision of urban services and extension of infrastructure (including roadways, sewerage, or water service) into an undeveloped area. Growth-inducing impacts can also result from substantial population increase, if the new population may impose new burdens on existing community service facilities, such as increasing the demand for service and utilities infrastructure and creating the need to expand or extend services, which may induce further growth.

A project can remove infrastructure constraints, provide access, or eliminate other constraints on development, and thereby encourage growth that has already been approved and anticipated through the General Plan process. This planned growth would be reflected in land use plans that have been developed and approved with the underlying assumption that an adequate supporting infrastructure ultimately would be constructed. This can be described as accommodating or facilitating growth.

A project can remove infrastructure constraints, provide new access, or otherwise encourage growth, which is not assumed as planned growth in the general plans or growth projections for the affected local jurisdictions. This could include areas that are currently designated for open space, agricultural uses, or other similar non-urban land

uses. In such a case, the removal of infrastructure constraints or provision of access can trigger consideration of a change in land use designation to allow development at a higher level of intensity than originally anticipated. For this section, the terms "inducing" will be used for both types of growth.

Growth-inducing impacts may also be categorized as either direct or indirect. Direct growth-inducing impacts occur when a project directly fosters growth. This may occur in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to, the construction of new homes and businesses and the extension of urban services, such as utilities and improved roads, to previously undeveloped areas. Growth can also be induced directly due to the economic effect of a project whereby economic growth multiplier effects can cause related growth in areas near the new project. Indirect growth is induced by the demand for housing, goods, and services associated with a project. There are many other factors that can affect the amount, location, and rate of growth in the region. These include the following:

- Market demand for housing, employment, and commercial services;
- Desirability of climate and living/working environment as reflected by market demand;
- Strength of the local employment and commercial economy;
- Availability of other roadway improvements (e.g. new and/or expanded arterial or highway capacity);
- Availability of other services/infrastructure (e.g. wastewater treatment, water, schools, etc.); and
- Land use and growth management policies of the county and municipal jurisdictions.

To assess potential growth inducing impacts of the proposed project, the geographic range or extent of any possible growth inducing impacts was evaluated.

There would be little or no growth-inducement resulting from the proposed project. This statement is based on the following:

- The proposed project includes approximately 77 timeshare housing units, which would function as vacation homes rather than full-time residences.
- The proposed project would be "self contained," in that it would not extend infrastructure or eliminate barriers to growth beyond the boundaries of the project site.
- The proposed project does not include expansion of infrastructure, including water, wastewater and roadways, beyond that needed to serve the project development.
- Due to the existing topography at the project site, a substantial portion of the project site would remain unchanged and scenic easements would be required for all property exceeding 30 percent slope outside of the approved development of the proposed project in accordance with Policy 26.1.10 of the *Monterey County General Plan*.
- The proposed project is not intended specifically to generate new growth, but rather to allow job growth to occur within Monterey County. Providing the hotel/resort spa and associated accessory uses could provide neighboring city residents with job opportunities.

4.4 EFFECTS FOUND TO HAVE NO IMPACT

A significant effect on the environment is generally defined as a substantial or potentially substantial adverse change in the physical environment (CEQA Guidelines Section 15328). 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 proposed project. The "environment" includes both natural and man-made conditions (CEQA Guidelines Section 15360).

Detailed analyses and discussion of environmental topics found to be significant are provided within Section 3.0 of this EIR. Listed below are those environmental issues (broad topics) found to have no impact as a result of the proposed 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.

Mineral Resources

According to the *Monterey County General Plan,* there are no mineral resources within or in the project vicinity. The 2010 *Monterey County General Plan Final Environmental Impact Report* identifies that impacts to mineral resources are less than significant and also that cumulative mineral resource impacts are less than cumulatively considerable. The nearest operating mineral extraction operations are several miles away, with one operation east of Soledad and several north of Greenfield, all on the east side of the Salinas Valley. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on mineral resources.

Agricultural Resources

The 2010 *Monterey County General Plan Final Environmental Impact Report* identifies that impacts related to conversion of agricultural resources are significant and unavoidable and that cumulative agricultural impacts are cumulatively considerable. However, the project site is not currently in agricultural production and is not designated as important farmland. The proposed development does not encroach against existing agricultural development such that conflicts could arise from development too close to agricultural uses, including pesticide spraying on crops. Development of the project would not convert agricultural resources on site or cause adverse effects on nearby agricultural resources. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on agricultural resources.

Population and Housing

The 2010 *Monterey County General Plan Final Environmental Impact Report* identifies that impacts to population growth are significant and unavoidable at year 2030 and buildout, and also that population growth impacts are cumulatively considerable. The proposed project would include construction of a resort hotel and time-share units. This would increase transient population at the site but would not result in a substantial increase in permanent residential population at the project site or in the vicinity. The proposal would not induce substantial population growth (see discussion under section

4.3 Growth Inducing Impacts above). Employees are expected to come from the Salinas Valley cities and unincorporated area, which together provide well over 220,000 residents (U.S Census 2015). In addition, the cities of the Salinas Valley have General Plans that propose accommodating substantial population growth to meet the needs of the region, including any employment needs for this project. Monterey County traditionally has a higher unemployment rate than the state as a whole, resulting in more labor being available for new job creation (California Employment Development website, accessed December 27, 2016). Therefore there are no population and housing related issues that would result in significant environmental impacts.

4.5 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

4.5.1 CEQA Requirements

CEQA defines cumulative impacts as two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are substantial or which compound or increase other environmental impacts. An evaluation of cumulative impacts is required by CEQA when they are significant, but need not be as detailed as the discussion of project impacts. Cumulative conditions are defined as conditions in the foreseeable future with all approved, pending, and known planned development in place. The *CEQA Guidelines* require that an EIR discuss the cumulative impacts of a project where the project's incremental effect is cumulatively considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.

The criteria for determining significance of cumulative impacts are the same as those that apply to the project-level analysis unless otherwise noted in the section, where other agency standards regarding cumulative analyses may apply. Where the combined cumulative impact associated with the projects' incremental effect and the effects of other projects is not significant, the EIR indicates why the cumulative impact is not significant and is not discussed in further detail in the EIR. Where the EIR identifies a significant cumulative impact, but finds that the project's contribution to that impact would be less than considerable, an explanation for that conclusion is provided.

According to the California State CEQA Guidelines section 15130 (a)(1), there is no need to evaluate cumulative impacts to which the project does not contribute. Relevant potential cumulative impacts to which the proposed project could contribute include: aesthetics and visual resources, air quality, biological resources, climate change, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, noise, public services and utilities, and transportation and traffic. Each of these topics is addressed below.

4.5.2 Cumulative Impacts Assumptions and Analysis

An evaluation of the impacts generated from the implementation of the proposed project when considered in conjunction with development forecasts based on the buildout of the 2010 *Monterey County General Plan*, is included below. The reconstruction of the Paraiso Springs Resort was accommodated in the 2010 *Monterey County General Plan* and analyzed at a Program level in the 2010 *Monterey County General Plan Final Environmental Impact Report*.

Thresholds of significance for impacts are those indicated in the relevant portions of Sections 3.1 through 3.12 of this EIR. In addition, as outlined in Title 14 CCR § 15139(b)(3), the geographic scope of the proposed project varies depending on the type of impact discussed. For example, the cumulative impact area for long-term operational air quality emissions is the North Central Coast Air Basin and for aesthetics, cumulative impacts is the area within and adjacent to the project site.

Aesthetics

The geographical area for overall cumulative aesthetic impacts is the Sierra de Salinas mountain range from Highway 68 to Arroyo Seco River canyon. The most visually significant portions of the site are the steep slopes surrounding Paraiso Valley and Indian Valley. Approximately 66.7 percent of the project site is located on slopes greater than 30 percent. Some of the proposed development would be visible from the Paraiso Valley floor, potentially from the upper section of Paraiso Springs Road approaching the site, and with distant views for some of the project from Highway 101 and county roads. Protecting surrounding landforms and the dominant natural features will help to mitigate the impact of this development upon the visual character of the area. Standard conditions of approval, as explained in Section 3.1, require scenic easements for property exceeding 30 percent slope outside of the approved development of the proposed project in accordance with Policy 26.1.10 of the *Monterey County General Plan.*

The impact from that portion of the site which is potentially visible from off site will be minimized by implementation of a strategically designed landscape plan placing trees and other vegetation around the buildings and development to integrate the development into the natural environment (Mitigation Measure 3.1-1). With these mitigation measures and the standard condition associated with light and glare, the visual character of the site and surrounding area would be maintained and the impact associated with the proposed project and the surrounding area would be less than significant.

The 2010 *Monterey County General Plan Final Environmental Impact Report* identifies that impacts to scenic vistas, visual degradation, and light and glare are significant and unavoidable and cumulatively considerable for year 2030 and at buildout. Potential projects in the defined area include development near Highway 68 and River Road, over 20 miles to the north. One project (Ferrini Ranch) has been approved and would be visible from Highway 101 and Highway 68, but is located on the lower hills just above the valley floor and would be subject to General Plan and Area Plan policies and site-specific mitigation measures identified in that project's EIR that would impose strict design limitations and guidelines to the project. The 2012 EIR for the Ferrini Ranch project identified that the cumulative impact for that project on aesthetics and visual sensitivity was less than significant (page 5-7). Development allowed in the vicinity along the lower slopes of the Sierra de Salinas mountain range is agriculture. No other development projects are proposed in the vicinity (between Highway 101 and Paraiso Valley) of the project site that, when combined with the visual impacts of the project, would result in cumulative visual impacts. The aesthetic/visual impacts of this project have been determined to be less than significant with mitigation; therefore, the project's contribution to aesthetic cumulative significant effects is less than cumulatively considerable.

Air Quality

Regional Emissions

The geographical area for overall cumulative air emission impacts is the North Central Coast Air Basin, which includes Monterey County, San Benito County, and Santa Cruz County, which is the extent of the jurisdiction of the air district. The air district updated the regional *Air Quality Management Plan* (AQMP) in 2008, adopted a Triennial Plan Revision in 2013 that amended portions of the AQMP, and adopted an AQMP Update (2012-2015 Air Quality Management Plan) on March 15, 2017. The 2012-2015 Air Quality Management Plan is an update to elements included in the 2008 AQMP and Triennial Revision based on a review of the time period 2009-2011 and shows that the region continues to make progress toward meeting the state ozone standard. The AQMP includes current air quality data, revises the emission inventory and emission forecasts, provides an analysis of emission reductions needed to meet and maintain State ozone standards, and includes adoption of five stationary source controls to achieve emission reductions. In developing the emission forecasts, the AQMP accounts for population growth for cities and counties located within the basin based on the population projections of the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG).

These forecasts are then accommodated within the AQMP. According to the *MBUAPCD CEQA Guidelines*, projects that are consistent with the AQMP would not result in cumulative impacts as related to regional emissions that have been factored into the AQMP. In addition, projects that would result in a significant regional air quality impact at the project level would also be considered to have a cumulative air quality impact. The project does not have a significant regional air quality impact at the project level, as described in Section 3.2.

In a letter dated April 8, 2010, AMBAG determined that the proposed project would be consistent with the growth forecasts in the County of Monterey. Therefore, the proposed project is consistent with the regional forecasts and the AQMP and would not result in cumulative regional air quality impact. Since 2010, actual population growth, hindered by the economic downturn, is less than what had been forecast by AMBAG at the time the AQMP was adopted; therefore, the proposed project remains within the regional forecasts upon which the AQMP is based.

Localized Emissions

The geographic area for cumulative localized pollutant impacts would be those intersections anticipated that could be affected by significant volumes of traffic from the proposed project; i.e. those intersections studied in the traffic study prepared by Hatch Mott McDonald (2008, 2011, and 2017). The *MBUAPCD CEQA Guidelines* indicate that projects that reduce intersection level of service to LOS E or LOS F may result in localized increases in Carbon Monoxide concentrations at those intersections. The traffic studies evaluated vehicular trips from all existing, existing plus project, and cumulative conditions. According to the traffic impact reports, implementation of the proposed project would not result in unacceptable levels of service at study intersections under cumulative conditions and therefore would result in a less than significant impact with

respect to cumulative carbon monoxide emissions at all study intersections in accordance with the *MBUAPCD CEQA Guidelines*. In addition, the proposed project would not result in toxic air contaminant (TAC) emissions at buildout.

Conclusion

The 2010 *Monterey County General Plan Final Environmental Impact Report* identifies that impacts to air quality are significant and unavoidable for certain criteria pollutants and also that cumulative air quality impacts are cumulatively considerable. Cumulative impacts related to regional and local air emissions are considered less than significant. In accordance with the *MBUAPCD CEQA Guidelines*, project contributions to regional cumulative air emissions are not considered significant when a project is consistent with the AQMP. Cumulative CO concentrations with project buildout would not exceed state CO concentration standards. Construction and operation activities will not cause significant impacts with mitigation identified; therefore, the proposed project would result in a less than considerable contribution to a cumulative impact on air quality.

Biological Resources

The cumulative impact scenario for biological resources is variable, depending on the specific resource being considered. Generally, past and present projects in the vicinity, region, and/or state have permanently removed plant and wildlife resources, thereby significantly impacting the range and number of multiple plant and animal species and contributing to threats to their continued viability. Federal and state agencies recognize numerous plant and wildlife species as special status, which requires their specific consideration and protection. Special status reflects that the respective species are declining in number and range relative to their historic occurrences. Special-status species are generally considered rare, restricted in distribution, declining throughout their range, and/or have a critical, vulnerable stage in their life cycle that warrants their protection and monitoring. Such development has also caused the loss or decline of sensitive natural plant communities including riparian, woodland, and wetland communities, constrained wildlife movement, and reduced nesting and foraging habitat for resident and migratory avian species. The impacts of past and present projects on special status species and protected habitats/plant communities are cumulatively significant. Future probable projects would further contribute to these impacts.

Proposed project impacts on biological resources are discussed in Section 3.3, Biological Resources. Please refer to that section for more information. Potentially significant impacts on special-status animals, potentially jurisdictional wetlands/waters, and oak woodlands/trees anticipated during construction and/or from conversion of vacant areas to developed or disturbed areas are identified. Mitigation measures are then provided to avoid or reduce all impacts to special-status biological resources to a less-than-significant level. Cumulative biological impacts are discussed below for the special-status resources on which the proposed project has a potentially significant impact. The 2010 *Monterey County General Plan Final Environmental Impact Report* identifies that impacts to biological resources are significant and unavoidable for special status species, riparian habitat, and wetlands at buildout and also that cumulative biological resource impacts are cumulatively considerable.

Special-Status Animal Species

The project site provides suitable habitat for special status animal species including four special status bat species, Monterey dusky-footed woodrat, Coast horned lizard, and burrowing owl. Project activities may result in direct impact (injury or mortality) to special status animals during vegetation removal, grading, building demolition, and equipment movement. Project implementation may also result in temporary direct or indirect disturbance to nesting raptors and migratory birds, should they be present on or adjacent to the site during construction activities.

Impacts to these special status animal species due to direct construction impacts or reduction of their habitat would be cumulatively considerable. As discussed above, special status species are so designated generally due to substantial reductions in their number and/or range that have occurred over time. The species have become vulnerable and their ability to maintain population levels sufficient to ensure their continued existence is of concern. Consequently, any reduction in the number of these animals would be cumulatively considerable.

Potentially Jurisdictional Wetlands/Waters

The project site contains wetlands/waters and a small amount of associated riparian habitat that are potentially under the jurisdiction of the USACE, RWQCB, and/or CDFW. Project implementation would result in the loss of a 0.04-acre potentially jurisdictional seasonal wetland, and two in-stream culverts would be removed totaling approximately 0.02-acre (229 linear feet) of potentially jurisdictional non-wetland waters. Rock slope protection of stream banks to prevent erosion and scour above and below two of the three proposed bridge locations would impact an additional 0.02-acre (160 linear feet) of potentially jurisdictional non-wetland waters. With regard to riparian habitat, three willow trees would be removed for construction of one of the three proposed bridges. Loss of potentially jurisdictional wetlands/waters/riparian trees is a potentially significant impact.

Impacts to jurisdictional wetlands/waters are closely regulated by the USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW so that development projects result in no net loss of resources. As a result, project impacts to jurisdictional wetlands/waters would not be cumulatively considerable, and project-specific regulatory agency permitting and on-site creation and restoration of wetland/riparian habitats will ensure that the project does not contribute to cumulative loss of these resources.

Oak Woodlands/Trees

The proposed project would result in conversion/loss of approximately 8.8 acres of coast live oak woodland habitat and removal of up to 191 trees, including 185 oak trees protected by county ordinance. Oak woodlands throughout the state provide valuable wildlife habitat, and take very long periods of time to establish and grow to a fully sustainable condition/functioning ecosystem. Though mitigation has been developed to lessen the long-term project impacts, the loss of native oak woodlands/trees due to project implementation, in conjunction with the loss of other oak woodlands in the region and state, would be cumulatively considerable.

Summary

The 1982 *Monterey County General Plan* and *Central Salinas Valley Area Plan* contain goals and policies to ensure the protection of biological resources in the project region, as presented in Section 3.3.3 -Regulatory Background of this EIR. Overall, the proposed project in conjunction with other reasonably foreseeable growth areas within the Salinas Valley and south Monterey County would result in a permanent loss of habitat and would contribute to biological resource impacts including disturbance to special status animal species. Development of the project site is anticipated to contribute to these impacts. However, implementation of mitigation measures incorporated herein would reduce the project's potential contribution to this cumulative impact to a less-than-significant level by requiring biological resource assessment and avoidance, pre-construction surveys, biological monitoring, regulatory agency permit compliance, oak tree protection and replacement, and habitat creation/restoration.

Implementation of the biological resource mitigation measures contained herein would ensure that the proposed project would not have a significant contribution to the potential loss of special status species or habitats in the region. Therefore, the proposed project would result in a less than considerable cumulative contribution to an impact to biological resources.

Climate Change

GHG emissions effects are not localized to areas where they are produced. Climate change is a global phenomenon resulting from the combined effects of GHG emissions produced worldwide. Consequently, the analysis of climate change impacts from production of GHGs as included in Section 3.4, Climate Change, is inherently cumulative in nature. While the true geographic scope of the area affected by GHG emissions is global, for purposes of this EIR, the geographic scope is considered to be the State of California. This scope is selected because California's legislative and regulatory climate change framework is designed to reduce GHG emissions whose regulation is directly or indirectly within the control of the state. The CEQA process is considered to be the appropriate mechanism for assessing the impacts of GHG emissions from land development projects in light of the state's comprehensive climate change mitigation strategy.

Mitigation Measures 3.4-1a and 1b require that the applicant implement several reduction measures that will ensure that the sum of the GHG emissions generated by the proposed project and the sum of the emissions offset by the project equals zero. The proposed project emissions are net zero; therefore, the proposed project would not contribute to a cumulative impact.

Cultural Resources

The geographical area for overall cumulative cultural resource impacts is the unincorporated area of Monterey County. The 2010 *Monterey County General Plan Final Environmental Impact Report* identifies that impacts to cultural resources are less than significant and also that cumulative cultural resource impacts are less than cumulatively considerable for general plan buildout.

Ground disturbing activities associated with the proposed project may result in the disturbance or destruction of buried historic, archeological, paleontological, or burial site resources. Mitigation incorporated herein would require that the project applicant identify the existing known cultural resource sites located within the boundary of the project site as exclusion zones on construction drawings and on the ground and conduct cultural resource monitoring during ground disturbing activities. This would mitigate the impacts to archaeological resources at the project site. Development within the County is required to comply with Section 18.25: Preservation of Historic Resources, which would ensure that cumulative development does not result in a cumulative impact to historic resources within the County. Even with the prior destruction of nine historic cottages on the property, as described above in section 4.1, damage or destruction of cultural resources in conjunction with other projects in the area is not expected to result in a cumulatively considerable impact due to the isolated nature of the project site, the limited nature of additional projects in the vicinity of the project site, and the mitigation requirements imposed on those projects. As such, the proposed project would not have a cumulatively considerable impact on cultural resources.

Geology and Soils

The proposed project would not combine with any other factors or project and thus would not be considered significant due to the localized site-specific nature of geotechnical and seismic impacts. The 2010 *Monterey County General Plan Final Environmental Impact Report* identifies that impacts to geology and soils are less than significant and also that cumulative geology and soil impacts are less than cumulatively considerable. Therefore, the proposed project would not have impacts that are cumulatively considerable.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Hazardous impacts would be site specific and would not be affected or amplified by cumulative development in the area. As described in Section 3.7 of this EIR (Hazards and Hazardous Materials), with implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, the project would not contribute to an increase in the potential for soil or groundwater contamination or the potential risk of upset as a result of current or past land uses.

The 2010 *Monterey County General Plan Final Environmental Impact Report* identifies that impacts to hazards and hazardous materials are less than significant and also that cumulative hazards and hazardous materials impacts are less than cumulatively considerable. The proposed project would not combine with any planned growth in the area to form a hazards impact greater or more significant than the proposed project impact alone. Therefore, the proposed project would not have impacts that are cumulatively considerable.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The geographical area for overall cumulative hydrology and water quality impacts is from the project site to the Arroyo Seco River for potential drainage impacts, and the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin for potential groundwater impacts. The 2010 Monterey County General Plan Final Environmental Impact Report identifies that impacts to groundwater quality and the indirect effects from future water supply projects would be cumulatively considerable. In addition, the document identifies significant and

unavoidable impacts for 1) exceeding capacity of existing water supplies for year 2030 and buildout, 2) secondary impacts from increased demand for storage, treatment, and conveyance for 2030 and buildout, 3) increased demand on water supplies and groundwater for 2030 and buildout, 4) development in the floodplain at buildout, and 5) exposure of people to inundation through dam failure at buildout.

The project site is located several hundred feet above the Salinas Valley floor; inundation from dam failure in the central Salinas Valley would occur only on the valley floor. The project will not be exposed to such an event and will not substantially contribute to that impact. The project also is not located in a floodplain, so will not increase development in the floodplain and will not substantially contribute to that impact, including the requirement to control runoff on the project site, thereby protecting downstream areas from flooding.

The proposed project would contribute to cumulative drainage flows and surface water quality impacts when combined with other growth and development under buildout of the General Plan. However, mitigation measures incorporated herein would require that prior to recording the Final Subdivision Map, or issuance of grading permits, whichever occurs first, the project applicant prepare a final drainage plan that includes low impact design features and best management practices in order to detain the difference between the 100-year post-development runoff rate and the 10-year pre-development runoff rate in accordance with Section 16.16.040.B.5 of the Monterey County Code and MCWRA standards. With implementation of mitigation measures, the proposed project's contribution to cumulative stormwater runoff and contamination impacts would be considered less than significant.

The Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin (SVGB) is the area considered to be affected by any cumulative impact associated with impacts to groundwater related to this project. CA DWR Groundwater Bulletin 118 defines the SVGB, which includes the following subbasins: 180/400-Foot Aquifer (the Monterey County Water Resources Agency, "MCWRA," refers to this portion of the SVGB as the "Pressure Subarea"), East Side Aquifer, Forebay Aquifer, Upper Valley Aquifer, Corral de Tierra Area, Langley Area, Seaside Area, and Paso Robles Area (portion within Monterey County). Nearby properties are affected directly by the project and are affected by direct project impacts, as described in this section. The MCWRA expects consumptive use in the SVGB to increase by 8,600 acre-feet per year between 1995 and 2030 (Todd Groundwater, 2018, section 10.2). The MCWRA has been working on projects for 70 years that have improved the balance of water inputs and water outputs of the basin and continues to identify additional methods and projects to provide more balance to the basin. The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014 requirements will assist the County in identifying methods to determine what is sustainable for this basin and to identify any additional projects needed to achieve a sustainable level.

The analysis in this RDEIR does not rely solely on information and analysis included in the 2010 General Plan and its EIR nor from the Salinas Valley Water Project (SVWP) documents and its EIR. This RDEIR uses a variety of factors and sources when evaluating the impacts to water in connection with this project and its contribution to cumulative impacts. Zone 2C is the benefit zone defined for the SVWP and new reservoir operations. These regional improvements were developed to better manage groundwater

resources within the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin. The project site is within Zone 2C, and the property owner pays Zone 2C assessments. Accordingly the owner is making a fair share contribution toward these groundwater management projects, which include the two reservoirs, Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project (CSIP), and the SVWP. The proposed project would not directly rely on water produced through the SVWP or other projects, but relies on the overall benefits provided from the suite of projects described in Section 3.8.

The project site is located at the margin of the Forebay Aquifer Subbasin of the SVGB. The subbasins making up the SVGB are interconnected. The FEIR certified for the 2010 General Plan identified that the impact of General Plan buildout on groundwater levels beyond the year 2030 is a significant and unavoidable impact. The Paraiso Springs development was included in the General Plan buildout calculations for the 2010 General Plan and was considered as part of the development potential analyzed for impacts in the 2010 General Plan EIR and also in its 2013 Addendum. As identified in the 2010 General Plan EIR, the long-term (beyond 2030) cumulative effect of development reducing groundwater levels in the Salinas Valley is an existing significant effect; however, the Paraiso Springs project's incremental contribution to that effect is less than cumulatively considerable as described below. In addition, the property has been paying assessments to the long-term solution (Zone 2C assessments funding the two reservoirs, CSIP and SVWP, and other projects) to bring the groundwater basin into balance. Groundwater quality impacts are discussed in Section 3.8, which demonstrates that potential impacts are localized to the project area and would not degrade regional groundwater quality.

While a net deficit currently exists in the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin, the project's additional water use will not substantially contribute to the current deficit, and will not interfere with the anticipated balancing effect of the SVWP and CSIP by 2030. The result is that there is an assured long term water supply associated with this development in that the project draws from a groundwater basin with 16.4 million acre-feet in storage, draws directly from the Forebay Subarea, will not adversely affect groundwater quality, will not adversely affect the economic extraction of water, and will not produce unmitigable adverse environmental impacts. The water demand of up to 42.9 acre-feet per year, resulting in a modeled net water use of 15.5 acre-feet per year, or 17.8 acre-feet per year if supplemental water is needed for wetland mitigation, flowing from the property to the aquifer (a 2.1% decrease relative to existing flow conditions from the site to the aquifer) (Todd Groundwater, 2018), is considered a less than significant impact. The Todd Groundwater 2018 report points out that groundwater storage within the local basin would equilibrate to the new stresses and not continue to increase or decrease over the long run (section 8.2.2). In other words, the net water loss would accrue long term to the regional aquifer, not the local basin under the site. The threshold against which the project is measured is whether it would substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level. First, the gross demand of 40.6 to 42.9 acre-feet per year to an aquifer with over 16 million acre-feet in storage is not a substantial loss to the aquifer (less than three millionths of the water in storage--0.00027%; this demand to the Forebay Subarea storage, alone, would be 0.0009%) and, therefore, does not meet the threshold of substantially depleting groundwater supplies. Second, the net demand, after use of stormwater infiltration project design

(LID methodologies explained in section 3.8), of 15.5 to 17.8 acre-feet per year to an aquifer with over 16 million acre-feet in storage is not a substantial loss to the aquifer (approximately one millionth of the water in storage--0.0001%; this demand to the Forebay Subarea storage, alone, would be 0.0004%) and, therefore, does not meet the threshold of substantially depleting groundwater supplies. The requirement to maximize the use of LID methodologies to collect and infiltrate storm water is required by Mitigation Measure 3.8-2. Third is that annual pumping within the Forebay Subarea has dropped from an annual average of about 160,000 acre-feet per year between 1958 and 1994 to 148,000 acre-feet in 2013. Fourth is the small water demand of this project (up to 42.9 gross acre-feet per year, calculated to be reduced to between 15.5 and 17.8 net acre-feet per year) in relation to the overall annual pumping demand of 148,000 acre-feet for the Forebay Subarea (Brown and Caldwell, 2015, section 4.3.3). Fifth, the project pays fees to, and procures water from wells located within, Zone 2C, receiving a regional benefit of increased groundwater resources. Payment of fees within Zone 2C provides a fair share of funding for projects that seek to balance water input and water output within Zone 2C.

MCWRA continues to monitor groundwater levels within the basin in order to assess the long-term effect of current management efforts and projects over wet and dry years, including the SVWP. MCWRA groundwater data in 2013 demonstrated near-term benefits of these management efforts, with an understanding that monitoring will be ongoing. Recent updates, after a five-year drought, show an increase in seawater intrusion (as described in section 3.8). Longer-term analysis will lead to a better look at the long-term trend and the need for additional projects or conservation methods. Although the proposed project will cause an increase in the demand on the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin, it would not be to a level that wasn't already analyzed and disclosed through preparation of the SVWP EIR (Monterey County 2013; Brown and Caldwell 2015; Monterey County Water Resources Agency 2017a; Monterey County Water Resources Agency 2017b).

For seawater intrusion, MCWRA projects, including the Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project, the Salinas Valley Water Project, and the continued operation of the Nacimiento and San Antonio reservoirs are intended to address seawater intrusion, as well as water supply. These projects are funded through Zone 2C assessments; the project is located within Zone 2C and pays the assessments. Prior to the recent five-year drought, seawater advancement had slowed with evidence that the slowing was a result of MCWRA projects (including CSIP and SVWP) (Peter Kwiek, Hydrologist, Monterey County Water Resources Agency, personal communication, June 2, 2017). The recent drought has caused a larger area within the Pressure 180-Foot and Pressure 400-Foot Aquifers to be infiltrated by seawater intrusion. See full discussion in section 3.8, including information related to the conclusion of a less than significant impact from the project's net water use on the Forebay and Salinas Valley groundwater basins.

For all the reasons stated in this section, the project's contribution to a cumulative impact is less than cumulatively considerable and thus is not significant.

Land Use and Planning

The geographical area for overall cumulative land use and planning impacts is the unincorporated portion of Monterey County. The 2010 *Monterey County General Plan Final Environmental Impact Report* identifies that impacts to land use and planning are less than significant and also that cumulative land use and planning impacts are less than cumulatively considerable.

The proposed project would be generally consistent with policies in the *County of Monterey General Plan* (1982) and the *Central Salinas Valley Area Plan* (1987) with implementation of the mitigation measures identified within this EIR. In addition, the proposed project would not divide an established community or conflict with any other applicable land use plan or policy. Therefore, the proposed project as mitigated would not result in a cumulative considerable impact associated with land use and planning issues.

Noise

The geographical area for overall cumulative noise impacts is the Salinas Valley road network for traffic-generated noise and within 1500 feet for potential construction and operational noise impacts. The 2010 *Monterey County General Plan Final Environmental Impact Report* identifies that impacts to noise are less than significant and also that cumulative noise impacts are less than cumulatively considerable. The proposed project along with reasonably foreseeable cumulative projects would result in increased traffic volumes along study roadway segments within the Central Salinas Valley Area Plan. This would expose residents living along the road segments to additional transportation noise. However, resulting noise levels would be within County noise standards for single-family residential uses and are considered to be less than significant. Construction or operational noise could impact nearby residential uses. Mitigation measures have been developed for construction staging areas and for operational uses to meet adopted noise standards at the property line. With implementation of these mitigation measures, the proposed project's potential noise impacts would be considered less than significant and would not be cumulatively considerable in conjunction with other noise, such as noise emanating from agricultural fields in the Salinas Valley or from traffic noise from Highway 101 a few miles to the northeast.

Several policies in the *Monterey County General Plan* (1982) would ensure that foreseeable future development under the General Plan evaluate noise attenuation measures as part of the project design. Each project's attenuation measures would be required to meet county noise standards adopted in 2014 that would attenuate noise levels under cumulative conditions. Therefore, the proposed project would not have impacts that are cumulatively considerable.

Public Services and Utilities

The geographical area for overall cumulative public services and utilities impacts is dependent on the service. The 2010 *Monterey County General Plan Final Environmental Impact Report* identifies that impacts to public services and utilities are significant and unavoidable for schools and solid waste at buildout and also that solid waste and wildfire impacts are cumulatively considerable.

For public safety agencies, the area is Beat #10 for the Sheriff, the area between Greenfield and the Salinas Valley Prison for fire services, and the area between the project site and the Arroyo Seco River for drainage, wastewater treatment, and potable water distribution and treatment. No significant increases in demand on public services and utilities have been identified for the proposed project. The application included a fire protection plan that was reviewed by Soledad Rural Fire District, which has requested to review a final version of the plan prior to issuance of permits. The Fire District has identified a need for a fire station for the District (or expansion of the existing station in the City of Soledad), but no specific plan or funding mechanism has yet been adopted. If such a plan were adopted, the property would pay their fair share of the construction of the station through their tax assessments and possibly other fees adopted by the District, as would all others in the approximately 60 square mile district. Implementation of proposed mitigation measures would ensure that storm water drainage facilities, potable water distribution and treatment facilities, and wastewater collection and treatment facilities are adequate to accommodate the increased demand associated with the proposed project. These systems are proposed as part of the project and will only serve the project itself.

Since the proposed project will not generate a significant increase in demand for public services and utilities it will have minimal affect on the cumulative impact to public services and utilities. The increased demand for public services associated with the proposed project and other future development would be accommodated by increased property tax revenue, special district revenue, and development impact fees assessed for new construction. The project will not generate any school children and would have no substantial contribution to cumulative impacts associated with school impacts. Mitigation measures related to solid waste are required resulting in a less than significant impact. Potential wildfire impacts are less than significant for the project. As a result, impacts associated with providing public service facilities and utilities for cumulative development would be considered to be less than significant.

Transportation and Traffic

The geographical area for overall cumulative transportation and traffic impacts is the county road network from the project site to Highway 101, and Highway 101 itself through the county. The 2010 *Monterey County General Plan Final Environmental Impact Report* identifies that impacts to traffic increases and emergency access are significant and unavoidable for 2030 and buildout, and that cumulative traffic and emergency access impacts are cumulatively considerable.

General Plan forecast volumes were obtained from the AMBAG Transcad Model Year 2030 forecasts to establish a growth factor of 69 percent. Arroyo Seco Road is expected to carry a total of 7100 trips on an average day in 2030 between Fort Romie Road and the U.S. Highway 101 Ramps. This number was used to estimate the approximate General Plan volumes on Fort Romie, Foothill, Arroyo Seco Road, Paraiso Springs Road, and Clark Road. There are no specific plans for other development along Paraiso Springs Road and estimates of future traffic growth are not likely to be experienced. The existing plus project volumes along Paraiso Springs Road are expected to remain unchanged through the General Plan buildout. All study intersections and roadway segments will

operate at LOS A with the exception of Arroyo Seco Road between Fort Romie Road and U.S. Highway 101, which will operate at LOS B. No mitigation measures would be necessary to alleviate a level of service deficiency under cumulative conditions (Hatch Mott McDonald 2008, page 9; Hatch Mott McDonald 2017).

The project applicant would be required to contribute their fair share towards the regional traffic impact fee as required by Chapter 12.90: Regional Development Impact Fee to help fund regional improvements in the County and reduce the project's cumulative impact to regional intersections and roadway segments (e.g., U.S. Highway 101). Payment of the regional traffic impact fees would reduce the cumulative impacts on the regional roadway system to a less than significant impact. The project has no significant impacts related to traffic or emergency access and will not have a substantial contribution to cumulative impacts.

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