3.0 Cumulative Scenario and Methodology

Under the CEQA Guidelines, "a cumulative impact consists of an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the environmental impact report (EIR) together with other projects causing related impacts." Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an environmental impact report (EIR) discuss cumulative impacts of a project when the project's incremental effect is cumulatively considerable, as defined in section 15065(c). An EIR need not discuss impacts that do not result in part from the project evaluated in that EIR. The cumulative discussion does not need to provide as much detail as is provided for the effects attributable to the project alone. The discussion of cumulative impacts shall be guided by standards of practicality and reasonableness, and shall focus on the cumulative impact to which the identified other projects contribute rather than the attributes of other projects which do not contribute to the cumulative impact."(CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b)).

The CEQA Guidelines allow for two approaches or methodologies, for establishing the cumulative scenario. One approach is to use a "list of cumulative projects producing related or cumulative impacts." (CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b)(1)(A)). The other is to use a "summary of projects contained in an adopted general plan or related planning document, or in a prior environmental document which has been adopted or certified, which described or evaluated regional or area wide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact." (CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b)(1)(B)).

This EIR uses a combination of the two approaches that includes (Tier I) specific projects that are reasonably foreseeable, and (Tier II) Area Plans and General Plan updates that are currently undergoing review. Tier I projects are specific cumulative projects within the study area that are reasonably foreseeable. Tier II projects are Area Plans and General Plan items that are currently undergoing review by the City and County.

The combined Tier I and Tier II approach was used because for some of the issue areas there was a need to assess not only other specific projects but also actions resulting from the implementation of Area Plans and General Plan updates. Certain issues, such as traffic and air quality, are more regional in nature, and cumulative impacts need to be assessed based upon regional information contained in various City and County Plans as well as the specific projects. For example, the analysis of cumulative impacts in traffic and circulation need to considers build out conditions in the City of San Luis Obispo, as well as regional transportation improvements. Cumulative water quality impacts are considered on a watershed basis for the San Luis Obispo Creek Watershed, and include area wide projects covered in both the Tier I and Tier II projects.

For issue areas such as noise and biology, where the cumulative impacts are more localized (i.e., to the Project Site only), the Tier I projects are included in the cumulative analysis.

3.1 Cumulative Development Scenario

The proposed Project Site is in unincorporated San Luis Obispo County (County), California, just south of the City of San Luis Obispo (City). Although predominantly vacant, the 332-acre site has remnants of its previous use as a petroleum storage and distribution facility, including three buildings, utility lines, a paved parking lot, fencing, and reservoir imprints (see Figure 2-2). Cattle also graze on site for weed control and fire prevention.

The proposed Project Site is surrounded by the rural and urban development of the City and County of San Luis Obispo. The northern side of the proposed Project Site is bound by undeveloped land used for grazing. The northwestern side of the site abuts 32 acres of level, tilled cropland (north of Tank Farm Road). Actively tilled cropland and hay-cropped land abuts the southern side of the Project Site (near Esperanza Lane) and land used for livestock grazing also abuts its southern side. The San Luis Obispo County Regional Airport is southeast of the site, with runways oriented northwest to southeast.

Areas containing developed industrial/business parks with light manufacturing, commercial office, and service uses lie to the northwest of the site (south of Meissner Lane), to the west of the site along Suburban Road (and south of Tank Farm Road), and to the southeast of the Project Site. Parkland is located northeast of the site and a mobile home park is situated east of the site (north of Tank Farm Road). The closest residential uses are the mobile home park referenced above and scattered residences within agricultural lands.

U.S. Highway 101 lies less than one mile to the west of the proposed Project Site, while State Route 227 (Broad Street) is less than one mile to the east of the proposed Project Site. California Polytechnic State University, Camp San Luis Obispo (California National Guard), and Cuesta College are to the north and northwest of the proposed Project Site.

3.1.1 Proposed Development in the City and County of San Luis Obispo

The Tier I reasonably foreseeable projects in the City and County that could contribute to the cumulative effects scenario are listed in Table 3-1 and shown in Figure 3-1. Collectively, these projects represent known and anticipated activities that may occur in the Project vicinity that have the potential to contribute to a cumulative impact on the environment. Many of the Tier I projects in the cumulative effects scenario are limited in their geographic extent and would only result in minor construction plans and renovations. Other Tier I projects are expansive in nature and would have the potential to create cumulative impacts. The Tier I cumulative projects related to the San Luis Obispo County Regional Airport (SLOCRA) are listed as County projects in Table 3-1.

The Tier II Area Plan and General Plan update projects are included in Table 3-2. These tables provide the project name and project type, as well as its location and status.

Table 3-1 List of Tier I Cumulative Projects (Specific Projects)

#	Project	Location	Type	Description	Status
City of San Luis Obispo					
1	Broad Street Village	2238 Broad Street	Residential Commercial	Residential and Commercial	83 residential units and 30,000 sq. ft. commercial space
2	DeBlauw Map	408 Prado Road	Residential Commercial	Residential and Business Park	121single-family residential lots, one lot for affordable housing (23 units); and 6 mixed-use lots
3	Cowan Map	392 Prado Road	Residential Commercial	Residential and Business Park	56 single-family residential lots, 10 mixed-use lots
4	King Map	3000 Calle Malva	Residential	165 Single Family lots, 32 multi-family lots	Tentative Map approved
5	Airport Business Park	4450 Broad Street	Commercial	70,000 sq. ft in seven buildings for office and retail use	One Gymnasium building constructed. Other buildings pending building permits not yet submitted.
6	Suburban Road Tract Map	143, 151 & 163 Suburban Road	Commercial	23 commercial lots on two existing parcels (one vacant and one developed) totaling approximately 13.5 acres on the south side of Suburban Road between Short Street and Horizon Lane. Parcels range in size from 9,000 square feet to 202,113 square feet	Tentative Map approved
7	Long Bonetti Ranch Commercial Development	3897 S. Higuera Street & 120 Tank Farm Road	Commercial	Several commercial buildings with a total of 43,000 square feet	Approved. Pending submittal of building permits
8	Moylan Terrace	851 & 860 Humbert Avenue	Residential	81 residential units	Under construction
9	Broad Street Mixed Use Project	3229 Broad Street	Residential Commercial	Mixed use project with 4,000 square feet of commercial space and eight residential units	Pending building permit review
10	2959 Broad Street	2959 Broad Street	Commercial	Automatic Carwash	Building permits submitted and pending final approval
11	Laurel Creek	861 & 953 Orcutt (Sacramento at Orcutt)	Residential	161 residential units	44 units completed; 117 pending.
12	Creekston	791 Orcutt	Residential Commercial	Mixed-use project with 86 residential units and 10,000 square feet of commercial floor area	Planning approvals complete, building permits not submitted
13	Johnson Avenue Housing Project	(1642 Johnson Avenue))	Residential	88 residential units	EIR under review
14	Mind Body Development	651 Tank Farm Road	Business Park	Develop approximately 60,000 square feet two story office building with outdoor plaza, surface parking and a four-level parking structure	Under Review

Table 3-1 List of Tier I Cumulative Projects (Specific Projects)

#	Project	Location	Type	Description	Status
County of San Luis Obispo					
15	Green Waste Management Facility	Orcutt Road	Industrial	Composting facility	Information hold pending review
16	Fiber Optic Cable	Rail Road Right-of-Way	Industrial	Install fiber optic cable along 242 miles between San Luis Obispo and Los Angeles in the Union Pacific Railroad Right-of-way	Application Received
17	Wind/Solar Energy System	4910 Edna Road	Industrial	500 KVA photovoltaic system - ground mounted - for courtside cellars winery	Project Approved
18	Dalidio Ranch	1035 Madonna Road	Industrial	Storage site for fill material intended for a future multi-use development on 131 acres	Application Received
19	Home Depot Area - Grading	12393 Los Osos Valley Road	Industrial	Engineered (major) grading for drainage facility for home depot area	Permits Issued
20	Grading Project	1900 Southwood Drive	Industrial	Grading restoration - as-built grading: remove and restore grading and remove 3 water tanks	Project Approved
21	Industrial Buildings	Buckley Road	Industrial	Two industrial buildings totaling 25,500 square feet	Information hold pending review
22	Grading Major Project	470 Buckley Road	Industrial	Placement of top soil from Costco site to agricultural land (Drake Farms) for agricultural use	Project Approved
23	Airport Project	4733 Broad Street		22,583 square foot private air terminal; 33,400 square foot repair hangar; 27,000 square foot repair hangar; curb, gutter and sidewalk waiver	Under Review
24	Grading Major Project	1146 Farmhouse Lane	Industrial	Major grading for three pads for future industrial structures, rough grading and utilities, parking lot, concrete flatwork and landscape under building permit	Under Review
25	Commercial Development	Broad Street	Commercial	Two 10,000 square foot buildings, parking and landscaping.	Project Approved
26	Road Improvements	Los Osos Valley Road overpass at Hwy 101	n/a	Widen overpass to 4 lanes at Hwy 101	Project Approved

Source: City 2011a, 2011b, County 2011

Figure 3-1 Location of Tier I Cumulative Projects

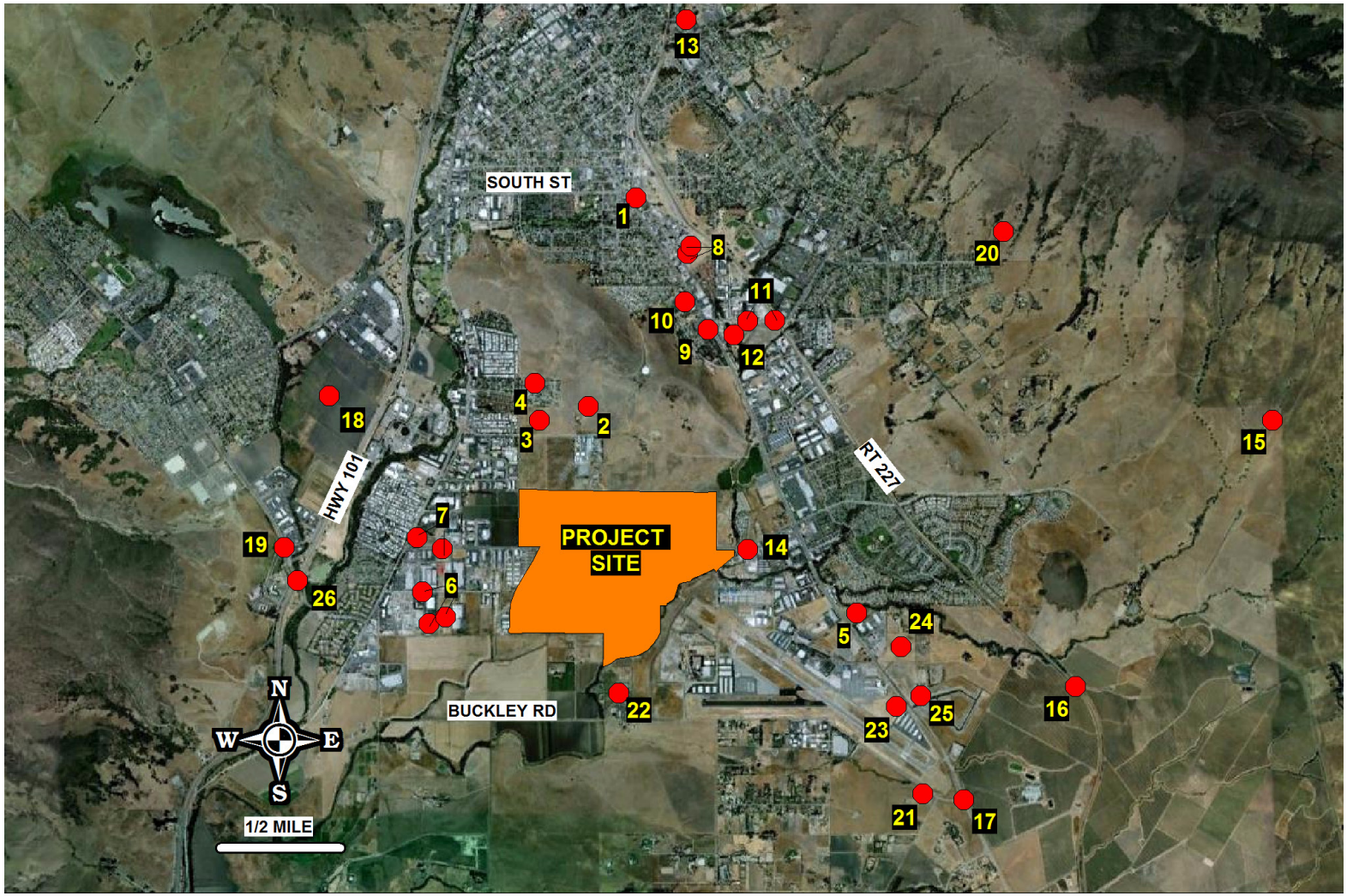

Table 3-2 List of Tier II Cumulative Projects (Area and General Plans)

#	Project	Location	Type	Description	Status
1	Area Plan	Broad Street	Service-Commercial	Broad Street Corridor Plan (includes land use and zoning amendments, design and circulation standards)	Under review
2	City-wide General Plan and Circulation Element Updates	City-wide	n/a	City-wide update to General Plan LUE and Circulation Element.	Under review
3	Area Plan	Avila Ranch 173 Buckley Road	Business Park to be rezoned	550 housing units, 15-20,000 sq. ft commercial and office. Buckley Road extension to S. Higuera.	Conceptual Review over the next year.

3.1.2 Caltrans

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) currently has one cumulative project that is of a scale and location that could contribute to cumulative impacts. Caltrans proposes to improve the Los Osos Valley Road/US Highway 101 interchange in the City and County in order to correct operational deficiencies and improve safety. The Los Osos Valley Road/US Highway 101 Interchange Improvements Project would widen both the Los Osos Valley Road overcrossing and the adjacent San Luis Obispo Creek bridge (Caltrans 2009).

As a result of its initial study, Caltrans determined that the proposed improvements to the Los Osos Valley Road/US Highway 101 interchange would not have a significant effect on the environment. Further, due to the proposed mitigation measures, the proposed improvement of the Los Osos Valley Road/US Highway 101 interchange would reduce the potential effects on aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, noise, public services, and transportation/traffic to insignificant (Caltrans 2009).

With the environmental review portion of the process completed, design and construction of all or part of the proposed improvements to the Los Osos Valley Road/US Highway 101 interchange is contingent on funding approval.

3.1.3 Other Potential Stakeholders

The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County, California Polytechnic State University, Camp San Luis Obispo (California National Guard), Cuesta College, and Pacific Gas & Electric Company do not currently have any active or proposed cumulative projects in the cumulative impact study area.

3.2 Cumulative Impact Analysis Methodology

The development of the Tank Farm Property was included as part of the City of San Luis Obispo's Airport Area Specific Plan (AASP), and the cumulative impacts of development of this area were addressed as part of the Airport Area and Margarita Area Specific Plans and Related Facilities Master Plans Program EIR. While the Project would result in a number of changes to the AASP, these changes are mainly structural in nature (elimination of a road, changes in location and mix of development on the Project Site), and would not substantially affect the cumulative analysis contained within the AASP EIR. The cumulative analysis in the Airport Area and Margarita Area Specific Plans and Related Facilities Master Plans Program EIR is incorporated by reference in this EIR (CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(d)).

However, changes have occurred since the Final Airport Area and Margarita Area Specific Plans and Related Facilities Master Plans Program EIR that required an update to the cumulative analysis as part of this EIR. Also, the Final Airport Area and Margarita Area Specific Plans and Related Facilities Master Plans Program EIR did not address the remediation of the Project Site, which is part of the proposed Project.

The area within which a cumulative effect can occur varies by issue area. For example, air quality impacts tend to disperse over a large area, while noise and safety impacts are typically more localized. For this reason, the geographic scope for the analysis of cumulative impacts must be identified for each issue area. The analysis of cumulative effects considers a number of variables including geographic (spatial) limits, time (temporal) limits, and the characteristics of the resource being evaluated. The geographic scope of each analysis is based on the topography surrounding the Project Site, and the natural boundaries of the resource affected, rather than jurisdictional boundaries. The geographic scope of cumulative effects will often extend beyond the scope of the direct effects, but not beyond the scope of the direct and indirect effects of the Project.

In addition, each of the cumulative projects has its own implementation schedule, which may or may not coincide or overlap with the proposed Project's schedule. This is a consideration for short-term impacts from the Project. The cumulative impact analysis for each individual issue area is included in the respective discussions in Sections 4.1 through 4.15 of this EIR.

3.3 References

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). 2009. Los Osos Valley Road/US 101 Interchange Improvements Project. Initial Study with Mitigated Negative Declaration. December 2009. SCH No. 2008061098.

San Luis Obispo County (County). 2011. Department of Planning and Building, Environmental Resource Division. May 24, 2011. List of County Cumulative Airport Area Projects.

City of San Luis Obispo (City). 2011a. Community Development Department. May 12, 2011. Cumulative Development Summary.

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___. 2003. Final Program Environmental Impact Report for the Airport Area and Margarita Area Specific Plans and Related Facilities Master Plans. September 2003. SCH #2000051062.