

V. M. HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

The following discussion of hazardous materials is based on a database research provided by Environmental Data Resources, Inc. (EDR), November 2004, and a visual inspection of the area. The results of the EDR database search are available in their entirety at the County of San Luis Obispo, Department of Planning and Building (Topographic Map Report 2004; Radius Map 2004; Aerial Photography Print Service 2004). This section also references relevant information from the Hazardous Materials section (VL) in the Willow Road/Highway 101 Interchange FEIR (1999).

1. Existing Conditions

There are a variety of land uses within the proposed project area, some of which have the potential to generate or use hazardous materials. West of Pomeroy Road and north of the existing Willow Road is the Black Lake Golf Course. On either side of Willow Road between Pomeroy and Hetrick Avenue, the predominating land use is rural residential. This designation includes scattered ranch structures, residences, corrals, and barns. Pismo Flowers, Inc. (formerly Brand Flowers, Inc.) is located just south of the proposed Willow Road alignment between Pomeroy and Hetrick Avenue. It is possible that pesticides have been used for past and current cultivation within this area. Agricultural land predominates east of Hetrick Avenue and north of the existing Willow Road. Evidence of an underground natural gas pipeline, owned by Pacific Gas & Electric, was noted along the western boundary of US 101. Minor evidence of surface hazardous materials were noted on private property at the same location of the proposed park-and-ride lot, west of US 101 and south of Willow Road. The potentially hazardous surface materials include:

- Six small metal tanks. The contents of the tanks were undetermined and no surface stains were noted.
- Five small oil tanks. The contents of the tanks were undetermined and no surface stains were noted.

East of US 101 is in predominantly agricultural use consisting of scattered grazing areas and croplands.

C&M Nursery is located east of US 101, in the southeast quadrant of the proposed interchange. C&M Nursery has been operating since the early 1970's and is located on approximately 30 acres. It is mostly devoted to the cultivation of avocado and citrus trees, with soil stockpiles in the northern portion, small greenhouse structures in the central portion, and potted trees in the southern portion. Various pesticides and fungicides have been used within this property to fumigate imported soils and reduce the potential for root rot. Pesticides are applied to the trees from a truck-mounted spray unit. According to a nursery supervisor, the use of pesticides in the area is monitored by the County of San Luis Obispo, Department of Agriculture/Measurement Standards; however, trace amounts of pesticides may be present on surface soils due to nursery operations.

Two Unocal pipelines are located east of US 101 and west of Thompson Avenue. These pipes are the 8-inch Orcutt and 12-inch Santa Maria pipelines. They are buried approximately 12 feet beneath the ground surface.

Other possible areas of environmental concern were noted in the 1999 FEIR and include the LR Braggs Company and Gibbs International Trucks. LR Braggs Company is an active waste oil operator located at 483 North Frontage Road, Nipomo and Gibbs International Trucks has an active hazardous materials operating permit and is located at 215 8th Street in Nipomo.

The database research conducted for this analysis (EDR, November 2004) indicated no hazardous materials have been recorded on or adjacent to the project site.

2. Thresholds of Significance

According to Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines and the County of San Luis Obispo Initial Study Checklist, a significant impact is represented by the creation or increase of public health hazards. This may include the disposal, creation, or use of materials that would jeopardize human, plant, and/or animal populations within the affected area.

The proposed project would have a significant effect on the environment from hazards or hazardous materials if it would:

- Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use or disposal of hazardous materials;
- Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment;
- Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school;
- Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, and as a result, create a significant hazard to the public or the environment;
- Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan; and/or;
- Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to an urbanized area or where residences are intermixed with wildlands.

3. Project Impacts

Roadways. Elevated levels of soil contaminants, such as lead, may be present along the shoulders of US 101 due to airborne deposition from automobiles. If elevated levels of lead are confirmed within the soils adjacent to US 101 (See Mitigation Measure M-1), this will not pose a significant potential impact to human or environmental health. However, if these soils are disturbed during grading activities, ingestion or inhalation of airborne dust may pose a potential threat to human health.

Asphalt roadways containing petroleum compounds and oil drippings may be a source of adjacent soils contamination. According to a soils/toxics engineer, these compounds are within the roadway

base and are not mobile. Oil drippings and petroleum compounds do not generally seep through the roadway and, therefore, are not considered to cause significant impacts from a local or regional perspective (FEIR 1999).

Underground Utilities. Pacific Gas & Electric owns and operates an underground natural gas pipeline adjacent to and west of US 101. Prior to grading and construction activities, the location of the pipeline must be accounted for and appropriately recognized. (see Mitigation Measure M-2).

The Unocal pipelines, designated the Orcutt and Santa Maria oil pipelines, transverse the agricultural land between Thompson Avenue and US 101. If the pipelines are disturbed by grading activities or if any leaks are currently present, hydrocarbon contamination of the subsurface soils may occur which would be a significant impact. Prior to grading and construction activities, the location of the pipeline must be accounted for and appropriately recognized (See Mitigation Measures M-3 and M-4).

Asbestos Containing Materials. As the project is located in San Luis Obispo County, and this area is among the counties listed as containing serpentine and ultramafic rock, asbestos or ultramafic rock may be encountered during construction activities. However, a general location guide¹ shows no areas of naturally occurring asbestos (NOA) in the project vicinity. In the unforeseen event of the discovery of ultramafic or asbestos containing materials, the County shall comply with all requirements outlined in the Asbestos ATCM for Construction, Grading, Quarrying and Surface Mining Operations and, therefore, NOA impact during project construction would be minimal to none. (See Standard Condition D-2, Asbestos Dust Mitigation Program). Section V.D, Air Quality, further addresses the potential for ultramafic rock and /or asbestos containing materials.

Nurseries. The eastern portion of the proposed project is directly adjacent to the northern portion of C&M Nursery. Activities within this area of impact on nursery property include temporary soil and equipment storage. No hazardous materials were identified and no potential impacts are anticipated.

Pismo Flowers Inc. is the only off-site operation that could potentially cause environmental concern due to prior or current use of pesticides. However, the nursery is approximately 800 feet south of the proposed Willow Road extension right of way and therefore would not cause significant impacts related to exposure of hazardous substances.

Oil and Propane Tanks. Although oil and propane tanks were identified on private property west of US 101 and south of the proposed Willow Road alignment, no hazardous materials were identified or determined within the tanks and, therefore, no potential impacts are anticipated.

The proposed project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials. The proposed project would create an additional roadway and highway interchange, and hazardous materials could potentially be transported on the roadway. However, the Willow Road extension would be a two lane arterial classification, and the majority of the hazardous material transport is on regional routes including US 101.

¹ A General Location Guide for Ultramafic Rocks in California – Areas More Likely to Contain Naturally Occurring Asbestos, Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology, State of California, August, 2000. (ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dmg/pubs/ofr/ofr_2000-019.pdf)

Use of the proposed roadway and interchange would not emit hazardous emissions or involve hazardous materials handling. The proposed project impact area is not located on the list of hazardous materials sites compiled per Government Code Section 65962.5.

The proposed project will improve emergency access/circulation and will not, therefore, interfere with any emergency response or evacuation plans. Vehicular use of the proposed roadway extension and interchange would increase the potential fire hazard along the roadway perimeter; however, this change would not constitute significant wildland fire danger, or a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fire generation.

4. Cumulative Impacts

The cumulative study area for potential hazardous materials impacts is the area containing the cumulative projects shown on Figure IV-1. Although there are potential significant impacts associated with the disturbance of the Pacific Gas & Electric and Unocal pipelines, implementation of the mitigation measures described below will ensure that the proposed Willow Road Extension/US 101 Interchange project will not add significantly to cumulative impacts due to hazardous materials. Potential cumulative impacts from hazardous materials from the other development projects in the study area would require mitigation on a project by project basis.

5. Mitigation Measures

M-1, Soil Contamination. To confirm whether lead contaminants are present in surface soils adjacent to US 101, soil sampling and testing shall be conducted by a County-approved soil scientist prior to any grading or construction activities. Should elevated levels of lead or petroleum contaminants be found, a Health and Safety Plan shall be prepared by a qualified individual approved by the County. Work practices and worker health and safety must conform to California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 1532.1 (Construction Safety Orders). The compliance program required under this section, which would include the health and safety plan, must be prepared by an industrial hygienist certified by the American Board of Industrial Hygiene. A qualified person who is capable of taking corrective action must monitor the compliance program/Health and Safety Plan.

M-2, Pacific Gas & Electric Pipeline. The existing PG&E pipeline along the western side of US 101 will require special consideration during project grading activities associated with proposed Willow Road and interchange alignment. Optional design considerations include:

- Avoidance of the existing pipeline;
- Stabilization of the existing pipeline through strengthening materials;
- Relocation of the existing pipeline outside of the axis of grading.

Project design and construction plans shall include specifications for the appropriate method to avoid or remedy any impact to the pipeline. If avoidance is not feasible, the County shall consult PG&E for appropriate means to ensure that the pipeline is stabilized and strengthened. If it is determined that the pipeline must be relocated, the County of San Luis Obispo will analyze for the potential environmental impacts (e.g. archaeological, biological, etc.) caused by relocating the line. A

Relocation analysis will be conducted prior to construction activities and the County will either redesign construction plans or provide adequate mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts to less than significant levels. The mitigation measures will meet the performance criteria established by PG&E and the State Fire Marshall for pipeline stability, security and proper function to prevent leakage or other hazardous effects.

M-3, Unocal Pipelines. The two existing Unocal pipelines along the eastern alignment of US 101, east of Nipomo Creek and west of Thompson Avenue will require special consideration during project grading activities associated with proposed Willow Road and interchange alignment. Considerations include:

- Avoidance of the existing pipelines;
- Stabilization of the existing pipelines through strengthening materials;
- Relocation of the existing pipelines outside of the axis of grading.

If the pipelines cannot be avoided, and stabilization of the lines is feasible, Unocal shall be consulted on appropriate means to stabilize the pipelines. If it is determined that one or both of the lines must be relocated, the County of San Luis Obispo will analyze for potential environmental impacts of relocating the line. A relocation analysis will be conducted prior to construction activities and the County will either redesign construction plans or provide adequate mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts to less than significant levels. The mitigation measures will meet the performance criteria established by Unocal and the State Fire Marshall for pipeline stability, security and proper function to prevent leakage or other hazardous effects.

M-4, Unocal Pipeline Monitoring. Due to the potential impacts of a leaky or broken oil pipeline, the Unocal pipeline and surrounding areas shall be monitored by a County-designated monitor for the presence or absence of leaks and contaminants prior to project construction in the affected areas. If leaks or contaminants are detected, proper corrective actions shall be taken to comply with all regulatory codes. At a minimum, the contractor shall notify the County engineer and Unocal to turn off the line, as necessary; the affected soil shall be removed and monitoring shall be conducted in accordance with the County Environmental Health Department.

6. Residual Impacts

All possible hazardous materials are confined to specific areas that are unlikely to be disturbed by the proposed project. Implementation of mitigation measures described above will further ensure these potentially hazardous materials are not disturbed. Therefore, no significant unavoidable adverse impacts associated with hazardous materials are anticipated.