

**SECTION 5.0
CUMULATIVE EFFECTS SUMMARY**

5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.1.1 CEQA Guidance

Direction regarding the analysis of cumulative effects is found in Section 15064 and 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines. Section 15064 deals with the issue of cumulative effects in determining whether or not an EIR is necessary for a project and Section 15130 provides some guidance on how to evaluate and discuss cumulative effects. Depending on the issue, different approaches may be used in considering cumulative effects, as set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b) (1). The first approach involves compiling a list of similar or nearby projects that are “...past, present, and probably future projects...” that should be considered based on “...the nature of the environmental resource being examined, the location of the project, and its type...” (Section 15130(b) (2)). The second approach relies on “...projections contained in an adopted local, regional, or statewide plan, or related planning document, that describes or evaluates conditions contributing to the cumulative effect.” Both of these approaches are used in this EIR.

Regardless of which method is used, the point is to identify those issues or resources where the effects of the project would be considered “cumulatively considerable.” Although there is no quantitative or objective definition of this phrase in the CEQA Guidelines, project effects that are disproportionately large or which add to other projects and cause a numerical threshold to be exceeded are commonly considered to be cumulatively considerable. If a project-specific impact cannot be mitigated to a less than significant level, it might also be considered to contribute to a cumulative significant impact as well. Also, even if a project-specific impact is less than significant, it may contribute to a cumulatively significant impact and this result should be identified.

5.1.2 Initial Study/Notice of Preparation

The IS/NOP prepared for this project identified possible cumulative effects in the following issues:

- **Agriculture.** Cumulative effects may arise from indirect effects (such as transportation air pollution or the potential introduction of weeds) or from the direct conversion of land from its present use to the quarry and its addition to similar conversions in other areas.
- **Air Quality.** This issue is typical of those that are addressed through consideration of regional plans, the SLO APCD Clean Air Plan in this instance. Greenhouse gases and their contribution towards global climate change are related issues that are usually evaluated on a cumulative basis, rather than focusing on a single project.

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- **Public Services.** The IS/NOP (page 24) notes that cumulative effects on public services are usually addressed through the County impact fee program. The same discussion also notes the potential for cumulative effects on public roadways – and the need to address cumulative traffic.

This list is not exhaustive, and it was recognized that the EIR must address cumulative effects appropriately. This IS/NOP did conclude (page 32) that cumulative effects can and will be mitigated. In the analysis for this EIR, however, two cumulative impacts have been identified for which mitigation is not feasible. These are cumulative effects on aesthetics (views from the SR 58 corridor) and cumulative traffic noise in Santa Margarita. These effects are described in their respective sections in Chapter 4 of this EIR, and are summarized below along with the discussions of other cumulative effects found to be less than significant.

5.2 CUMULATIVE PROJECTS

The County Planning and Building Department maintains a listing of recently approved projects, and prepared a preliminary list of projects in the vicinity of the proposed quarry. This list was reviewed, updated, and augmented with information obtained from the City of Atascadero. The resulting list is shown in Table 5-1 below, and the project locations are shown in Figure 5-1.

The projects from Table 5-1 with the greatest potential to contribute towards significant cumulative effects are the Eagle Ranch Specific Plan and possible future development in the Santa Margarita Ranch. If developed, both of these projects would contribute substantial volumes of traffic affecting US Highway 101, and would have related effects on air quality. Traffic and air quality are both topics that involve regional modeling and planning, and their cumulative effects are discussed in the context of larger plans. Eagle Ranch is located west of US Highway 101 and would have less effect on traffic using SR 58 and little or no effect on lands and other resources in the project vicinity. A preliminary review of future development within Santa Margarita Ranch was provided in the EIR for the Agricultural Cluster development. In the traffic forecast used for future conditions, the Santa Margarita Ranch Agricultural Residential Cluster subdivision was considered, since it was approved, but the “Future Development Program” was not considered to be reasonably foreseeable since it was not approved.

The two solar photovoltaic projects listed are very large, but are located at a distance such that they do not contribute towards effects near the proposed quarry site. By the time the quarry is developed, the construction traffic from the solar plants will no longer affect SR 58, so they will have little or no additive effects.

Most of the remaining projects listed are small lot splits or parcel maps that do not involve significant effects.

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**TABLE 5-1
LIST OF PROJECTS CONSIDERED
IN CUMULATIVE EFFECTS ANALYSIS**

Project ID Number	Project Name (APN)	Description	Status
1	Eagle Ranch, City of Atascadero (many APNs)	3,450 acre Specific Plan; annexation to City; re-configuration of 452 existing residential lots, development of Village Center office and local retail uses, highway commercial uses at US Highway 101 and Santa Barbara Road, resort hotel, schools, roads, trails, open space and agricultural uses	Early 2012: Specific Plan and Draft EIR are under preparation and project is undergoing review by City through series of public workshops. Hearings for approval anticipated in 2013.
2	Church of the Nazarene (043-301-035)	Re-zone from Agriculture to Rural Lands and expansion of organizational camp to add 10,000 square feet of yurt clusters and an approximately 4,000 square foot dining room addition, with an increase of campers from 120 to 250.	Information hold
3	Hendrix MUP (070-093-017)	Temporary Events including: 10 events with no more than 300 attendees; 5 events with no more than 200 attendees; 5 events with no more than 150 attendees; and 8 events with no more than 125 attendees.	Information hold
4	Cully Parcel Map (069-044-005)	Four-lot parcel map (~9.5 acres)	Information hold
5	Johansen Parcel Map (059-241-021)	2 lot parcel map (~5 acres)	Approved
6	Wonsley Parcel Map (070-172-006)	2 lot parcel map (~42 acres)	Accepted
7	Ioppini Parcel Map (059-061-015)	2 lot parcel map with TDCs (~2.5 acres)	Approved
8	Volbrecht Parcel Map (059-181-064 /065)	2 lot parcel map with TDCs (~2.2 acres)	Recorded, not built
9	Galena Parcel Map (059-431-042)	2 lot parcel map with TDCs (~2.5 acres)	Recorded, not built
10	Barre Parcel Map (059-331-029)	2 lot parcel map (~2 acres)	Recorded, not built
11	Kelling Parcel Map (059-141-059)	2 lot parcel map with TDCs (~4.9 acres)	Recorded, not built
12	Burgett Parcel Map (059-141-053)	3 lot parcel map with TDCs (~5.4 acres)	Recorded, not built
13	Damon Parcel Map (070-191-057)	2 lot parcel map (~46 acres)	Recorded, not built

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**TABLE 5-1 (CONTINUED)
LIST OF PROJECTS CONSIDERED
IN CUMULATIVE EFFECTS ANALYSIS**

Project ID Number	Project Name (APN)	Description	Status
14	Dickerson Parcel Map (070-172-028)	2 lot parcel map (~47 acres)	Approved
15	Kregger Parcel Map (069-133-030)	4 lot parcel map	Approved
16	Santa Margarita Ranch	150 lot Ag Cluster, and future development to be determined.	Ag. Cluster Approved / Litigation.
17	Topaz Solar Farm and Tract Map	The project would allow for a 550 megawatt (MW) photovoltaic (PV) solar power plant over approximately 3,500 acres, within 19 properties (totaling approximately 7,182 acres, or approx. 9.9 square miles). The project also includes a Vesting Tentative Tract Map (Tract 3032) that creates one parcel of 320 acres from three legal parcels of 40, 40, and 80 acres each, and four 40-acre previous created parcels.	Approved 2011, under construction in 2012.
18	California Valley Solar Ranch (SunPower)	A request to establish a 250 megawatt (MW) photovoltaic power plant on 25 properties totaling approx. 4,685 acres. Related project (Twisselman Surface Mine) would provide aggregate for on-site road base only.	Approved 2011, under construction 2012.
19	Hanson Aggregates (Santa Margarita Quarry) Mining Area Expansion (070-141-054)	Request to amend the existing CUP and Reclamation Plan for the quarry operations to add an additional 45 acres to the mining area. No increases in maximum output levels, operating hours, or daily truck trips are proposed.	Application filed June 2012. NOP released by County for a Use Permit/ Reclamation Plan Amendment DRC2011-00098, 99
20	City of Atascadero, Dove Creek, PD-12 (ZCH 2003-0049)	Planned development for 279 dwelling units, east of US Hwy 101, north of Santa Barbara Road.	Approved 09-28-2004. As of March 2012, approx. 150 built or under construction. Remaining 129 dwelling units expected by 2017.

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**TABLE 5-1 (CONTINUED)
LIST OF PROJECTS CONSIDERED
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Project ID Number	Project Name (APN)	Description	Status
21	City of Atascadero, Las Lomas (Woodridge Specific Plan, SP-1, ZCH 2003-0041)	Specific Plan for 279 dwellings (100 apartments, 179 single family)	Approved 10-15-2003. As of March, 2012, approx. 50 built. 100 apartments pending and remaining 129 dwelling units expected by 2017.

5.3 SUMMARY OF CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

Each of the topical discussions throughout Section 4.0 of this EIR discusses cumulative effects. The degree of detail in each discussion varies depending on the issue and approach used in the evaluation. The most important cumulative effect is related to traffic, but future traffic improvements are expected to allow all roadway segments and intersections examined in this EIR to function at acceptable levels of service. With or without the project, traffic volumes are expected to increase along SR 58 to the point where a signal will be warranted at its intersection of Camino Estrada with El Camino Real. The proposed quarry will contribute towards this cumulative impact, and a proportional contribution towards mitigating that impact will be required.

The following sections summarize the cumulative impact discussions from the Section 4.0 topics.

5.3.1 Aesthetics and Visual Resources

The project is about one-half mile distance from the existing Hanson Santa Margarita Quarry. Both quarries are within the EX1 Extractive Resource Combining Designation, as shown on Figure 3-1. In this region, the EX1 Combining Designation is placed over the La Panza Granitics, a large area that is classified as MRZ-2 by the California State Geological Survey (1989:9). Since this Combining Designation is specifically intended to promote mineral extraction, it is reasonable to expect that future quarries will be approved and constructed in this area, and that an unspecified number of them will have graded areas and ultimately revegetated slopes that will have visual impacts similar to this proposed project, particularly when viewed from SR 58. Although the specific number and actual configuration of these future quarries is unknown at this time, cumulative effects relative to Aesthetics and Visual Resources are expected to be significant and not mitigable.

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5.3.2 Agricultural Resources

Countywide, there was a loss of 5,840 acres of agricultural land from 2006–2008 (FMMP). The proposed project would result in a loss of approximately 2.1 acres of grazing land which is relatively small in size and is generally of low productivity. This loss does not contribute a considerable or significant proportion of the total agriculture land in the County or of the loss of agricultural land over time.

With proper implementation of best use practices and mitigation measures, the impacts related to the introduction of invasive species are considered less than significant. Given the lack of agricultural uses within the immediate vicinity of the project and with proper implementation of APCD procedures, the threat of dust damage from this project and other sources in the vicinity is considered less than significant.

5.3.3 Air Quality

Section 4.3 Air Quality reviews potential cumulative effects under IMPACT AQ-5. The following paragraphs summarize that discussion.

Guidance from the SLO APCD (2012:page 1-6), indicates that cumulative impacts for criteria air pollutants should be evaluated by combining the air quality impact from the project with all planned construction and development activities within one mile of the project.

The proposed Oster/Las Pilitas Quarry is about one-half mile in a crosswind direction from the existing Hanson Santa Margarita Quarry. The Hanson Santa Margarita Quarry has submitted a request to expand the allowable mining area but is not proposing any increase in production or changes to operation that would result in increased air emissions over the current operations according to the Notice of Preparation (NOP). Traffic originating at the Hanson Quarry will not increase as a result of their proposed project, and impacts associated transportation emissions from the proposed Las Pilitas Quarry along the haul routes are less than significant.

The only major foreseeable development in the general vicinity includes the completion of approved residential subdivisions in the southern portion of Atascadero (about 400 dwelling units) and the future development of the Eagle Ranch Specific Plan, in the southwestern portion of Atascadero. These locations are about 3.5 and six miles northwest from the project site, respectively. The Santa Margarita Ranch is closer; the approved Agricultural Cluster subdivision in that project is about two miles southwest from the project site. The remaining portions of the Santa Margarita Ranch property, referenced as the “Future Development Program” in the 2008 EIR for that project (San Luis Obispo County 2008:page 2-1), have not been approved for any development beyond continued agricultural and related uses. The extent of future land uses other than agriculture in this Future Development Program is not

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known; but this entire area is also much more than one mile from the project site. Thus, there are no significant projects, other than the Hanson Santa Margarita Quarry discussed above, that are within one mile of the project site (note: this distance is consistent with Section 1.5(h) of the SLO County APCD CEQA Air Quality Handbook), which would warrant consideration for cumulative effects.

With respect to Toxic Air Contaminants, and in particular Diesel Particulate Matter (DMP) from heavy truck exhaust which is a known carcinogen, the Health Risk Assessment performed for the air quality analysis determined that the maximum increase in cancer risk within the community of Santa Margarita was 1.9 in one million, well below the 10 in one million threshold for project specific analysis suggested by the SLOAPCD. Even if the existing truck traffic from the Hanson Quarry and from other quarries and transport businesses in the area were added up, the total increase in cancer risk along SR 58 through Santa Margarita would be approximately 4 in one million, still below the single project threshold, and well below higher thresholds that could be used for cumulative analysis. Thus, the cumulative effect related to DMP and increased cancer risk is not a significant impact.

5.3.4 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The project related impact related to greenhouse gas emissions is less than significant. Furthermore, the proximity of the Oster Quarry within one mile of the existing Hanson Quarry provides an appropriate cumulative impact study area for greenhouse gas emissions. The greenhouse gas emissions generated from the Quarry project are negligible even when combined with the emissions from the Hanson Quarry. This potential cumulative impact is less than significant.

5.3.5 Biological Resources

The proximity of the Oster Quarry within one mile of the existing Hanson Quarry provides an appropriate cumulative impact study area for biological resources. The loss of approximately 41 acres of habitat from this region does not, by itself, constitute a cumulatively considerable biological impact, due to the quantity of surrounding habitat in the region surrounding the project site. The applicant proposes the permanent preservation of 68.8 acres of undeveloped land on-site, as mitigation for the loss of Native Habitats. The on-going operations of Hanson Quarry within one mile of the proposed project do not require an increase in the amount of habitat being preserved within the Oster Quarry site. The proposed Hanson Quarry expansion will be evaluated for its own biological effects, but that project will not alter the production rate, traffic generation, emissions or other factors that would increase indirect effects. For these reasons, the cumulative effects on biological resources are less than significant.

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5.3.6 Geology

The project as designed, and with the listed mitigation measures applied to it, will not have any significant impacts related to geological constraints or resources. There are several other granite quarries in the region, and each is subject to applicable code requirements that work to reduce their adverse environmental and safety effects. As described in Section 3.1 of this EIR, the EX-1 Extractive Resource Combining Designation extends over 8,000 acres within the Las Pilitas Planning Area and also extends into the adjacent planning areas north and west. Given the extent of the granitic resources present, and the continuing demand for aggregate resources necessary to maintain highways and local roads, as well as for any new development, it is reasonable to anticipate future quarry proposals throughout the EX-1 area. For the most part, each of the geological constraints involved in the significance criteria used in this analysis is evaluated on the basis of the specific location of a project relative to the constraint or issue being analyzed. Thus, there are no additive or cumulative effects associated with a project's distance from the nearest active fault zone, or presence or absence of soils subject to expansion. Some effects, however, could be cumulative in nature. These include the loss of topsoil through erosion and the discharge of sediment into surface watercourses. These effects may be associated with any proposed quarry, or with any other type of development or even with a change in agricultural activities. For these issues, permit requirements and existing statewide programs provide measures that serve to avoid or minimize the potential effects on a project-by-project basis. In this way, significant cumulative impacts are avoided or minimized, and it is not necessary to identify additional requirements for any individual project. Cumulative effects regarding geology are less than significant.

5.3.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

There are several other granite quarries in the region which transport, manage and handle explosive and hazardous materials but each of these quarries are also subject to applicable regulatory requirements that mitigate their potential impacts. There are no additive or cumulative effects associated with the hazards or hazardous material at the site. Dust control measures and other recommendations to minimize the exposure of workers to Valley Fever are required at all major construction sites, quarries, and similar operations. These measures serve to minimize the potential for worker exposure to Valley Fever and the potential for any significant outbreaks or widespread infection from this disease.

In summary, the application of existing regulatory programs that address and control hazards and hazardous material that may be associated with the project, and with all similar projects, prevent these effects from having a significant additive or cumulative impact.

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5.3.8 Noise

Although the Hanson Santa Margarita Quarry is in the same general vicinity as the proposed project, it is located at a sufficient distance such that its noise effects are just barely audible along SR 58 and in the vicinity of the project (Dublink Associates 2010:13). For this reason, the most important cumulative noise effects related to the project are those involving roadway traffic noise. The project is expected to have a lifetime of 30 years or more, and will continue to generate truck traffic on area roadways as the surrounding communities and traffic volumes grow. In Section 4.8, IMPACT NOISE-5 provides details regarding the cumulative roadway noise effects, which are summarized in the following paragraphs.

In Santa Margarita the existing traffic conditions lead to Ldn values at residences close to SR 58 near the east and west end of the village in excess of 60 dBA. Future traffic growth, both with and without the proposed project, will cause Ldn values to increase and surpass 65 dBA, and the project traffic will contribute about 2 dBA to this impact. With these future noise levels, it will become increasingly difficult to provide exterior living areas with Ldn values below 60 dBA, and interior Ldn values may begin to exceed 45 dBA. This cumulative traffic noise impact is considered significant, and the project will contribute towards this impact.

Given the proximity of existing residential uses to SR 58 passing through Santa Margarita, it is not feasible to construct a wall or other noise barrier between the roadway and still maintain access to those lots with driveways along the roadway. Such a construction project would also be inconsistent with the design guidelines for the Santa Margarita village. Project generated truck noise can be reduced with a requirement that all trucks using the quarry be required to maintain mufflers (MM Noise-2a), but this cannot avoid the future noise impacts.

In summary, due to its separation from the existing Hanson Santa Margarita Quarry the proposed quarry is not expected to contribute to cumulative operational impacts. It will, however, contribute towards cumulative traffic noise impacts. Cumulative traffic noise will remain less than significant in the project vicinity, but will be significant and not mitigable at residential locations along SR 58 in Santa Margarita.

5.3.9 Public Services and Utilities

This project, along with others in the area, will have a cumulative effect on police and fire protection, and will not affect schools. The project's cumulative impacts are within the general assumptions of growth projected in this area. Accordingly, public facility (County) and school (State Government Code 65995 et seq.) fee programs have been adopted to address this impact, and will reduce the cumulative impacts to less than significant levels and no special mitigation is required.

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5.3.10 Recreation

San Luis Obispo County Parks Department manages approximately 15,000 acres of parkland. Development of the larger Salinas River Trail system would have a positive recreational benefit. It may also have relatively minor adverse environmental effects associated with trail construction and increased human activity along the riparian corridor of the river. These types of effects are associated with all recreational trails and would have to be evaluated at the time when a specific trail alignment and design are formulated, which is when measures to minimize any adverse effects could also be identified..

The applicant is requesting an approval for a quarry that would have a life of at least 25 years (or longer) and without the offer of dedication could potential result in fragmentation of the Salinas River Trail for a minimum of 25 years. Without the offer of dedication, the project could potentially result in impacts to County trail systems, as would all projects on lands adjacent to the Salinas River. Through the planning and environmental review of projects in the region, however, and implementation of County policies and other requirements, the potential effects on the Salinas River corridor and trail system would be less than significant.

In summary, due to the non-residential nature of this quarry and the Hanson Quarry, and the offer of dedication for the trail alignment, potential cumulative impacts to Recreation are less than significant.

5.3.11 Transportation and Circulation

Of the 21 future development projects anticipated in the region (see Section 5.3), Santa Margarita Ranch (Project ID# 16) is clearly the most notable – both in terms of its potential traffic effects within the community and because it is the only large private development that would be expected to contribute substantial funding towards major traffic improvements on area roads. The two major land development projects underway in the southern portion of the City of Atascadero (Dove Creek (Project ID# 20) and Las Lomas/Woodridge Specific Plan (Project ID# 21) will construct an additional 350 to 400 dwelling units in the next 5 to 10 years. These projects, however, will generate little southbound peak hour traffic through Santa Margarita since they both have more direct access to US Highway 101 via Santa Barbara Road. Development of the Eagle Ranch Specific Plan area (Project ID# 1) in southwestern Atascadero may start within that timeframe, but would not likely be completed for another 10 to 20 years. In any event, that project will affect US Highway 101, but would have little or no traffic effects on SR 58 since its access to and from US Highway 101 is farther north.

In order to mitigate cumulative Traffic impacts, the applicant/quarry operator shall enter into an agreement with the County to pay their fair share of future traffic improvements in Santa Margarita. MM TRAFFIC-4 in Section 4.11 includes more detail regarding this condition. Although the proposed mitigation would reduce impacts to the extent possible, due to the

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uncertainty regarding Caltrans approval of improvements within their jurisdiction, and uncertainty regarding right-of-way acquisition, in cannot be assured that all improvements would be feasibly constructed prior to the time when they are needed. As a result, cumulative traffic impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.

5.3.12 Wastewater

No cumulative effects relative to wastewater were identified.

5.3.13 Water Quality and Supply

Cumulative effects related to groundwater use are well-documented for the Paso Robles groundwater basin within the upper Salinas River watershed. As discussed in Section 4.13, the project site is not within the Paso Robles groundwater basin, and would not affect it. The available riparian water supply associated with the Salinas River is adequate for the project and other foreseeable uses in the vicinity.

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