Public Review Period Comment Letter and Response

The public review and comment period on the Draft Initial Study-Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS-MND) for the Brookside Avenue Fire Station (project) was between October 4 and November 5, 2021. Copies of the Draft IS-MND were distributed to interested state agencies by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research – State Clearinghouse. Notices that the Draft IS-MND was available for review were published in the Santa Maria Times, and the Draft IS-MND was available for review on the Santa Barbara County Fire Department's website.

Comments on the Draft IS-MND were provided by one individual:

- Chris Hinds, November 4, 2021

A copy of the comment letter and a response is provided herein to the one comment received on the adequacy of the environmental impact analysis provided by the Draft IS-MND.

Letter 1

Melissa Whittemore

From: [redacted]thew <Matthew.Farris@sbcfire.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 4, 2021 10:22 AM
To: Susan Festerling; Melissa Whittemore
Subject: [EXT] FW: Brookside Avenue Fire Station Draft MND

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I just received this email

From: Chris Hinds [redacted]
Sent: Thursday, November 4, 2021 10:20 AM
To: Farris, Matthew <Matthew.Farris@sbcfire.com>
Subject: Brookside Avenue Fire Station Draft MND

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Staff-
I believe that the Noise Study did not consider the 31 approved town houses northwest of the proposed project site. Please include this approved future development into your study and take additional measurements near the proposed buildings.
Thank you,
Chris Hinds (Owner)

1.1

Letter 1

Commenter: Chris Hinds

Date: November 4, 2021

Response 1.1

The commenter states that the noise analysis in the Draft IS-MND did not consider the "31 approved town houses northwest of the proposed project site," and requests that such an analysis be conducted.

The 31-townhome project site to which the commenter is referring is located immediately west and northwest of the eucalyptus grove located on the proposed project site and to the west of the site. A map for the 31-townhome project site was recorded in 1982, but the Development Plan that would allow development of the 31-townhome project expired before any development commenced. Most recently, on February 26, 2018, the applicant for the 31-townhome project submitted an additional time extension request for the Development Plan, but it was not ultimately granted so the Development Plan expired. Development of the 31-townhome project site raised by the commenter was not included in the Cumulative Projects list in the IS-MND because no entitlements for the site are currently approved and no applications have been submitted for future development of the site. However, as discussed below, if the site were included, noise impacts from the proposed project would be less than significant.

The noise analysis conducted as part of the IS-MND for the proposed project focused on potential noise impacts to the nearest noise-sensitive receivers, consisting of the single-family residences to the east of the site (along Brookside Avenue), which would be located at least 185 feet from the nearest rooftop-mounted heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) equipment based on the location of the fire station, assuming HVAC equipment would be mounted in the center of the proposed fire station rooftop, and the distance between the fire station and off-site residence adjacent to the site's eastern boundary. In comparison, the closest residence of the expired 31-townhome project would be approximately 300 feet from the nearest HVAC equipment for the proposed fire station and would be buffered by the existing eucalyptus grove that would remain on the project site. Additionally, as stated in the IS-MND, "Rooftop HVAC units are traditionally shielded from surrounding land uses with parapets and roofs that block line-of-sight to sensitive receivers would typically provide at least a 5 dBA noise reduction. Project HVAC operation would not exceed 65 dBA Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) or result in a 3 dBA increase in existing noise levels due to HVAC use at the proposed fire station." Because HVAC operation would not significantly impact the existing residences located at least 185 feet to the east of the proposed HVAC equipment, the HVAC equipment also would result in less-than-significant noise impacts to the expired 31-townhome project to the west.

The noise impact analysis also discusses noise due to siren use associated with the proposed fire station. As discussed in the IS-MND, noise-sensitive receivers in the immediate project vicinity may experience periodic exposure to high noise levels due to siren use. In terms of magnitude of noise exposure, a typical siren emits approximately 100 dB at 100 feet. However, because emergency vehicle response is, by nature, rapid, the duration of exposure to these peak noise levels is estimated to last for a maximum of 10 seconds as emergency vehicles pause at the driveway exit, engage the siren and turn onto the roadway and accelerate rapidly away from the fire station. Therefore, residents of existing nearby homes would be exposed to short-duration high noise levels

for approximately ten seconds during an emergency event; this would also be applicable to the expired 31-townhome project to the west. Further, the typical practice for emergency siren use is to use sirens to break traffic at intersections or warn drivers of the emergency vehicle approach when traffic is congested. Responses to nighttime emergency calls, when nuisance noise is most noticeable, routinely occur without the use of sirens. The IS-MND concludes that the relatively short duration of emergency events and the low frequency of siren use would not substantially change the existing CNEL[1] for the vicinity and would not exceed the County's noise threshold of 65 CNEL or result in a 3 dBA increase in existing noise levels due to emergency vehicle and siren use at the proposed fire station.

In summary, the existing residences to the east of the project site are closer to the noise-generating elements of the proposed fire station than the expired 31-townhomes project to the west. Noise impacts from the proposed project would be less than significant to the closest noise-sensitive receptors, as well as the expired 31-townhome project to the west, if developed in the future. Therefore, no revisions to the IS-MND are necessary based on this comment.

[1] Community noise can be measured using Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL), which is the 24 hour average noise level with a +5 dBA penalty for noise occurring from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and a +10 dBA penalty for noise occurring from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. (http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/env/noise/pub/TeNS_Sept_2013B.pdf).