Initial Study Summary – Environmental Checklist

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING
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Promoting the Wise Use of Land • Helping to Build Great Communities

Project Title & No. Agricultural Cluster Division and Density Program Initial Study ED09-0132 (LRP2008-00010)

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED: The proposed project could have a "Potentially Significant Impact" for at least one of the environmental factors checked below. Please refer to the attached pages for discussion on mitigation measures or project revisions to either reduce these impacts to less than significant levels or require further study.

☒ Aesthetics	☒ Geology and Soils	☐ Recreation
☒ Agricultural Resources	☒ Hazards/Hazardous Materials	☒ Transportation/Circulation
☒ Air Quality	☒ Noise	☐ Wastewater
☒ Biological Resources	☒ Population/Housing	☒ Water
☒ Cultural Resources	☒ Public Services/Utilities	☒ Land Use

DETERMINATION: (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation, the Environmental Coordinator finds that:

☐ The proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☐ Although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☒ The proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

☐ The proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

☐ Although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Michael Conger and Airlin Singewald		20/JAN/2010
Prepared by (Print)	Signature	Date
John Nall	Ellen Carroll, Environmental Coordinator (for)	1/20/10
Reviewed by (Print)	Signature	Date

Project Environmental Analysis

The County's environmental review process incorporates all of the requirements for completing the Initial Study as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines. The Initial Study includes staff's on-site inspection of the project site and surroundings and a detailed review of the information in the file for the project. In addition, available background information is reviewed for each project. Relevant information regarding soil types and characteristics, geologic information, significant vegetation and/or wildlife resources, water availability, wastewater disposal services, existing land uses and surrounding land use categories and other information relevant to the environmental review process are evaluated for each project. Exhibit A includes the references used, as well as the agencies or groups that were contacted as a part of the Initial Study. The Environmental Division uses the checklist to summarize the results of the research accomplished during the initial environmental review of the project.

Persons, agencies or organizations interested in obtaining more information regarding the environmental review process for a project should contact the County of San Luis Obispo Environmental Division, Rm. 200, County Government Center, San Luis Obispo, CA, 93408-2040 or call (805) 781-5600.

A. PROJECT

DESCRIPTION: Request by the County of San Luis Obispo for an amendment to the Agriculture Element, Land Use Ordinance, and Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance to change policies and standards regarding agricultural cluster subdivisions and residential density on existing agricultural parcels. The project would also introduce agricultural cluster subdivision provisions to the coastal zone. In the inland area, the project would amend agricultural cluster subdivision policy and ordinance provisions addressing such things as criteria for qualification, subdivision design, and the density bonus. Additionally the project would reduce the number of primary residential dwellings on each existing Agriculture-designated parcel from two to one. This project applies Countywide.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project consists of amendments to Titles 22 and 23 of the County Code (Land Use Ordinance and Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance), Coastal Plan Policies, and the North Coast Area Plan.

Amendments to the Land Use Ordinance (Title 22)

The Land Use Ordinance (LUO), Title 22 of the County Code, is the primary ordinance concerning land use in the inland portion of the County. The following amendments are proposed to the Land Use Ordinance:

- **Reduce residential density on existing agricultural parcels.** Removing LUO Section 22.30.480A, which allows two primary dwellings on parcels in the Agriculture land use category that are larger than 20 acres. As a result, only one primary dwelling and qualifying farm support housing would be allowed on parcels in the Agriculture land use category.

- **Eliminate the distinction between major and minor clusters.** Combining the Major Agricultural Cluster Ordinance (LUO Section 22.22.152) and Minor Agricultural Cluster Ordinance (LUO Section 22.22.154) into a single ordinance (LUO Section 22.22.150) with one set of standards for all eligible properties.

- **Eliminate agricultural cluster subdivision as an option in Rural Lands.** Allowing the agricultural cluster program to be used only in the Agriculture land use category.

- **Allow clusters only within 2 miles of urban areas.** Modifying agricultural cluster eligibility criteria to include only parcels within the Agriculture land use category that are within two miles of the Urban Reserve Line (URLs) of Arroyo Grande, Atascadero, San Luis Obispo, San Miguel, Nipomo, and Paso Robles.

- **Eliminate the density bonus.** Modifying the method for calculating the allowable number of residential cluster parcels and eliminating the residential density bonus.

- **Increase the minimum cluster parcel size.** Establishing a 2.5 acre minimum size for residential cluster parcels, which would allow each cluster parcel to accommodate individual on-site well and septic systems.

- **Add design standards.** Adding various site design and development standards to reduce impacts associated with agricultural cluster subdivisions and to protect agricultural lands. Some examples of design provisions include the following:
  - Requiring that cluster lots be physically contiguous to each other.
  - Requiring that cluster lots be located in a single cluster area (or up to two if environmental conditions warrant this).
  - Clarifying that roads and other residential infrastructure be counted towards the 5 percent developable area.

- **Add application requirements.** Modifying and expanding application content requirements.

- **Clarify agricultural buffer requirements.** Establishing that required agricultural buffers be located on the residential parcels, consistent with the County's agricultural buffer policy.

- **Update section references.** Updating section references throughout.

Amendments to the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance (Title 23)

The Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance (CZLUO), Title 23 of the County Code, is the primary ordinance concerning land use in the coastal portion of the County. The CZLUO is one component of the County's Local Coastal Program (LCP), which has been certified by the California Coastal Commission. The proposed project would add a new section to Chapter 23.04, which would allow for agricultural lands clustering in the Coastal Zone. This new section would be consistent with the proposed amendments to Title 22; however, the maximum allowed number of residential cluster parcels would be limited the number of existing underlying lots.

Amendments to the Agriculture Element of the County General Plan

The following amendments are proposed to Chapter 2 of the Agriculture Element of the County General Plan:

- Modifying *Agriculture Policy 5: Residential Density* to specify that agricultural parcels are allowed one primary residence.
- Modifying *Agriculture Policy 20: Agricultural Land Divisions* to specify that the creation of residentially sized parcels and the bonus agricultural parcel provide an incentive to landowners to choose the cluster approach as an alternative to a conventional subdivision.
- Modifying *Agriculture Policy 22: Major Agricultural Cluster Projects* to achieve consistency between the Agriculture Element and Agricultural Lands Clustering Ordinance.
- Eliminating *Agriculture Policy 23: Minor Agricultural Cluster Projects.*

- Updating section references throughout.

SETTING

Regulatory Setting

Existing cluster regulations. Agricultural cluster subdivisions are governed by the Agriculture Element of the General Plan and by Section 22.22.140 of the Land Use Ordinance. Presently agricultural cluster subdivisions may only occur in the inland portion of the County. The Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance has not yet been updated to allow cluster subdivisions within the Coastal Zone.

The Agriculture Element policies and Land Use Ordinance provide specific restrictions on cluster subdivision. Some examples of these provisions include the following:

- Procedures for determining the base number of parcels and the density bonus.
- Design features, such as minimum and maximum parcel size.
- A specified percentage of land to be devoted to agricultural uses, and limitations on what uses could occur on that land.

Existing standard subdivision regulations. Agricultural cluster subdivision density is based on the number of parcels that can be achieved through a standard subdivision. Standard subdivisions may occur based on one of two tests: use or capability. The use test allows sites which are intensively cultivated to obtain smaller parcel sizes (i.e. 40 acres). The capability test allows sites with good soils and irrigation potential to obtain smaller parcel sizes (i.e. 40 acres).

Location. Under the present agricultural cluster subdivision regulations, any land in the inland portion of the County designated as Agriculture or Rural Lands may qualify for cluster subdivision, with some limited exceptions. For example, lands within the County's most intensively farmed and productive areas (i.e. Oso Flaco Valley, Cienaga Valley, etc.) are excluded from the cluster subdivision provisions. Additional density may be achieved for sites located within 5 miles of certain urban and village reserve lines under the major agricultural cluster subdivision provisions. In total, roughly 1.5 million acres of land in this County could qualify for cluster subdivision when only considering the location-based criteria.

Environmental Setting

San Luis Obispo County is a diverse county in terms of its environmental features. The county contains a variety of scenery and vegetation. Stands of pines in the north coastal portion of the County give way to oak-dotted grasslands, chaparral, and sand dunes along the southern coast. Inland, livestock populates grass-covered rolling hills, oak savannah, and chaparral. The diverse geologic features which characterize the County include forms of volcanic rock (most notable are the Morros extending from San Luis Obispo to Morro Bay), alluvial material washed into fertile valleys and sand dunes.

The steep Santa Lucia mountain range is the major physical barrier dividing the County into coastal and inland portions. The dark tones of the chaparral and oak woodlands that cover the slopes of the Santa Lucia Mountains provide contrast to the grasslands of the range's lower slopes. This area is sparsely developed, as the steep slopes, dense vegetative cover, and lack of extensive transportation, infrastructure, and public service networks have historically limited urbanization and agricultural activity.

Baseline

How this project is being evaluated. CEQA Guidelines Section 15125(a) specifies that a project would *normally* be evaluated for the potential for significant impacts, when considered against the environmental setting. This is consistent with the findings in *Environmental Planning and Information Council (EPIC) v. County of El Dorado*[a], which holds that a jurisdiction should not evaluate a new General Plan to an existing General Plan under CEQA – but instead should evaluate the new General Plan relative to the existing environmental setting.

A second case, *Black Property Owners Association v. City of Berkeley*[b] specifies, however, that the project itself need only be evaluated. This means that only those portions of the existing regulatory framework that are changing need to be evaluated. Existing policies which are not being changed and are simply being carried forward are not part of the "project" being evaluated.

For reference, this project involves changes to portions of the Agriculture Element, Land Use Ordinance, and Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance involving cluster subdivisions and second primary residences. The vast majority of County ordinances and the General Plan will remain unchanged, including provisions for buildout of legal non-agricultural parcels and standard subdivisions. As a result, the evaluation of the project will not consider these elements.

Included considerations. Based on the above discussion and the project description provided, the project would result in the following actions, which will be evaluated relative to the County's environmental setting:

- Allowing agricultural cluster subdivisions in the Coastal Zone.
- Requiring second primary residences on existing legal agricultural parcels to qualify as farm support quarters.
- Changing how a site may qualify for an agricultural cluster subdivision, resulting in a substantial reduction in acreage where agricultural cluster subdivisions could occur:
    - Parcels in the Rural Lands would no longer qualify.
    - Only those parcels within 2 miles of an Urban Reserve Line would qualify.
- Changing design features of agricultural cluster subdivisions:
    - Specifying a larger minimum parcel size for most clusters.
    - Requiring contiguous residential development.
- Eliminating the density bonus, thereby reducing an incentive to pursue cluster subdivision.
- Allowing the creation of new cluster subdivision parcels – estimated to be a maximum of approximately 1,300 residential cluster parcels.
- Permanent preservation of up to 125,000 acres of agricultural land.

Excluded considerations. As discussed in the aforementioned *Black Property Owners* case, some considerations will not be evaluated relative to the environmental setting. These are existing policies and procedures which are being carried forward unchanged:

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[a] 131 Cal. App. 3d 350
[b] 22 Cal. App. 4th 974

- The buildout of primary single family residences on existing legal lots, as this has been anticipated in the County's General Plan and the project will not change the policies and standards.

- The buildout of standard Agriculture and Rural Lands subdivisions, as this has already been anticipated in the County's General Plan and the regulations and policies affecting standards subdivisions will not be altered by these changes.

ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER(S): N/A

Latitude: N/A Longitude: N/A SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT # All

B. EXISTING SETTING

PLANNING AREA: All

LAND USE CATEGORY: Agriculture, Rural Lands

COMBINING DESIGNATION(S): Various

EXISTING USES: Various agricultural and residential uses on Agriculture parcels throughout county

TOPOGRAPHY: Nearly level to very steeply sloping

VEGETATION: Various

PARCEL SIZE: N/A

SURROUNDING LAND USE CATEGORIES AND USES:

North: N/A	*East:* N/A
South: N/A	*West:* N/A

C. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

During the Initial Study process, several issues were identified as having potentially significant environmental effects (see following Initial Study). Those potentially significant items associated with the proposed uses can be minimized to less than significant levels.

COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
INITIAL STUDY CHECKLIST

1.	**AESTHETICS** - ***Will the project:***	**Potentially Significant**	**Impact can & will be mitigated**	**Insignificant Impact**	**Not Applicable**
a)	***Create an aesthetically incompatible site open to public view?***	☒	☐	☐	☐
b)	***Introduce a use within a scenic view open to public view?***	☒	☐	☐	☐
c)	***Change the visual character of an area?***	☒	☐	☐	☐
d)	***Create glare or night lighting, which may affect surrounding areas?***	☒	☐	☐	☐
e)	***Impact unique geological or physical features?***	☒	☐	☐	☐
f)	***Other:_____***	☐	☐	☐	☐

Setting

The following summarizes the key characteristics of the County's visual resources:

- The County includes both urban and rural/agricultural visual settings. The visual character of urban areas is dependent on the character, mass, and scale of the built environment; while the character of the rural areas is characterized by undeveloped rolling hills and rustic agricultural scenery.
- The County contains a variety of scenery and vegetation, including dense pine forest along the northern coast, sand dunes along the southern coast, and oak-dotted grasslands and chaparral covering the inland portions of the county.
- The County's landscape is characterized by unique and diverse geologic features and topography, including rolling hills, the steep Santa Lucia range dividing the coastal and inland areas, and volcanic peaks extending from San Luis Obispo to Morro Bay.

Regulatory Setting

The following summarizes local, State, and federal regulations affecting visual resources:

- The County General Plan identifies various Sensitive Resource Area (SRA) combining designations over areas in the County with highly scenic and important backdrops and natural landmarks visible from transportation corridors.
- Highway 1 is a designated State Scenic Highway and an All-American Road in the National Scenic Byway system. A portion of Nacimiento Drive is also considered a State scenic corridor.
- The County has adopted Highway Corridor Design Standards along Highway 101 that address residential and related development.

- Development within the Coastal Zone is subject to Visual and Scenic Resource policies of the Local Coastal Program and implementing sections of the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance. These policies encourage preservation and protection of attractive features of the landscape, including unusual landforms, scenic vistas and sensitive habitat. Development in rural areas of the Coastal Zone should be subordinate to the rural character of the surrounding landscape.

Impact. The proposed project would significantly modify the County's rules for the location, design and intensity of residential development on agricultural properties throughout the unincorporated area. These amendments would indirectly result in additional residential development in rural/agricultural areas of the County. This development may result in the following potentially significant impacts to visual resources:

- Development of residences could occur in highly visible areas, silhouetting above ridgelines and contrasting with surrounding natural colors and the composition of the landscape.
- Residences could create glare or night lighting impacts.
- Development of residences in cluster form could be inconsistent with the rural agricultural character of the surrounding landscape.
- Development restrictions may force residential development on land which is more likely to have visual impacts. For example, requirements to avoid development on prime farmland could result in more development on steeper slopes.
- Residential development could occur in significant visual areas / corridors identified in the General Plan.

Conclusion. The proposed project may result in potentially significant impacts related to visual resources. The EIR should evaluate the indirect and cumulative visual impacts that may result from the proposed amendments. Individual agricultural cluster subdivisions would be subject to discretionary review and require a separate environmental determination. These individual environmental determinations would identify project-specific impacts and associated mitigation measures. Residential development within designated SRAs and/or areas subject to Highway Corridor Design Standards would be subject to special design standards to minimize visual impacts.

2. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES - ***Will the project:***	**Potentially Significant**	**Impact can & will be mitigated**	**Insignificant Impact**	**Not Applicable**
a) Convert prime agricultural land to non-agricultural use?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b) Impair agricultural use of other property or result in conversion to other uses?	☒	☐	☐	☐
c) Conflict with existing zoning or Williamson Act program?	☒	☐	☐	☐
d) Other: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

Setting

The following summarizes the agricultural setting of the County:

- California is the leading state in agricultural production in the United States and San Luis Obispo County consistently ranks within the top 20 counties of the State in overall agricultural productivity.
- Agriculture makes a substantial contribution to the County's economy and accounts for approximately 80% of the privately-owned land in the county.
- The top five crops in the county include wine grapes, broccoli, strawberries, and vegetable transplants. The cattle industry has been one of the top value agricultural commodities in the county since 1928.
- Approximately 3 percent of the County's agriculture land is considered Prime Farmland.
- The conversion of prime agriculture lands to non-agricultural uses is a concern within the County and across the State.
- Although acreage of agricultural land in San Luis Obispo County has declined, total agricultural production valuations from 1999 to 2008 have increased by over $211 million.

Regulatory Setting

The following summarizes local, State, and federal regulations affecting agricultural resources:

- Agriculture and Open Space Element of the General Plan provides background on agricultural and open space resources within the County.
- California Land Conservation Act of 1965, known as the Williamson Act, encourages preservation of agricultural land using reductions in property tax assessments as an incentive.
- San Luis Obispo "Right-to-Farm" Ordinance states that the use of property for agricultural operations is a high priority and favored use.

Impact. The proposed project would significantly modify the County's rules for the location, design and intensity of residential development on agricultural properties throughout the unincorporated area. These amendments would indirectly result in additional residential development in rural/agricultural areas of the County. This development may result in the following potentially significant impacts to agricultural resources:

- Removal of cluster subdivision ability from roughly 1 million acres of land could affect land values, financing, estate planning, and the ability to sustain agriculture.
- Removal of cluster provisions could affect the amount of agricultural land entering into preservation.
- Reducing areas prone to cluster subdivision could reduce agricultural/residential conflicts.
- Residential development in agricultural areas could create land use conflicts affecting both the project site's agricultural preserve parcel and neighboring "off-site" agricultural operations.

- Residences may be impacted by noise, pesticides, and odors resulting from the adjacent agricultural operations. This could result in complaints against agriculturalists. Increased residential development could also have drainage impacts on adjacent agricultural land.

- Residential development could affect agricultural water resources resulting in inconsistency with Agriculture Element Policy 11.

- Eliminating the density bonus and increasing the parcel sizes could reduce the potential number of residential parcels, affecting land value, financing, estate planning, and the ability to sustain agriculture.

- The new program would result in more standard subdivisions, which would fracture agricultural lands, making them less productive.

- Larger parcel sizes could take up more agricultural land than would otherwise be required to accommodate the same number of units. More agricultural land converted to residential use.

- Disallowing second primary units may hasten agricultural subdivision.

Conclusion. The proposed project may result in potentially significant impacts to the County's agricultural resources. The EIR should evaluate the indirect and cumulative agricultural impacts that may result from the proposed amendments. Individual agricultural cluster subdivisions would be subject to discretionary review and require a separate environmental determination. These individual environmental determinations would identify project-specific impacts and associated mitigation measures.

3. AIR QUALITY - ***Will the project:***	**Potentially Significant**	**Impact can & will be mitigated**	**Insignificant Impact**	**Not Applicable**
a) Violate any state or federal ambient air quality standard, or exceed air quality emission thresholds as established by County Air Pollution Control District?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b) Expose any sensitive receptor to substantial air pollutant concentrations?	☒	☐	☐	☐
c) Create or subject individuals to objectionable odors?	☒	☐	☐	☐
d) Be inconsistent with the District's Clean Air Plan?	☒	☐	☐	☐
e) Other: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

Setting

The County of San Luis Obispo is part of the South Central Coast Air Bain, which also includes Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. The County encompasses 3,316 square miles with varied vegetation, topography, and climate. The County contains three general regions with distinct air quality characteristics:

- Coastal Plateau - consists of the 5 to 10 mile wide area immediately inland of the Pacific Ocean. This region contains approximately 75 percent of the County's population and proportionate urban development, and yields higher levels of air pollutants as a result.

- Upper Salinas River Valley - consists of the northern one-third of the county, inland of the Santa Lucia Range. This region houses about 25 percent of the county's population and contains the highest ozone and particulate levels in the County; some of this pollution may originate from the Coastal Plateau and San Joaquin Valley.

- East County Plan - lays farther inland along the eastern flank of the county. Although this is the largest region by land area, it contains less than one percent of the County population. Dry land farming and unpaved roads in this region effect air quality, but these emissions rarely affect other regions.

Regulatory Setting

Both the federal and state governments have established ambient air quality standards for the protection of public health. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the federal agency designated to administer air quality regulation, while the California Air Resources Board (CARB) is the state equivalent in the California Environmental Protection Agency. Local control in air quality management is provided by the CARB through regional-level Air Pollution Control Districts.

The County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) monitors compliance with state and federal air quality standards for the local air basin. Depending on whether the standards are met or exceeded, the local air basin is classified as being in "attainment" or in "non-attaniment."

- The County is in attainment with federal air quality standards. This includes primary and secondary ambient air quality standards for ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, suspended particulates (PM_{10}), and lead.
- County is in non-attainment with the more restrictive state standards for PM_{10} and ozone.

Global Climate Change

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the combustion of fossil fuels is one of the primary anthropogenic causes of global climate change. The State has enacted the following legislation to reduce GHG emissions:

- Executive Order (S-3-05) - signed by the Governor in 2005, this executive order establishes the following GHG reduction targets:

  - By 2010, reduce GHG emissions to 2000 levels.
  - By 2020, reduce GHG emissions to 1990 levels.
  - By 2050, reduce GHG emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels.

- Assembly Bill 32 (California Global Warming Solutions Act) - enacted in 2006, this represents the first enforceable statewide program to limit GHG emissions from all major industries with penalties for noncompliance. Requires CARB to adopt rules and regulations that would achieve GHG emission equivalent to 1990 levels by 2020. This would be an approximately 15 percent reduction below 2005 levels.

- Senate Bill 375 - establishes regional targets for GHG emissions in relation to transportation and land use. Additionally, SB 375 created new requirements for regional coordination. Each metropolitan planning organization must develop a Regional Transportation Plan. Funding for transportation projects would be, in turn, tied to that plan.

Impact. The proposed project would significantly modify the County's rules for the location, design and intensity of residential development on agricultural properties throughout the unincorporated area. These amendments would indirectly result in additional residential development in rural/agricultural areas of the County. This development may result in the following potentially significant impacts to air quality:

- The project could lead to additional residential development that is removed from existing employment centers and commercial services. This could increase greenhouse gas emissions by increasing vehicle miles traveled.
- Trips generated from residential development could contribute to a cumulative long-term impact relative to standards for vehicle generated pollutants (e.g. ROX, NOX, SO2).
- A short-term cumulative construction-phase impact could result from fugitive dust emission, construction equipment, trucking material, and employee trips.
- Design standards could necessitate that development occur in areas affecting Naturally Occurring Asbestos (NOA).
- Development in rural areas could be inconsistent with the land use planning strategies of the Clean Air Plan.
- The project could lead to additional residential development adjacent to existing agricultural operations. This could expose residences to noxious agricultural odors.

Conclusion. The proposed project may result in potentially significant impacts to the County's air quality. The EIR should evaluate the indirect and cumulative air quality impacts that may result from the proposed amendments. The EIR should contain a separate section to address potential impacts associated with greenhouse gas emissions. Individual agricultural cluster subdivisions would be subject to discretionary review and require a separate environmental determination. These individual environmental determinations would identify project-specific impacts and associated mitigation measures.

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES - ***Will the project:***	**Potentially Significant**	**Impact can & will be mitigated**	**Insignificant Impact**	**Not Applicable**
a) Result in a loss of unique or special status species or their habitats?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b) Reduce the extent, diversity or quality of native or other important vegetation?	☒	☐	☐	☐
c) Impact wetland or riparian habitat?	☒	☐	☐	☐

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES - *Will the project:*	Potentially Significant	Impact can & will be mitigated	Insignificant Impact	Not Applicable
d) Introduce barriers to movement of resident or migratory fish or wildlife species, or factors, which could hinder the normal activities of wildlife?	☒	☐	☐	☐
e) Other: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

Setting

The following summarizes the key characteristics of the County's biological resources:

- The County is comprised of 55 distinct habitat types. Some of the most prominent and sensitive of these habitat types include: native oak woodlands, Monterey pine forest, native and non-native grasslands, vernal pools, chaparral, wetlands and riparian areas.
- The County's various habitat types could support 79 special-status animal species and 123 special-status plant species. This includes several state and federally listed threatened and endangered species. Some of the most prominent of these include the San Joaquin kit fox in the grasslands and oak woodlands of the northern inland area of the County, the Morro shoulderband snail in the community of Los Osos and surrounding areas, and the California red-legged frog which inhabits riparian and aquatic areas throughout the County.
- The County is currently preparing a community-wide habitat conservation plan for the Morro shoulderband snail, a federally threatened species. Currently, applicants of projects that would result in an incidental "take" of the Morro shoulderband snail must prepare individual habitat conservation plans for approval by the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Regulatory Setting

The following summarizes local, State, and federal regulations affecting biological resources:

- Kit Fox Habitat Mitigation Program - enables applicants to pay a fee to mitigate for projects that would result in the removal or fragmentation of kit fox habitat, a federally endangered and state threatened species. The impact fee is then used to purchase and permanently preserve kit fox habitat in the County.
- County Land Use Element – includes a Sensitive Resource Area (SRA) combining designation for areas in the county with special environmental qualities, unique or endangered vegetation, and/or sensitive habitats. Development in an SRA is subject to special requirements and findings that the development would not significantly impact the identified resource.
- The State of California Endangered Species Act – ensures protection for plants listed as rare or endangered, and species of wildlife formally listed as endangered or threatened.
- Federal Endangered Species Act – provides for protection of threatened and endangered plant and animal species, and their critical habitat.
- Migratory Bird Treat Act (MBTA) – protects potential nesting and roosting sites for birds-of-prey and other migratory birds.
- USFWS Permitting Process – pursuant to the Federal Endangered Species Act, requires a permit from USFWS for a "take" of a federally listed species.

- Clean Water Act – protects wetlands on a federal, state, and local level. Wetland and riparian communities may be subject to Army Corps of Engineers jurisdiction as waters of the U.S. pursuant to Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act.

Impact. The proposed project would significantly modify the County's rules for the location, design and intensity of residential development on agricultural properties throughout the unincorporated area. These amendments would indirectly result in additional residential development in rural/agricultural areas of the County. This development may result in the following potentially significant impacts to the County biological resources:

- Residential development could impact sensitive plant species and their habitat.
- Residential development could impact sensitive wildlife species and their habitat.
- Residential development could impact significant wildlife corridors.

Conclusion. The proposed project may result in potentially significant impacts to the County's biological resources. The EIR should evaluate the indirect and cumulative biological resource impacts that may result from the proposed amendments. Individual agricultural cluster subdivisions would be subject to discretionary review and require a separate environmental determination. These individual environmental determinations would identify project-specific impacts and associated mitigation measures.

5. CULTURAL RESOURCES - ***Will the project:***	**Potentially Significant**	**Impact can & will be mitigated**	**Insignificant Impact**	**Not Applicable**
a) Disturb pre-historic resources?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b) Disturb historic resources?	☒	☐	☐	☐
c) Disturb paleontological resources?	☒	☐	☐	☐
d) Other: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

Setting

The following summarizes the key characteristics of the County's cultural resources:

Pre-historic Resources

- Prehistoric resources represent the remains of human occupation prior to European settlement.
- The County is within the territory historically occupied by the Obispeno Chumash.
- The northern part of the County (from approximately Morro Bay north to the Monterey County line) is within the area historically occupied by the Salinan people.
- Areas adjacent to water bodies are more likely to contain pre-historic resources.
- The County Land Use Element includes an "Archeologically Sensitive" combining designation over those areas in the Coastal Zone that are likely to contain cultural resources, although not all areas containing resources have been mapped.

Historic Resources

- Historic resources represent remains after European settlement. This may include structures for habitation, work, recreation, education, and religious worship.
- The earliest Spanish explorers of the central California coastline included:
  - Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo in 1542
  - Pedro de Unamuno in 1587
  - Sebastian Rodriguez Cermeño in 1595
  - Sebastián Vizcaíno in 1602
  - Gaspar de Portolá in 1769
- The National Register of Historic Places lists 34 historically-recognized locations within San Luis Obispo County. These properties are distinguished by having been documented and evaluated according to uniform standards.
- The County has a long agricultural history dating back to the early 19th Century. Many of today's agricultural parcels contain important historic agricultural structures, including historic barns and dairies.
- The County Land Use Element includes a "Historic" combining designation to identify important historic resources in the Coastal Zone, although not all historic resources have been mapped.

Impact. The proposed project would significantly modify the County's rules for the location, design and intensity of residential development on agricultural properties throughout the unincorporated area. These amendments would indirectly result in additional residential development in rural/agricultural areas of the County. This development could impact pre-historic, paleontological, and historic resources. Since the project would affect the location and intensity of development on agricultural parcels in the County, it would likely result in impacts to historic barns and other agricultural accessory structures.

Conclusion. The proposed project may have potentially significant impacts on cultural resources. The EIR should evaluate the indirect and cumulative cultural resource impacts that may result from the proposed amendments. Individual agricultural cluster subdivisions would be subject to discretionary review and require a separate environmental determination. These individual environmental determinations would identify project-specific impacts and associated mitigation measures.

6. GEOLOGY AND SOILS - ***Will the project:***	**Potentially Significant**	**Impact can & will be mitigated**	**Insignificant Impact**	**Not Applicable**
a) Result in exposure to or production of unstable earth conditions, such as landslides, earthquakes, liquefaction, ground failure, land subsidence or other similar hazards?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b) Be within a California Geological Survey "Alquist-Priolo" Earthquake Fault Zone"?	☒	☐	☐	☐

6. GEOLOGY AND SOILS - *Will the project:*	Potentially Significant	Impact can & will be mitigated	Insignificant Impact	Not Applicable
c) *Result in soil erosion, topographic changes, loss of topsoil or unstable soil conditions from project-related improvements, such as vegetation removal, grading, excavation, or fill?*	☒	☐	☐	☐
d) *Change rates of soil absorption, or amount or direction of surface runoff?*	☒	☐	☐	☐
e) *Include structures located on expansive soils?*	☒	☐	☐	☐
f) *Change the drainage patterns where substantial on- or off-site sedimentation/ erosion or flooding may occur?*	☒	☐	☐	☐
g) *Involve activities within the 100-year flood zone?*	☒	☐	☐	☐
h) *Be inconsistent with the goals and policies of the County's Safety Element relating to Geologic and Seismic Hazards?*	☒	☐	☐	☐
i) *Preclude the future extraction of valuable mineral resources?*	☐	☐	☒	☐
j) *Other:* _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

Setting

Geology – The County includes a wide range of geologic features. Land within the Agriculture and Rural Lands categories can vary from level low-lying coastal valleys to steeply sloping terrain in the Santa Lucia Mountains.

The Safety Element of the General Plan evaluates potential geologic hazards in these areas:

- Liquefaction potential can vary from *Low* to *High.*
- Landslide potential can vary from *Low* to *High.*
- Some areas are located within close proximity to active and/or potentially active faults.

Additionally, some soils characteristics can affect stability or create hazards. These conditions include:

- High shrink/swell potential.
- High erodibility.
- Serpentine or ultramafic soils.

In general, the portions of the County with the highest geologic hazard risk are identified in the

Geologic Study Area (GS) combining designation. These areas are subject to specific requirements established in Chapter 22.14 of the Land Use Ordinance and Chapter 23.07 of the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance.

Additionally, the 2007 California Building Code requires certain building practices to take place in areas with seismic risk or soils issues.

Erosion and Sedimentation – Soils in the County can vary from clayey soils, which are generally not as prone to erosion to highly erosive sands. All development projects are required to prepare and implement erosion and sedimentation control plans, with limited exceptions. Exceptions are only available when site conditions are expressly non-conducive to erosion and when all work will occur outside of the rainy period. Erosion and sedimentation control plans are to be designed to prevent erosion from occurring (erosion control) and to prevent any eroded material from entering a waterway (sedimentation control).

Drainage and Stormwater Protection – In the rural areas of the County, drainage is generally conveyed by sheet flow, towards drainage swales, into creeks and rivers, and ultimately into the ocean ("stormwater conveyance system"). Changes in drainage patterns resulting from development are considered in a project drainage plan. Drainage plans are required for most development projects, but exemptions can occur in limited circumstances. When required, drainage plans are reviewed to ensure that drainage velocity, direction, volume, and peak flow will not adversely impact another property owner or cause environmental damage. If impacts are identified, a drainage plan will not be approved unless facilities are included which would fully offset that impact (e.g. basins).

Both during the construction phase and in the long-term, development could result in discharge of pollutants into the stormwater conveyance system. These discharges could affect water quality, particularly where potential pollutants are already at an unacceptable level.

Larger construction projects (generally over 1 acre of disturbance) will require coverage under the State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB's) General Construction Permit. Coverage requires the preparation of a detailed Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), which identifies Best Management Practices (BMPs) to be implemented and includes a maintenance and monitoring program.

Flood Hazard – Portions of the County are located in areas with potential flood hazards. These areas are generally identified in the official land use maps as being within the Flood Hazard (FH) combining designations. Areas in the FH designation are required to adhere to special standards contained in Chapter 22.14 of the Land Use Ordinance and Chapter 23.07 of the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance.

Impact. The proposed project would significantly modify the County's rules for the location, design and intensity of residential development on agricultural properties throughout the unincorporated area. These amendments would indirectly result in additional residential development in rural/agricultural areas of the County. This development may result in the following potentially significant impacts pertaining to geology and soils:

- Development could be located in areas with potential geologic hazards – including seismic and liquefaction hazards.
- Development could be located in areas with soils-related hazards – including landslide risks, and high shrink/swell potential.
- Development could be located in highly erosive areas and could result in substantial erosion and sedimentation impacts.

- Development could alter drainage patterns impacting neighboring property.
- Development could alter drainage patterns affecting waterway morphology.
- Development could result in discharges to the stormwater conveyance system.

Conclusion. The proposed project may result in potentially significant impacts pertaining to the County's geologic/soils resources. The EIR should evaluate the indirect and cumulative geology and soils-related impacts that may result from the proposed amendments. Individual agricultural cluster subdivisions would be subject to discretionary review and require a separate environmental determination. These individual environmental determinations would identify project-specific impacts and associated mitigation measures.

7. HAZARDS & HAZARDOUS MATERIALS - *Will the project:*	Potentially Significant	Impact can & will be mitigated	Insignificant Impact	Not Applicable
a) *Result in a risk of explosion or release of hazardous substances (e.g. oil, pesticides, chemicals, radiation) or exposure of people to hazardous substances?*	☒	☐	☐	☐
b) *Interfere with an emergency response or evacuation plan?*	☒	☐	☐	☐
c) *Expose people to safety risk associated with airport flight pattern?*	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) *Increase fire hazard risk or expose people or structures to high fire hazard conditions?*	☒	☐	☐	☐
e) *Create any other health hazard or potential hazard?*	☒	☐	☐	☐
f) *Other:* _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

Setting. The Agriculture and Rural Lands designated areas are located outside of urbanized communities and extend into more remote portions of the County.

Fire Safety – The Safety Element of the General Plan identifies approximate fire hazard severity areas and fire response times. Larger minimum parcel sizes are required in the Rural Lands category for subdivisions with areas of higher severity and longer response times; however, no such restrictions apply in the Agriculture category. Development in areas with higher risk and longer response times could affect fire response resources and could result in a greater potential for loss of life and property in association with a wildland fire event.

Residential cluster subdivisions would be limited to areas within 2 miles of urban reserve lines, under the proposed program. These areas could include identified wildland/urban interface (WUI) areas, as specified by Cal Fire. WUI areas are notoriously difficult to provide fire protection services, because of remoteness, difficulty in access, and proximity to brush and other fuel sources. The 2007 California Building Code requires special fire protection features to be incorporated into residential development occurring within WUI areas.

The project would also result in a requirement that residential development be served by on-site wells, rather than by a community system. Conversely, most of the agricultural cluster subdivisions developed in the County to date have used community water systems to serve the residential component. Community water systems are generally more reliable and provide a higher fire flow capacity than individual well and tank systems.

Pesticides – The project would result in residential development occurring in largely agricultural areas. Agricultural uses are protected under the County's Right-to-Farm Ordinance. Amongst the considerations under the Right-to-Farm Ordinance is pesticide use. Pesticide use is overseen by the County Agricultural Commissioner's Office. The Agricultural Commissioner's Office also administers the Buffer Policy, requiring a specified "buffer zone" distance between residential development and agricultural uses. Buffers are designed to avoid direct impacts from pesticide use (e.g. overspray).

While pesticide use is regulated to avoid direct impacts on nearby residences, secondary effects of pesticides are not actively evaluated. Secondary effects could include transmission of pesticide chemical components by wind or groundwater to nearby sensitive receptors (e.g. residences).

Impact. The proposed project would significantly modify the County's rules for the location, design and intensity of residential development on agricultural properties throughout the unincorporated area. These amendments would indirectly result in additional residential development in rural/agricultural areas of the County. This development may result in the following potentially significant hazard-related impacts:

- Residential development could occur in areas of wildland/urban interface (WUI), which can create difficulties in fire safety (e.g. access, ability respond, ability to evacuate, proximity of vegetative fuel sources, etc.).
- Residential development could occur in areas of *High* and *Very High* fire severity, as identified in the Safety Element.
- The project could result in residential development occurring in rural areas, which generally have a longer fire response time.
- The project would require that residences in agricultural cluster subdivisions be served by individual wells and not by community systems. This could adversely affect system reliability and fire flow.
- Residential development could be affected by agricultural pesticide use.

Conclusion. The proposed project may result in potentially significant hazard-related impacts. The EIR should evaluate the indirect and cumulative hazard impacts that may result from the proposed amendments. Individual agricultural cluster subdivisions would be subject to discretionary review and require a separate environmental determination. These individual environmental determinations would identify project-specific impacts and associated mitigation measures.

8. NOISE - ***Will the project:***	**Potentially Significant**	**Impact can & will be mitigated**	**Insignificant Impact**	**Not Applicable**
a) Expose people to noise levels that exceed the County Noise Element thresholds?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b) Generate increases in the ambient noise levels for adjoining areas?	☒	☐	☐	☐
c) Expose people to severe noise or vibration?	☒	☐	☐	☐

8. NOISE - *Will the project:*	Potentially Significant	Impact can & will be mitigated	Insignificant Impact	Not Applicable
d) Other: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

Setting/Impact. The proposed project would significantly modify the County's rules for the location, design and intensity of residential development on agricultural properties throughout the unincorporated area. The project could result in the development of residences within proximity to agricultural operations. Depending on features such as distance, topography, or intervening structures, noise generated by agricultural operations could be weakened (i.e. attenuated) or enhanced (i.e. "amphitheatre" effect). Agricultural operations are protected under the County's Right-to-Farm Ordinance. Location of residences in areas nearby to noise-generating activities could result in potential exposure to unacceptable noise or vibration levels.

Conclusion. The proposed project may result in potentially significant noise impacts. The EIR should evaluate the indirect and cumulative noise impacts that may result from the proposed amendments. Individual agricultural cluster subdivisions would be subject to discretionary review and require a separate environmental determination. These individual environmental determinations would identify project-specific impacts and associated mitigation measures.

9. POPULATION/HOUSING - *Will the project:*	Potentially Significant	Impact can & will be mitigated	Insignificant Impact	Not Applicable
a) Induce substantial growth in an area either directly or indirectly (e.g., through projects in an undeveloped area or extension of major infrastructure)?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b) Displace existing housing or people, requiring construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Create the need for substantial new housing in the area?	☒	☐	☐	☐
d) Use substantial amount of fuel or energy?	☒	☐	☐	☐
e) Other: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

Setting.

Existing Housing Programs – In its efforts to provide for affordable housing, the county currently administers the Home Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program and the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, which provides limited financing to projects relating to affordable housing throughout the county.

Inclusionary Housing – The County currently has an inclusionary housing ordinance in place. This ordinance requires new residential, commercial, and industrial development to construct affordable housing or to contribute towards an affordable housing fund.

Fuel and Energy – The County's policies for Strategic Growth call for jobs and housing to be located within relatively close proximity to one another. This helps to reduce vehicle miles traveled from employee commutes and associated energy consumption.

Impact. The proposed project would significantly modify the County's rules for the location, design and intensity of residential development on agricultural properties throughout the unincorporated area. These amendments would indirectly result in additional residential development in rural/agricultural areas of the County. This development may result in the following potentially significant population and housing-related impacts:

- The project will result in the development of residences in areas far removed from employment centers. This may affect job-housing balance.
- Adding residential development to predominantly agricultural areas could induce further growth.
- Removing the ability for agricultural parcels to qualify for second primary residences, unless the residence qualifies as farm support housing, could result in a reduction in housing.
- Reducing the potential supply of housing in the County could impact housing affordability.

Conclusion. The proposed project may result in potentially significant population and housing impacts. The EIR should evaluate the indirect and cumulative population and housing impacts, as well as growth inducing impacts, that may result from the proposed amendments. Individual agricultural cluster subdivisions would be subject to discretionary review and require a separate environmental determination. These individual environmental determinations would identify project-specific impacts and associated mitigation measures.

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/UTILITIES - ***Will the project have an effect upon, or result in the need for new or altered public services in any of the following areas:***	**Potentially Significant**	**Impact can & will be mitigated**	**Insignificant Impact**	**Not Applicable**
a) Fire protection?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b) Police protection (e.g., Sheriff, CHP)?	☒	☐	☐	☐
c) Schools?	☒	☐	☐	☐
d) Roads?	☒	☐	☐	☐
e) Solid Wastes?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐
g) Other: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

Setting. The project area is served by the following public services/facilities:

Police: County Sheriff Location:

Fire: Cal Fire/County Fire Hazard Severity: Not Applicable Response Time: Not applicable

Location:

School District: Not Applicable

Setting/Impact. The proposed project would significantly modify the County's rules for the location, design and intensity of residential development on agricultural properties throughout the unincorporated area. These amendments would indirectly result in additional residential development in rural/agricultural areas of the County. These areas could face the following service and utility limitations:

- *Fire Protection* – As stated in the *Hazards* section of this report, residential development could adversely affect fire protection services, because residential development could occur in areas with long response times or high fire risk.
- *Police Protection* – Police protection could be adversely affected by having residential development occur in areas distant from sheriff stations and substations.
- *Schools* – New residential development could bring new school-aged children into areas where schools are nearing or beyond capacity.
- *Roads* – New development could generate additional trips in areas with impacted circulation and less-than-acceptable levels of service.

Cumulative Impact – Residential development could contribute towards a cumulatively significant impact on public services and utilities. In many cases there is an in-lieu fee program available to offset a project's contribution towards a cumulative impact. A summary of these programs follows:

- *Fire and Police Protection* – Public Facility Fees are collected through the building permit process to pay for capital improvements.
- *Schools* – A school impact fee is collected by the local school district to pay for capital improvements.
- *Roads* – Portions of the County are located within road fee areas. Building permits for projects in these areas must contribute towards the fee commensurate with the amount of anticipated traffic generation. The fees may be used for capital improvements.

The above programs address only facilities and other capital improvements. The fees do not cover ongoing operational expenses. In all cases, it is presumed that increased operational expenses resulting from the project will be offset by the increase in property tax revenue generated from the project.

Conclusion. The proposed project may result in potentially significant public service impacts. The EIR should evaluate the indirect and cumulative public service impacts that may result from the proposed amendments. Individual agricultural cluster subdivisions would be subject to discretionary review and require a separate environmental determination. These individual environmental determinations would identify project-specific impacts and associated mitigation measures.

11. RECREATION - ***Will the project:***	**Potentially Significant**	**Impact can & will be mitigated**	**Insignificant Impact**	**Not Applicable**
a) Increase the use or demand for parks or other recreation opportunities?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Affect the access to trails, parks or other recreation opportunities?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Other _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

Setting/Impact. The Parks and Recreation Element of the General Plan identifies potential future parks, trails, and other recreational facilities throughout the County. Residential development occurring under the proposed Agricultural Cluster Subdivision and Density Program could potentially contribute towards a cumulatively significant increase in demand for parks and recreational facilities. This impact is offset through the County's parkland dedication in-lieu fee (Quimby Fee) program. Agricultural cluster subdivisions occurring on land containing a potential trail alignment would be required to offer trail dedications, consistent with the Parks and Recreation Element.

Conclusion. No significant recreation impacts are anticipated.

12. TRANSPORTATION/ CIRCULATION - ***Will the project:***	**Potentially Significant**	**Impact can & will be mitigated**	**Insignificant Impact**	**Not Applicable**
a) Increase vehicle trips to local or areawide circulation system?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b) Reduce existing "Levels of Service" on public roadway(s)?	☒	☐	☐	☐
c) Create unsafe conditions on public roadways (e.g., limited access, design features, sight distance, slow vehicles)?	☒	☐	☐	☐
d) Provide for adequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Result in inadequate parking capacity?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Result in inadequate internal traffic circulation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., pedestrian access, bus turnouts, bicycle racks, etc.)?	☒	☐	☐	☐
h) Result in a change in air traffic patterns that may result in substantial safety risks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
i) Other: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

Setting/Impact. The County has established the acceptable Level of Service (LOS) for roads in rural areas as "C" or better.

The proposed project would significantly modify the County's rules for the location, design and intensity of residential development on agricultural properties throughout the unincorporated area. In general, future agricultural cluster subdivisions would result in additional trips occurring on rural roads and major transportation corridors leading to these roads. When considered cumulatively, additional trips from new subdivisions could affect the Level of Service on rural roads, and in some cases, cause that Level of Service to degrade below an acceptable level.

These amendments would indirectly result in additional residential development in rural/agricultural areas of the County. This development may result in the following impacts concerning transportation and circulation:

- Road access may impede emergency access (i.e. violate Cal Fire's maximum dead-end road length requirement).
- Road access points could raise potential safety issues (i.e. inadequate sight distance).

Both of these impacts, however, would be avoided through the implementation of existing County policies (e.g. Fire Code, Public Improvement Specifications).

Finally, because agricultural cluster subdivisions would occur in rural areas, they would not be conducive to alternative transportation. Providing for additional residential development in these areas could conflict with provisions in the County's Clean Air Plan and conflict with the Strategic Growth policies and principles in the General Plan.

Conclusion. The proposed project may result in potentially significant transportation-related impacts. The EIR should evaluate the indirect and cumulative transportation and circulation impacts that may result from the proposed amendments. Individual agricultural cluster subdivisions would be subject to discretionary review and require a separate environmental determination. These individual environmental determinations would identify project-specific impacts and associated mitigation measures.

13. WASTEWATER - ***Will the project:***	**Potentially Significant**	**Impact can & will be mitigated**	**Insignificant Impact**	**Not Applicable**
a) Violate waste discharge requirements or Central Coast Basin Plan criteria for wastewater systems?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Change the quality of surface or ground water (e.g., nitrogen-loading, day-lighting)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Adversely affect community wastewater service provider?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Other: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

Setting. The rural areas in the County are generally served by on-site wastewater systems. Certain site conditions can pose limitations for conventional wastewater system design. These limitations can include the following:

- Steep slopes
- Poorly percolating soils
- Soils which percolate too rapidly for proper filtration
- Shallow depth to groundwater
- Shallow depth to bedrock
- Flood hazard areas
- Proximity to wells

- Proximity to creeks, waterways, and drainages

The Central Coast Basin Plan, a document administered by the Regional Water Quality Control Board, includes recommendations and requirements for the appropriate siting, design, and maintenance of septic systems.

Impacts. The proposed project would significantly modify the County's rules for the location, design and intensity of residential development on agricultural properties throughout the unincorporated area. These amendments would indirectly result in additional residential development in rural/agricultural areas of the County. Residential development that could result from the proposed project would be served by on-site septic systems. In some circumstances, the residential cluster parcels may experience one or more of the factors listed above which would affect suitability for septic systems. The proposed amendments could require residential development in areas with conditions that are less suitable for septic systems.

Conclusion. The proposed project could potentially result in significant wastewater impacts if development would occur in areas with site conditions which are not conducive to an on-site system.

14. WATER - ***Will the project:***	**Potentially Significant**	**Impact can & will be mitigated**	**Insignificant Impact**	**Not Applicable**
a) Violate any water quality standards?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Discharge into surface waters or otherwise alter surface water quality (e.g., turbidity, temperature, dissolved oxygen, etc.)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Change the quality of groundwater (e.g., saltwater intrusion, nitrogen-loading, etc.)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Change the quantity or movement of available surface or ground water?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Adversely affect community water service provider?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Other: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

Setting. The rural portions of this County designated by the General Plan as Rural Lands and Agriculture are generally served by on-site groundwater sources, with some areas being served by surface water or riparian underflow.

The County has a number of policy and guidance documents pertaining to water resources:

- The County's Master Water Plan provides technical data about water quality and quantity.
- The Conservation and Open Space Element (in draft form) provides policies encouraging sustainable use of water resources.
- The Annual Resource Summary Reports review water availability Countywide on an annual basis. These reports assign levels of severity to areas where water availability is a known concern.
- The County Code requires water conservation measures and/or retrofit requirements in certain

areas of the County, such as Nipomo and Los Osos.

Agriculture Element Policy 11 specifies that agricultural water resources should be retained for agricultural purposes. Sustainable water resources are a crucial component to the viability of agriculture in the County.

With regard to water quality, the County is currently subject to National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting requirements for water conveyed in urbanized portions of the County. The County is actively updating regulations which will ensure reduction in illicit discharges, construction-phase discharges and long-term post-construction discharges. Individual development projects may be required to prepare erosion and sedimentation control plans, drainage plans, and stormwater pollution prevention plans to document how water quality is being protected.

Impact. The proposed project would significantly modify the County's rules for the location, design and intensity of residential development on agricultural properties throughout the unincorporated area. These amendments would indirectly result in additional residential development in rural/agricultural areas of the County. In addition to residential development, this project may result in intensification of agricultural uses. In both cases, an increase in demand for water may be anticipated. The magnitude of the increase in water demand is unknown at this time. Although it can be anticipated that increases in water demand could occur in portions of the County with known or potential resource constraints, such as:

- Los Osos Valley
- Chorro Valley
- Nipomo Mesa
- Paso Robles groundwater area
- Edna Valley

The quality of domestic water could be affected by proximity to agriculture, particularly in areas where pesticides are in use and where groundwater can be susceptible to contamination due to rapidly percolating soils or shallow depth.

Regarding surface water quality, areas in crop production are generally required to comply with the Regional Water Quality Control Board's conditional waiver for irrigated agricultural. The conditional waiver requires agriculturalists to employ Best Management Practices and monitoring to avoid runoff of pollutants into streams and waterways. Residential development is generally required to provide stormwater management BMPs as part of the project design. If disturbing more than an acre, development projects would also require coverage under the State Water Resources Control Board's General Construction Permit Additionally such development would generally also trigger County requirements for an erosion and sedimentation control plan, drainage plan, and/or stormwater pollution prevention plan. These measures serve to reduce possible impacts to surface water quality.

Conclusion. The proposed project may result in potentially significant impacts to water resources. The EIR should evaluate the indirect and cumulative water impacts that may result from the proposed amendments. Individual agricultural cluster subdivisions would be subject to discretionary review and require a separate environmental determination. These individual environmental determinations would identify project-specific impacts and associated mitigation measures.

15. LAND USE - ***Will the project:***	**Inconsistent**	**Potentially Inconsistent**	**Consistent**	**Not Applicable**

15. LAND USE - *Will the project:*	Inconsistent	Potentially Inconsistent	Consistent	Not Applicable
a) *Be potentially inconsistent with land use, policy/regulation (e.g., general plan [county land use element and ordinance], local coastal plan, specific plan, Clean Air Plan, etc.) adopted to avoid or mitigate for environmental effects?*	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) *Be potentially inconsistent with any habitat or community conservation plan?*	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) *Be potentially inconsistent with adopted agency environmental plans or policies with jurisdiction over the project?*	☐	☒	☐	☐
d) *Be potentially incompatible with surrounding land uses?*	☐	☒	☐	☐
e) *Other:* _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

Setting/Impact. Land use in the unincorporated portions of the County is diverse and include both urbanized and rural environments. The County's General Plan distinguishes between urban areas, villages, and rural areas. Residential land use categories in the County range from more urban densities of up to 38 units per acre (Residential Multi Family) to very low density, such as in remote rangeland areas which may only qualify for one residence per 320 acres.

In addition to the land use categories and policies established in the Land Use Element of the General Plan, land use is also governed by several other documents, which include but are not limited to the following:

- Agriculture Element of the General Plan
- Conservation Element of the General Plan
- Coastal Plan Policies (in the Coastal Zone)
- Land Use Ordinance and Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance permitting requirements and standards

Recently, strategic growth policies and principles were incorporated into the General Plan. These policies and principles encourage a general trend towards increasing development in urban areas and maintaining rural areas in agricultural production, as open space, or for very low density residential development.

Other land use considerations include compatibility with the Clean Air Plan, which is a policy document adopted by the Air Pollution Control District. The Clean Air Plan seeks to reduce air pollutants by encouraging alternative transportation, jobs and housing balance, and walkable communities.

As the project could result in residential development in agricultural areas, considerations would need to be made with regards to the compatibility of residential and agricultural development. Residential development can affect agriculture due to such things as noise/odor complaints, drainage onto

agricultural fields, trespass, and vandalism. Nearby agricultural uses can affect residences due to such things as noise, odors, dust, and pesticide use. The Agriculture Element of the General Plan includes policies designed to reduce and mitigate incompatible development adjacent to agricultural areas.

Conclusion. The proposed project may result in the following possible land use incompatibilities:

- The project may not be consistent with strategic growth policies which are intended to focus residential development in urbanized areas.
- The project may not be consistent with Clean Air Plan policies, which:
  - Encourage rural areas to be preserved for agriculture and open space.
  - Encourage housing to be located nearby to jobs, retail, and services.
  - Encourage alternative transportation and other means of reducing vehicle miles traveled.
- The project may result in potential land use incompatibilities caused by locating residential development in agricultural areas.

The Environmental Impact Report will analyze the project for consistency with all applicable land use policy documents.

16. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE - ***Will the project:***	**Potentially Significant**	**Impact can & will be mitigated**	**Insignificant Impact**	**Not Applicable**
a) Have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b) Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)	☒	☐	☐	☐
c) Have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☒	☐	☐	☐

For further information on CEQA or the county's environmental review process, please visit the County's web site at "www.sloplanning.org" under "Environmental Information", or the California Environmental Resources Evaluation System at: http://www.ceres.ca.gov/topic/env_law/ceqa/guidelines for information about the California Environmental Quality Act.

Exhibit A - Initial Study References and Agency Contacts

The County Planning or Environmental Divisions have contacted various agencies for their comments on the proposed project. With respect to the subject application, the following have been contacted (marked with an ☒) and when a response was made, it is either attached or in the application file:

Contacted	Agency	Response
☐	County Public Works Department	**Not Applicable**
☐	County Environmental Health Division	**Not Applicable**
☐	County Agricultural Commissioner's Office	**Not Applicable**
☐	County Airport Manager	**Not Applicable**
☐	Airport Land Use Commission	**Not Applicable**
☐	Air Pollution Control District	**Not Applicable**
☐	County Sheriff's Department	**Not Applicable**
☐	Regional Water Quality Control Board	**Not Applicable**
☐	CA Coastal Commission	**Not Applicable**
☐	CA Department of Fish and Game	**Not Applicable**
☐	CA Department of Forestry (Cal Fire)	**Not Applicable**
☐	CA Department of Transportation	**Not Applicable**
☐	Community Service District	**Not Applicable**
☐	Other City of San Luis Obispo	**Not Applicable**
☐	Other _____	**Not Applicable**

*** "No comment" or "No concerns"-type responses are usually not attached*

The following checked ("☒") reference materials have been used in the environmental review for the proposed project and are hereby incorporated by reference into the Initial Study. The following information is available at the County Planning and Building Department.

☒ Project File for the Subject Application

County documents

- ☐ Airport Land Use Plans
- ☒ Annual Resource Summary Report
- ☒ Building and Construction Ordinance
- ☒ Coastal Policies
- ☒ Framework for Planning (Coastal & Inland)
- ☒ General Plan (Inland & Coastal), including all maps & elements; more pertinent elements considered include:
  - ☒ Agriculture & Open Space Element
  - ☒ Energy Element
  - ☒ Environment Plan (Conservation, Historic and Esthetic Elements)
  - ☒ Housing Element
  - ☒ Noise Element
  - ☒ Parks & Recreation Element
  - ☒ Safety Element
- ☒ Land Use Ordinance
- ☒ Real Property Division Ordinance
- ☐ Trails Plan
- ☐ Solid Waste Management Plan
- ☐ Area Plan and Update EIR
- ☐ Circulation Study

Other documents

- ☒ Archaeological Resources Map
- ☒ Area of Critical Concerns Map
- ☒ Areas of Special Biological Importance Map
- ☒ California Natural Species Diversity Database
- ☒ Clean Air Plan
- ☒ Fire Hazard Severity Map
- ☒ Flood Hazard Maps
- ☒ Natural Resources Conservation Service Soil Survey for SLO County
- ☒ Regional Transportation Plan
- ☒ Uniform Fire Code
- ☒ Water Quality Control Plan (Central Coast Basin – Region 3)
- ☒ GIS mapping layers (e.g., habitat, streams, contours, etc.)
- ☐ Other ____