

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The County of Monterey Resource Management Agency – Planning Department (County or County of Monterey), serving as the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has prepared this Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to assess the impacts that may result from approval of the Signal Hill LLC Combined Development Permit (project). The project includes demolition of an existing 4,125-square-foot residence, construction of a new 11,933-square-foot residence, and dune restoration activities. The project site is located on Signal Hill Road, approximately 350 feet east of 17-Mile Drive, in the unincorporated community of Pebble Beach.

1.1 PROJECT SETTING AND BACKGROUND

Signal Hill LLC, the project applicant, has submitted an application to the County for entitlements (Combined Development Permit) to demolish an existing residence, construct a new residence, and make associated site improvements, including site restoration. The project site has been the subject of several Monterey County code enforcement actions since the time of application submittal. A code enforcement case for unpermitted tree removal has recently been closed and replanting and restoration has been completed. A separate enforcement action for a substandard dwelling improperly maintained is in “compliance ordered” status. Entitlements include actions that would clear this case.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE EIR

The purpose of this EIR is to identify the proposed project’s significant impacts on the environment, identify ways in which such significant impacts would be mitigated or avoided, and develop alternatives to the proposed project that would avoid or reduce these impacts while still meeting major project objectives. This EIR is intended to serve as an informational document for use by the general public, the County, and other responsible agencies in their consideration and evaluation of the project. Public agencies are charged with a duty to consider and minimize environmental impacts to proposed developments where feasible, and have an obligation to balance a variety of public objectives, including environmental, economic, and social factors.

This EIR has been written to comply with the requirements of CEQA. Under the CEQA process, the EIR is provided to the public and agency decision-makers for their review and comment to enable agency decision-makers to fully evaluate and consider the potential environmental consequences of their decision on a proposed project.

1.3 SCOPING AND NOTICE OF PREPARATION PROCESS

In compliance with the State CEQA Guidelines, the County determined that due to potential significant impacts associated with the project, an EIR would be necessary. In accordance with Section (§)15082 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the County prepared and circulated a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR on February 17, 2015. The NOP was distributed to various federal, state, regional, and local governmental agencies and other interested parties to solicit comments and inform the public of the proposed project. A 30-day NOP public review period ended on March 20, 2015.

Nineteen comment letters were received in response to the NOP. In addition, a public scoping meeting was held on February 23, 2015, at the Pebble Beach Community Services District Office,

located at 3101 Forest Lake Road in Pebble Beach, Monterey County, California. Concerns raised in response to the NOP and scoping meeting were considered in preparation of the EIR, including destruction of a historic residence designed by eminent southern California-based architect Richard Neutra, impacts to public views along 17-Mile Drive, and impacts related to construction activities in areas of native dune habitat. The NOP and comment letters received in response to the notice and public scoping meeting are included as Appendix A.

1.4 EIR CONTENTS

The scope of the EIR includes issues identified by the lead agency during the preparation of the NOP for the proposed project, as well as environmental issues raised by agencies and the general public in response to the NOP and at the public scoping meeting. The EIR is divided into the following major sections:

Executive Summary. Provides a brief summary of the project background, description, impacts and mitigation measures, and alternatives.

Introduction. Describes the project background, the purpose of an EIR, the EIR process, and the scope, content, and intended use of the document.

Project Description. Describes the project location, identifies project objectives, includes a detailed description of the project characteristics, and provides a listing of necessary permits and government approvals.

Environmental Setting. Describes the regional and local physical project setting and surrounding land uses, and identifies relevant planning documents applicable to the proposed project.

Environmental Impact Analysis. Discusses the environmental setting as it relates to the various environmental issue areas, regulatory settings, thresholds of significance, impact determinations and methodology, project-specific impacts and mitigation measures, cumulative impacts, and secondary impacts. The EIR analyzes the potentially significant impacts to the following resource areas, as identified during the preparation of the NOP:

- Aesthetic Resources
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Hydrology and Water Quality

In addition, the EIR includes a section titled “Issue Areas with Less than Significant Impacts,” which evaluates the impacts to the following resource areas:

- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services and Utilities
- Recreation
- Transportation and Traffic

Alternatives Analysis. Identifies various project alternatives that would lessen or avoid identified significant environmental impacts. Summarizes the environmental advantages and disadvantages associated with the proposed project and alternatives. As required, the “No Project” alternative is included among the alternatives considered. An “Environmentally Superior Alternative” is identified.

Other CEQA Considerations. Identifies growth-inducing impacts and includes a discussion of long-term/short-term productivity and irreversible environmental changes.

Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan. This section contains a matrix of all mitigation measures contained in the EIR, the requirements of the mitigation measures, timing for implementation of these measures, the party responsible for verification, the method of verification, and verification timing.

1.5 PROJECT SPONSORS

Lead Agency:	County of Monterey Resource Management Agency 1441 Schilling Place, 2 nd Floor Salinas, CA 93901 Carl P. Holm, AICP, RMA Director
Project Applicant:	Signal Hill LLC 111 Independence Drive Menlo Park, CA 94025 Massy Mehdipour, Project Applicant
Environmental Consultant:	SWCA Environmental Consultants 1422 Monterey Street, Suite C200 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401 Emily Creel, Project Manager

1.6 REVIEW OF THE DRAFT EIR

This Draft EIR was distributed to responsible and trustee agencies, other affected agencies, interested parties, and all parties requesting a copy of the Draft EIR in accordance with Public Resources Code 21092(b)(3). A Notice of Completion and Notice of Availability of the Draft EIR were also distributed as required by State CEQA Guidelines §§15085 and 15087.

The public review period is 45 days. Written responses to all environmental issues raised during public circulation will be prepared and included as part of the Final EIR and the environmental record for consideration by decision-makers for the project. During this 45-day review period, the Draft EIR and all technical appendices will be available for review at the following locations:

County of Monterey Resource Management Agency 1441 Schilling Place, 2 nd Floor Salinas, CA 93901	Pebble Beach Community Services District 3101 Forest Lake Road Pebble Beach, CA 93953
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Harrison Memorial Library
Ocean Avenue and Lincoln Street
Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA 93921

Monterey Public Library
625 Pacific Street
Monterey, CA 93940

On behalf of the lead agency, comments on the Draft EIR shall be addressed to:

County of Monterey
Resource Management Agency – Planning Department
c/o Emily Creel, SWCA Environmental Consultants
1422 Monterey Street, C200
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Via email: ecreel@swca.com