



## Notice of Preparation

**DATE:** May 10, 2023

**TO:** State Clearinghouse, State Responsible Agencies, State Trustee Agencies, Other Public Agencies, and Interested Organizations and Individuals

**FROM:** Jill Miller, Senior Planner  
City of Salinas Community Development Department  
65 West Alisal Street, Second Floor  
Salinas, CA 93901  
Tel: 831-758-7206/Email: [jill.miller@ci.salinas.ca.us](mailto:jill.miller@ci.salinas.ca.us)

**SUBJECT:** Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed Ferrasci Business Center Specific Plan

The City of Salinas (City) would like to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information that is relevant to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency may need to use the EIR when considering agency actions in connection with the project.

The City will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an EIR for the project described below. The City has determined that the potential environmental effects of the project include, but may not be limited to: aesthetics, agricultural land conversion, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, hazardous materials, water supply and quality, public services, transportation (vehicle miles traveled), and public utilities. The City's final determination of environmental issues to be addressed in the EIR will consider input received in response to this NOP and to input provided at an EIR scoping meeting. The discussion of environmental effects determined to be less than significant may be limited to a short explanation of the basis for making this determination.

*Due to the time limits mandated by state law, your response must be sent within thirty (30) days of the date of publication of this NOP, or no later than June 8, 2023 at 5 PM.* Please direct all written public and agency comments to Jill Miller, Senior Planner, at the address provided above. Include the name of a contact person for your agency, environmental effects your agency believes should be addressed in the EIR, and mitigation measures for effects that your agency believes could be significant.

A scoping meeting will also be held per Public Resources Code Section 21083.9 to solicit input from local and state agencies and other interested organizations on the scope of the EIR. The date, time, and location for the meeting are shown below. Questions about the NOP should be directed to Jill Miller, Senior Planner. This NOP can be found on the City of Salinas' website at: <https://www.cityofsalinas.org/our-city-services/community-development/documents-public-review>.

## **Project Title**

Ferrasci Business Center Specific Plan

## **Project Applicant**

Chris Steinbruner (Landowner Representative)  
Carmel, California

## **Scoping Meeting Information**

June 8, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.  
City of Salinas Community Development Conference Room  
65 West Alisal Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Salinas, California 93901

## **Project Location and Background**

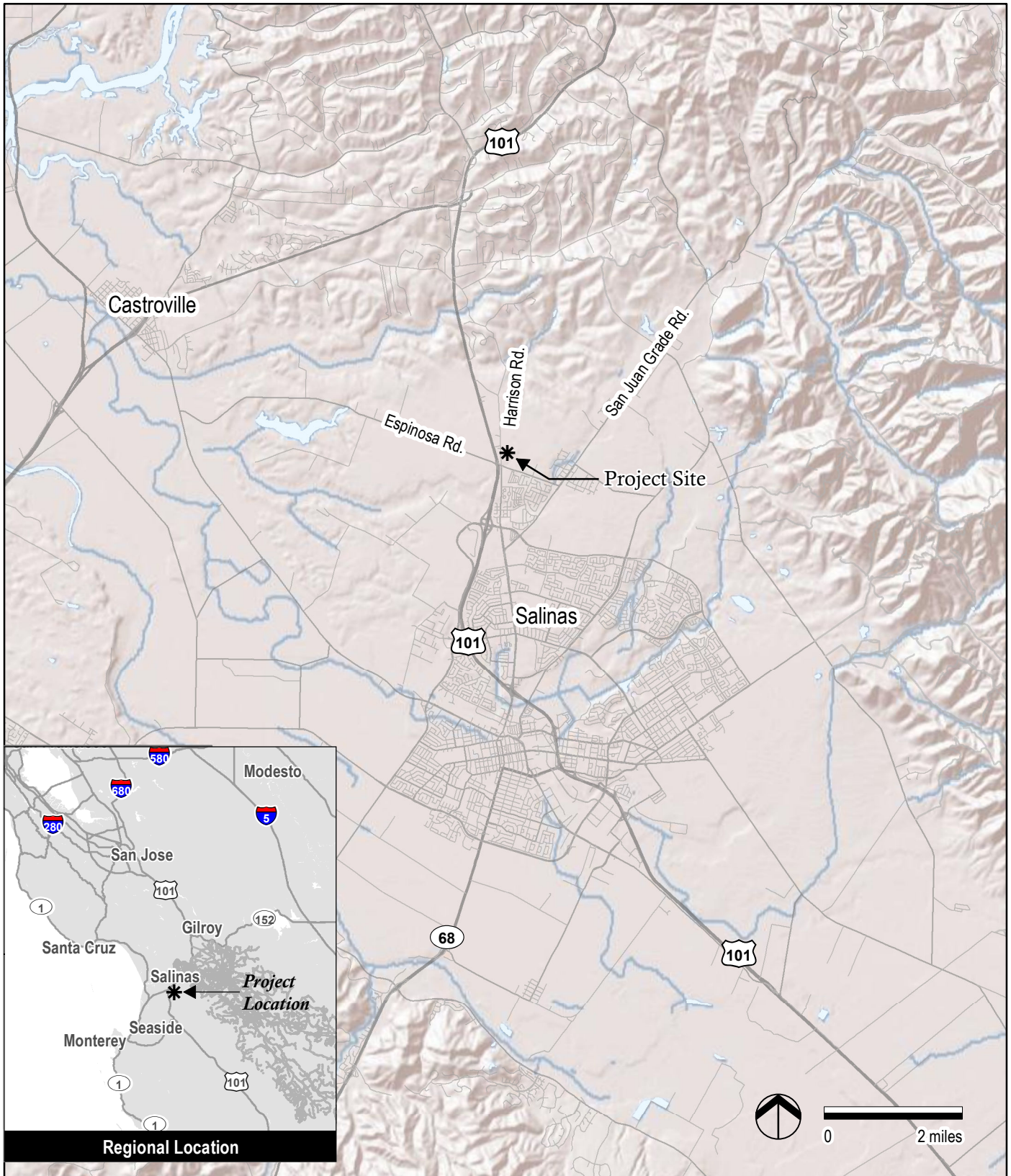
### **Project Location**

The approximately 140-acre project site (specific plan boundary) is located contiguous to the northeastern Salinas city limits in unincorporated Monterey County. The site is generally bound by U.S. Highway 101 on the west, agricultural fields on the north, agricultural fields and a school on the east, and Russell Road on the south. Harrison Road bisects the site from north to south and provides access to the U.S. Highway 101/Sala Road interchanges to the north, and to the City of Salinas to the south. Russell Road is a major arterial road that provides access to the northern portions of the city.

[Figure 1, Location Map](#), presents the project site location.

### **Background**

The project is being proposed in response to an urban development opportunity identified in the City of Salinas Economic Development Element (EDE). The 140-acre specific plan area largely overlaps the 162-acre boundary of "Target Area K" as identified in the EDE. With the City's approval of the EDE as a general plan amendment in 2017, Target Area K was designated for future retail and business park development, and was also designated as a Future Growth Area in the City of Salinas General Plan. The Salinas Economic Development Element Program EIR (EDE EIR) evaluated the impacts of implementing the EDE, including developing Target Area K with up to approximately 1,820,808 square feet of retail and business park uses.



Source: ESRI 2014

Figure 1  
**Location Map**



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City general plan policy requires that a specific plan be prepared to provide land use and development regulation guidance for projects proposed with a Future Growth Area. The Ferrasci Business Center Specific Plan (“specific plan”), described below, has been submitted by the applicant for this purpose.

## Project Description

The specific plan includes a range of information regarding planned land use and development regulations, circulation and infrastructure planning, and development design. Detailed guidance is provided for the area east of Harrison Road, as this area is under the control of the applicant and because land use, circulation, and infrastructure planning within it must be coordinated to allow development of individual blocks within that area over time. The area west of Harrison Road does not require internal land use, circulation and infrastructure coordination per se. It is comprised of existing individual parcels under separate ownership that would develop/redevelop directly as individual projects independent of development within the area east of Harrison Road. However, the specific plan does identify land use and development capacity for the west area. This allows the potential environmental impacts of annexing and developing Area B to be considered in the EIR as part of whole of the action of implementing the specific plan.

The specific plan includes illustrative land use alternatives for the site. One of these has been selected as the land use plan to be evaluated in this EIR. [Figure 2, Assumed Specific Plan Land Use Scenario](#), shows the plan. The specific plan EIR will evaluate impacts resulting from the retail, business park and mixed use (commercial and residential) land uses shown in the figure. [Table 1, Projected Specific Plan Development Capacity](#), shows development capacity assumptions for these uses. The assumed land use scenario is one of a number of possible future development scenarios for the project site, but has been selected as representative and as the basis for evaluation in the EIR.

The specific plan includes land uses that were not contemplated for Target Area K as part of the EDE EIR. Consequently, the EDE EIR cannot be used to streamline the environmental review of the specific plan pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15068. Further, the specific plan boundary is not coterminous with the Target Area K boundary. The applicant is proposing that boundary of Target Area K be amended to be consistent with that proposed in the specific plan. The boundary modifications would reduce the amended Target Area K by 22 acres. The northern boundary would be retracted by removing land currently in cultivated row crop production, while the eastern boundary would be expanded to include land also currently in agricultural row crop production.

The specific plan includes proposed modifications to use classifications and development regulations in Chapter 37 of the City of Salinas Municipal Code for each of the proposed land uses. The modified regulations would apply only within the specific plan boundary. The modifications primarily address changes to the types of individual projects that are not permitted, permitted with a conditional use permit approval, permitted with a site plan review approval, and/or permitted outright. Additional regulations address a range of development issues including land use compatibility, floor area, parking requirements, etc.

**Table 1 Projected Specific Plan Development Capacity**

Proposed Land Use	Net Developable Acres <sup>1</sup>	FAR/ Residential Density	Building/Residential Development Capacity
<b>Specific Plan Area A</b>			
Business Park	74.6	FAR = 0.37	938,021 Square Feet
Retail	28.4	FAR = 0.37	357,802 Square Feet
Mixed Use <sup>3</sup> Non-Residential Residential	20.0	FAR = 1.0 24 Dwelling Units/Acre	213,444 Square Feet 257 Dwelling Units
Subtotal	123.0		1,509,267 Square Feet 257 Dwelling Units
<b>Specific Plan Area B</b>			
Retail	17.6	FAR = 0.37	220,806
<b>Specific Plan Total</b>			
<b>Specific Plan Total</b>	<b>140.5</b>		<b>1,730,073 Square Feet 257 Dwelling Units</b>

The specific plan also includes preliminary plans for backbone water, wastewater, and storm drainage infrastructure, and identifies assumed cross-sections for new internal backbone roads and improvements to Harrison Road and Russell Road that border the site. Pedestrian and bicycle circulation improvements are integrated into the planned road sections.

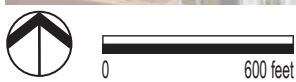
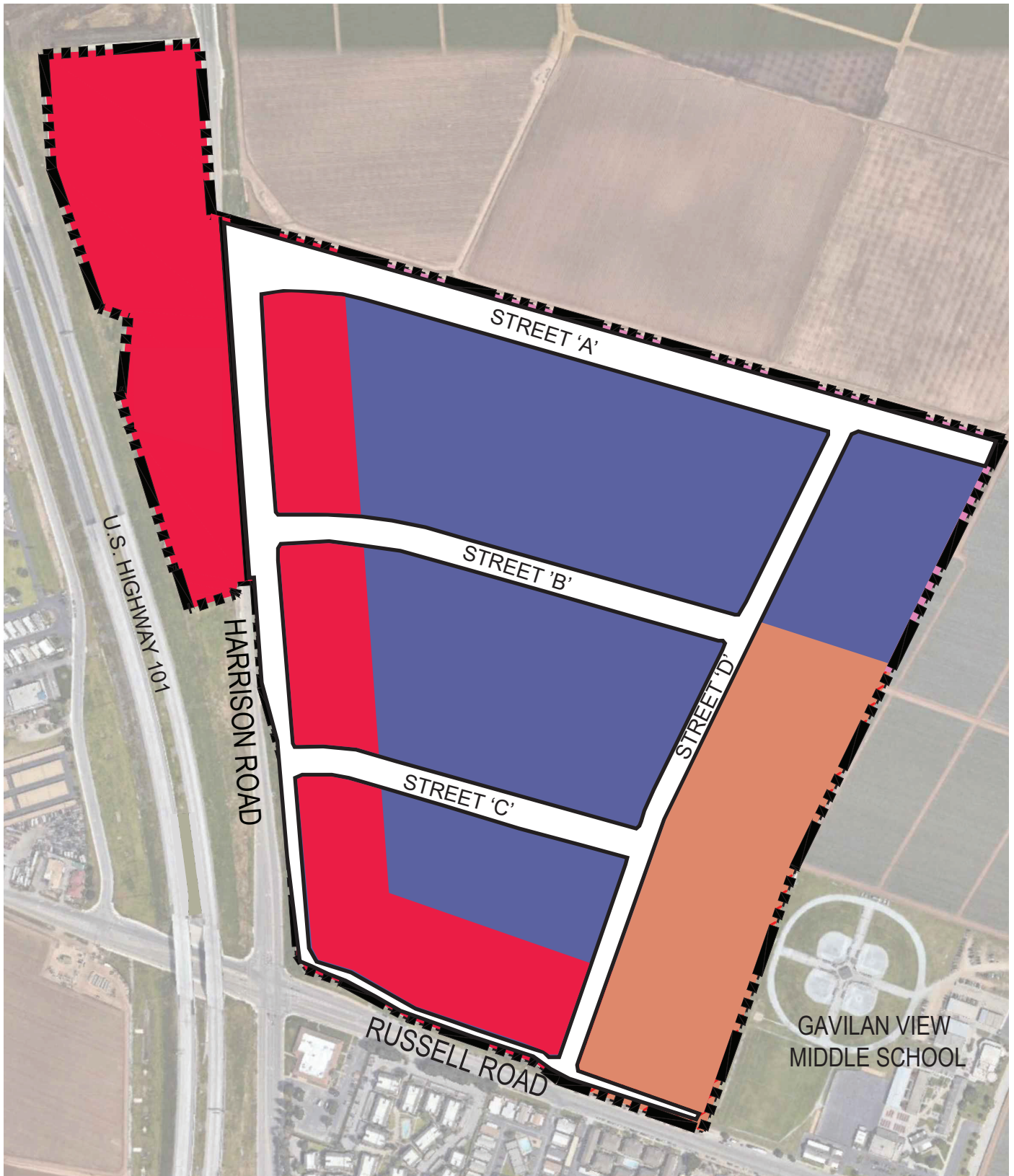
The residential component of the project is projected to generate a population of 943 people at a persons per household rate of 3.67. New projected employment is 3,929 jobs based on employment densities for industrial and retail uses of 400 and 500 square feet of building area per job, respectively.

## Required Entitlements

The following entitlements are being requested by the applicant.

- General plan amendments (reflecting specific plan adoption and various amendments to general plan text, tables, and graphics to integrate the specific plan into the general plan);
- Sphere of influence amendment;
- Rezoning and amendments to chapter 37, Zoning, of the municipal code; and
- Annexation.

No project specific entitlements are being requested at this time. City approval of the entitlements listed above and subsequent approval of the sphere of influence and annexation entitlements by the Monterey County Local Agency Formation Commission would enable the City to then accept applications for individual development projects within the specific plan boundary. CEQA review would be conducted for each individual development project.



-  Specific Plan Area Boundary
-  Industrial Business Park
-  Commercial Retail
-  MX (Mixed Use)

Source: RJA 2023

Figure 2

## Assumed Land Use Scenario

Ferrasci Business Center Specific Plan NOP



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## **Scope of Environmental Effects to be Analyzed**

The City has determined that an EIR will be prepared to evaluate the direct and indirect physical impacts from implementing the proposed specific plan. CEQA Guidelines section 15146 states that, “The degree of specificity required in an EIR will correspond to the degree of specificity involved in the underlying activity which is described in the EIR.”

The types of probable environmental effects and scope of analysis associated with buildout of the specific plan are summarized below.

## **Agricultural Resources**

The EDE EIR evaluated agricultural resource, including loss of Important Farmland resulting from future development within Target Area K. The City already adopted a statement of overriding consideration for this impact. However, the proposed project would result in a change in the location and amount of farmland conversion relative to that identified for Target Area K. Further, the specific plan specifies the locations of agricultural buffers planned to reduce land use incompatibilities. This section of the EIR will identify these changes and identify the City’s current mitigation approach for this impact should it differ from that identified in the EDE EIR.

## **Air Quality**

This section of the EIR will include an air quality analysis using the Monterey Bay Air Resources District’s methodology, focusing on consistency with current air quality plan control measures, analysis of criteria air emission volumes, analysis of projected vehicle miles travelled and/or vehicle trips, and comparison of criteria air emissions volumes to significance thresholds. Potential for impacts from toxic air contaminants will also be evaluated. Criteria emissions will be modeled using the California Emissions Estimator Model.

## **Biological Resources**

The proposed Target Area K boundary expansion includes land for which biological resources conditions were not identified in the EDE EIR. Though the expansion area is currently in agricultural row crop production, biological resources conditions in this area will be reviewed to determine if new or more significant impacts to special-status species, riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities, and/or federally-protected wetlands are possible. The biological resources mitigation measures in the EDE EIR for Target Area K will be reviewed to determine their current applicability.

## **Cultural and Tribal Resources**

Cultural resource records and Sacred Lands records searches will be conducted to update information contained in the EDE EIR for Target Area K and to address the potential for resources to occur within the proposed Target Area K expansion area. Offers of consultation will be made to Native American tribes pursuant to AB 52 and SB 18, with the consultation results reported along with potential for presences of tribal cultural resources.

## Energy

Energy demands of future development within the project site will be reviewed and quantified for informational purposes. Applicant-proposed measures that would reduce energy demand will be summarized as will air quality and/or greenhouse gas mitigation measures and uniformly applied policies and regulations which do the same. Impacts will be discussed qualitatively, as energy thresholds of significance are qualitative.

## Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The City of Salinas has not yet adopted a climate action plan. Consequently, greenhouse gas (GHG) impacts will be evaluated for the project. The EDE EIR found that GHG impacts of implementing the EDE, including developing Target Area K, would be significant and unavoidable, even after implementing mitigation measures. GHG emissions will be quantified using CalEEMod for informational purposes. At this time, it is assumed that performance-based GHG threshold of significance guidance from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District or a quantified service population-based threshold of significance will be derived based on City focused emissions and population and employment data. If the latter approach is used and the impact is found to be significant, mitigation will be proposed and quantified to assess the potential to reduce the impact to less than significant.

## Noise

This section of the EIR will address construction noise/vibration, traffic noise, and potential stationary noise sources associated with the proposed project. The analysis will be based on the land use plan submitted by the applicant and on traffic generation and distribution information to be generated as part of the transportation analysis to be prepared for the project. Noise compatibility with the adjacent school will be addressed. A noise assessment will be prepared to evaluate related impacts in the context of general plan noise and land use compatibility policies and standards.

## Public Services

This section of the EIR will identify whether the proposed project will trigger the need to construct new public facilities to meet increases in service/capacity demands on public service providers (e.g., police and fire services, recreation services, schools, etc.). If so, the impacts of constructing such facilities will be evaluated. The capacity of service providers to accommodate increases in demand will be identified as the basis for determining the need for new facilities.

## Transportation

The project will generate a substantial increase in vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled. A transportation analysis will be prepared to evaluate vehicle miles travelled impacts. Mitigation will be identified for significant impacts which considers characteristics of the project which may serve to reduce vehicle miles traveled. The transportation analysis will also evaluate project consistency with policies and plans for pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and public transit.

## **Wastewater**

This section of the EIR will focus on the capability of the City to convey wastewater and the capacity of the Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency to provide wastewater treatment service. The relationship between the proposed project and the Sala Road Project for providing key wastewater conveyance infrastructure will be identified. Environmental impacts resulting from the need to construct new conveyance and/or treatment capacity/infrastructure, if required, will be evaluated.

## **Water Supply and Groundwater Sustainability**

To evaluate the sufficiency of water supply for the project and evaluate project impacts on groundwater supply sustainability, a water supply assessment will be prepared by the water purveyor – Cal Water. The assessment results will be reported in this section as will project consistency with the applicable groundwater sustainability plan.

## **Effects Adequately Addressed in the EDE EIR or Found to be Less than Significant**

It is anticipated that impacts for several resource related environmental topics will be found to have been adequately addressed in the EDE EIR, even with the proposed Target Area K boundary change. These effects may include aesthetics, land use and planning, mineral resources, population and housing, recreation and wildfire. Other effects are anticipated to be found less than significant based primarily on information in the EDE EIR and/or required conformance of future development with uniformly applied policies/regulations. These effects may include several geology and soils effects, hazards and hazardous materials, and hydrology and water quality. These topics will be discussed along with evidence as to why detailed environmental analysis is not required.

## **Cumulative Impacts**

The cumulative effects of buildout of the specific plan, combined with other relevant plans and programs, will be analyzed in this section of the EIR.

## **Growth Inducement**

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15126.2(d) the EIR will include a discussion of the growth-inducing impacts of the project.

## **Alternatives**

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6 the EIR will include analysis of a reasonable range of project alternatives, and/or to the project location, which could feasibly attain most of the basic project objectives, but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant project effects. An evaluation of the comparative merits of the alternatives will be presented.

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