



JULY 7, 2021

VIA EMAIL: [TIFFANY.BROWN@MORGANHILL.CA.GOV](mailto:TIFFANY.BROWN@MORGANHILL.CA.GOV)

Morgan Hill Development Services

Attention: Tiffany Brown, Associate Planner

17575 Peak Avenue

Morgan Hill, CA 95037

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

**July 08 2021**

## STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

Dear Ms. Brown:

NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND SCOPING MEETING FOR A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED NEW HORIZONS RESIDENTIAL PROJECT, SCH# 2021060587

The Department of Conservation's (Department) Division of Land Resource Protection (Division) has reviewed the Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the New Horizons Residential Project (Project). The Division monitors farmland conversion on a statewide basis, provides technical assistance regarding the Williamson Act, and administers various agricultural land conservation programs. We offer the following comments and recommendations with respect to the project's potential impacts on agricultural land and resources.

### Project Description

The proposed project would remove the existing structures and develop the project site with a total of 337 residential units. The project proposes to subdivide the project site into 283 lots parcels. This includes 262 one- to two-story single-family detached houses, 20 two-story age-restricted single-family houses, and 55 age-restricted three-story condominiums. The project would include approximately four acres of private open space and nine acres of public open space. The project also proposes off-site improvements to Jackson Park, Jackson Elementary School, Hill Road, and Barrett Road.

The approximately 69.4-acre project site is located at the northeast quadrant of Barrett Avenue and Hill Road in the City of Morgan Hill (Assessor's Parcel Number [APN] 817-20-031). The project site contains Prime Farmland as defined by the Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/DLRP/CIFF/>.

## Department Comments

Conversion of agricultural land is often considered an unavoidable impact; however, the City has established a number of goals, policies, and actions in its General Plan to mitigate for the conversion of farmland. Additionally, the City has established an Agricultural Lands Preservation Program which is intended to promote continued viable agricultural activities in and around the City of Morgan Hill.

The Department is pleased to see the City's commitment to agricultural preservation, and strongly supports the City's current goals, policies, actions, and Agricultural Lands Preservation Program.

Prior to approval of the proposed project the Department recommends further discussion and consideration of the following issues:

- Proposed mitigation measures for all impacted agricultural lands within the proposed project area.
- Projects conformity with the City's established agricultural goals, policies, actions, and Agricultural Lands Preservation Program.

## Conclusion

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on the Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the New Horizons Residential Project. Please provide this Department with notices of any future hearing dates as well as any staff reports pertaining to this project. If you have any questions regarding our comments, please contact Farl Grundy, Associate Environmental Planner via email at [Farl.Grundy@conservation.ca.gov](mailto:Farl.Grundy@conservation.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

*Monique Wilber*

Monique Wilber

Conservation Program Support Supervisor