

5.0 OTHER CEQA SECTIONS

5.1 IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.2(c) requires that irretrievable commitments of resources be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified. This includes use of non-renewable resources, the commitment of future generations to similar uses, and irreversible damage which can result from environmental accidents associated with the project.

Construction of new buildings and paved surfaces would involve consumption of building materials and energy, some of which are non-renewable or locally limited natural resources (e.g., fossil fuels and wood). Non-renewable resources utilized for the proposed project could no longer be utilized for other purposes. Consumption of building materials and energy is associated with any development in the region, and these commitments of resources are not unique or unusual to the proposed project. The proposed project would represent an incremental commitment to long-term use of non-renewable resources, particularly fuel for increased automobile use and oil, coal, and natural gas for power generation. In addition, as discussed in Section 3.3, *Air Quality*, use of each of these forms of non-renewable energy would contribute to the generation of GHGs with an incremental contribution to global climate change. Thus while project energy demand and use of non-renewable sources itself would not be significant, the project would also incrementally contribute to resultant secondary impacts to other resources, such as air quality.

Implementation of the proposed project would irreversibly commit 2.55 acres of prime soils to development of the fire station and associated paved surfaces. The proposed project would commit future generations to similar uses. The irretrievable commitment of this site for these uses is considered justified given that this site has been zoned as residential by the County, the County approved overriding considerations for that zoning, and the proposed project is a high priority public benefit project. This environmental impact report (EIR) acknowledges that the project would create adverse, but less than significant impacts to agricultural resources due to the conversion of 2.55 acres of agricultural land currently cultivated with orchards to a public service use (please see Section 3.2, *Agricultural Resources* for a detailed discussion of impacts to agriculture).

The proposed project would not be expected to result in environmental accidents that have the potential to cause irreversible damage to the natural or human environment.

5.2 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

Section 15126.2(d) of the CEQA Guidelines requires a discussion of how the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Included in this are projects that would “remove obstacles to population growth.” CEQA Guidelines also state that growth in any area should not be assumed to be necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment (Section 15126.2[d]).

Based on this guidance, the following discussion of growth inducement reviews adopted County growth controls, whether the construction of Station 3 would remove a significant barrier to population growth, or lead to new housing construction, particularly in eastern Montecito, generally defined as the area currently identified as being outside of the Montecito Fire Protection District’s (MFPD’s) currently accepted service response zone (refer to Figures 3.6-1 and 3.6-2a/b). This discussion addresses the potential growth in the context of Montecito, within eastern Montecito specifically, and in relation to potential theoretical development that could occur or be induced on Rancho San Carlos and Featherhill Ranch in the vicinity of proposed Station 3 in response to station construction. Finally, an overview of the potential impacts of any such growth or housing construction and mitigation measures which could be applied to such growth is provided. However, it should be noted that the MFPD is not the Lead Agency responsible for approving such growth and has limited authority in the primary decisions regarding whether such growth should occur and the application of relevant mitigation measures required to address related impacts.

Existing Constraints and Controls on Growth: The proposed project may have some potential to result in growth-inducing impacts due to the improvement of fire service in eastern Montecito. Fire service response times in eastern Montecito are among one of a number of regional factors that potentially limit growth and development in that part of the community. In recognition of these factors, in order to protect public health and safety, the County has adopted the Montecito Growth Management Ordinance (MGMO), which limits the residential growth rate to 0.5 percent or 19 residential units per year. Under the MGMO, projects are awarded points based on environmental constraints, the availability of public services and other factors. Projects that receive the highest rating are most competitive to receive an allocation in years where more than the total of 19 available allocations is requested. Key constraints recognized in this ordinance include non-attainments status of the air basin for particulates and ozone, adequacy of long-term

water supply, inadequate road and intersection capacity, public infrastructure such as sewer service, high fire hazards in most of the community, and the fact that portions of the community lie outside of the MFPD's acceptable 5-minute response time. In fact, the MGMO stipulates that properties outside the MFPD's 5-minute response time must be awarded lower scores during the County's development review process. Section 7.2.5 of the point criteria in the MGMO point criteria awards 20 points to a project if it complies with all of the following:

- Travel distance from nearest Montecito Fire Protection District fire station to proposed structure is less than three miles; and
- Response time for fire apparatus from fire station does not exceed 5 minutes (County of Santa Barbara 2010).

Unless renewed, the MGMO will expire in approximately 15 years (December 31, 2030).

Water supply is another existing barrier to growth in the community of Montecito. As demonstrated by critical water shortages during the current drought since 2011, the adequacy of long-term water supply is a key regional barrier to growth in Montecito. The Montecito Water District (MWD) has declared a critical Water Shortage Emergency and has issued Ordinances 92 and 93, which limit water use and restrict water allocations. The MWD has adopted a Mandatory Water Use Restriction Ordinance and declared that "[t]hose who have not already drastically reduced usage must do so at once...". Additionally, on April 1, 2015, the Governor Brown issued Executive Order B-29-15 that directs the State Water Resources Control Board to implement statewide mandatory water restrictions to achieve a 25 percent reduction in potable urban water usage through February 28, 2016 (Office of Governor Brown 2015).

Sewer service, including the adequacy of infrastructure such as pump station capacity and sewer mains, are also identified as important regional constraints to growth in the MGMO. Traffic capacity along selected roadway segments, such as Sheffield Drive between Jelinda Drive and Birnam Wood Drive southeast of the proposed project site, is also of concern.

The MGMO and County policy also recognize the importance of site-specific resources and constraints and the extent to which potential growth and development in eastern Montecito can be constrained by site-specific factors. For example, the MGMO awards points to projects that protect oak trees, creeks and monarch butterfly habitats and that avoid flood plains. In addition regional constraints can constrain growth, such as the

presence of Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHAs), including riparian and oak woodlands, intact chaparral and coastal sage scrub, wetlands and other habitats. The County *Comprehensive Plan* protects ESHAs, oak trees and other resources and requires avoidance of hazards. ESHAs are identified throughout eastern Montecito, particularly along Romero Canyon, Picay and Buena Vista Creeks. One of the largest ESHAs in eastern Montecito is located on the Rancho San Carlos where approximately 45 acres (19 percent) of this 237 acre ranch is designated as ESHA.

Additional physiological and site specific constraints in eastern Montecito that potentially constrain growth include geologic hazards, such as steep slopes along Ortega Ridge, or in the foothills and active and potentially active earthquake faults, including the Arroyo Parida and Fernald Point faults and unstable soils. In addition, eastern Montecito is traversed by Romero, Picay and Buena Vista Creeks with their associated flood hazard zones. Rancho San Carlos and Featherhill Ranch exhibit a number of these constraints, including traces of the Arroyo Parida and Fernald Point Faults, steep slopes in the northern reaches of Rancho San Carlos and the flood plains of Romero Creek across the Featherhill Ranch and Picay Creek on Rancho San Carlos. The degree to which any of these constraints limits development on a particular site requires detailed analysis; however, the County's adopted Land Use Development Policy #2 permits the County to reduce development potential based on such constraints (County of Santa Barbara 2015).

Emergency response times in many parts of eastern Montecito exceed MFPD and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) guidelines of a 5-minute response time (MFPD 2008, MFPD 2014). The Montecito Community Plan (MCP) cites the potential need for a new fire station in eastern Montecito if development continues in this area of the community; however, the MCP does not contain any specific policies or restrictions on growth related to the potential need for such a new fire station. In fact, the County has not found that approval of development projects within eastern Montecito in areas that do not meet the MFPD's 5-minute standard would be inconsistent with County Land Use Development Policy # 4 and Coastal Plan Policy 2-6, which require provision of adequate public services. The 2010 MGMO Extension EIR identifies planned growth as consistent with adopted policies and the County has not denied pending development projects within this area based on adequacy of fire protection service issues (Almy 2014).¹

¹ In addition to response times, the County also considers a fire fighter to population ratio of a maximum of one fire fighter/4,000 residents for determining adequacy of service. MFPD currently exceeds this goal with approximately 1 on duty fire fighter for roughly every 2,000 residents, so that the County may determine that current conditions are consistent with policy.

The MGMO currently allows a maximum of 19 new residential allocations annually; however, demand for allocations over the last decade has averaged only 9 units per year, with a low of 4 units in 2007 and a high of 15 in 2003 (Harris 2014). Thus, over the last decade, the MGMO apparently has not restrained the rate of growth, and a long-term average of 9-10 allocations appears to be available annually for potentially less competitive projects under the County's point system, such as those outside the 5-minute response time. In addition, the MGMO stipulates that properties outside the MFPD's 5-minute response time are awarded lower scores during the County's MGMO point allocation process. Therefore, while a reduction in points assigned under the MGMO to potential future development in eastern Montecito due to inadequate fire response times may incrementally limit development, fire response time does not appear to constitute a major barrier to growth in eastern Montecito.

Given historical availability of excess allocations (i.e., 9-10 per year), the MGMO does not directly prohibit or even severely limit growth in eastern Montecito, but it may serve to limit the pace of such growth at the current set rate of 0.5 percent per year. Therefore, construction of Station 3 is likely to have very limited growth inducing impacts in relation to the County's adopted growth pacing mechanism, the MGMO. However, it should be noted that recent amendments to the MGMO included the completion of a third fire station as one of several factors that would allow the County to consider possible expiration of the MGMO (County of Santa Barbara 2010). Additional factors include adequate water resources and long-term water supply, transportation/circulation and wastewater infrastructure. Based on this amendment, if multiple other regional and site-specific constraints on growth were successfully addressed or eliminated, construction of Station 3 could facilitate expiration of the MGMO, allowing elimination of the current growth pacing mechanism.

Amount of Future Potential Growth: Various long-term growth estimates exist for the community of Montecito, including older projections within the MCP, updated communitywide estimates in the 2010 MGMO EIR, and projections by the MFPD. In 2008, MFPD prepared the Station 3 Site Identification Study, which included maximum long-term build out projections for eastern Montecito based upon the MCP and assessor's parcel data. In this study, MFPD identified the areas of eastern Montecito that are currently underserved with fire protection services (i.e., outside the 5 minute response time) as having a maximum growth potential of 175 new single family homes, with up to 524 Residential Second Units (RSUs) and 35 guest homes, presuming that all eligible

parcels would apply for and receive permits for RSUs and guest homes (MFPD 2008).² By comparison, the MGMO Amendments and Extension Final Supplemental EIR identified a maximum communitywide growth throughout Montecito of 455 units by 2030 and full buildout of the MCP as 592 units (County of Santa Barbara 2010). The County's estimates are markedly different in part because the County relied upon historical trends rather than theoretical maximums in estimating construction of only 60 RSUs in all of Montecito over the coming decades. These growth estimates provide a range of possible long term development that should be considered when reviewing the impacts of long term development and growth inducement in the community.

While regulatory barriers such as the MGMO, policies of the MCP and Comprehensive Plan, provision of adequate public sewer and water service, or the presence of sensitive biological resources could limit or pace eventual growth or development in eastern Montecito, construction of Station 3 would incrementally ease future development in the project vicinity.³ While lack of fire protection services is one of many potential barriers to growth and this level of development represents a worst case growth projection, construction of Station 3 would theoretically remove one of many barriers to future growth in eastern Montecito. Such growth could theoretically include eventual construction of as many as 250 new units, with up to 175 single family homes, 60 RSUs and 15 guest houses in eastern Montecito. However, it must be noted that to date, the County has not denied development or prohibited subdivisions in the areas of eastern Montecito located outside of the 5-minute response time.

Rancho San Carlos, the site of proposed Station 3, and the adjacent Featherhill Ranch represent the largest remaining undeveloped area within the urban area of Montecito with substantial potential for future residential development. While no development is currently planned or proposed for the Rancho San Carlos and Featherhill Ranch properties which surround the proposed location of Station 3, construction of a fire station would remove one potential barrier to development of up to 97 new homes on these ranches as permitted under the zoning and land use designations set forth in the MCP. Based on the MFPD's study of potential growth in currently underserved areas of the community, this would constitute more than 60 percent of the potential theoretical 175 single-family homes that could be developed in eastern Montecito. Based on County

² While these numbers of new homes are theoretically possible, many factors constrain development potential of individual parcels and the 175 units is thought to represent a theoretical maximum. In addition, development of secondary residential units is even more speculative; as of 2010, the County was issuing only 7 permits annually *countywide* for such secondary units.

estimates of buildout of Montecito by 2030, full development of Rancho San Carlos and the Featherhill Ranch would constitute 16 percent of the theoretical maximum future potential buildout of 592 units in Montecito.

Future development throughout Montecito of up to 455 new units by 2030 or 592 units at full buildout of the community as identified in the County's MGMO Extension EIR would create a number of potentially significant impacts. As discussed above, maximum projected growth in eastern Montecito in the areas underserved by fire protection services (i.e., outside of 5-minute response times) is estimated to be approximately 250 units or 55 percent of the up to 455 units permitted under the MGMO through 2030 or 42 percent of projected full buildout of the community (County of Santa Barbara 2010).⁴

Timing of Future Growth: In terms of the timing of potential future growth in Montecito, as set forth in the list of cumulative projects in Table 2-3, Section 2.7, only limited development is currently pending in Montecito. Limited developable land remains within the community. As discussed above, the limited remaining development potential within eastern Montecito, estimated at approximately a total of 250 units (including second units and guest houses), would limit the total amount of future potential growth. It is not possible to project the timing of any development on Rancho San Carlos or Featherhill Ranch; no pending permits have been submitted to the County of Santa Barbara, although the property is currently for sale. The pace of such growth is limited by the MGMO to 19 units per year, although growth has been proceeding at a slower pace of 9-10 units per year over the last decade (Harris 2014). As long as the MGMO remains in effect, construction of Station 3 would have little or no effect on the maximum allowable rate of growth. However, if other barriers such as provision of an adequate long-term water supply are removed and the County determines that the MGMO should expire, growth could accelerate with construction of Station 3. However, it must be noted that the County has not historically denied development projects in eastern Montecito based on emergency response times.

Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures: To the limited extent that construction of Fire Station 3 removes one of the multiple barriers to this potential future growth, its construction could be one factor that allows for or facilitates future development planned by the County under the MCP.⁵ Thus, if all other barriers to growth were removed and

⁴ Note that County future growth estimates include single family homes, residential second units and guest homes; however, only single family homes regulated under the MGMO

⁵ As discussed above, fire service response times have not been found by the County to be a major land use policy issue in eastern Montecito.

the County found growth in areas outside a 5-minute fire service response times to be inconsistent with adopted policy, construction of Station 3 could incrementally contribute to creation of potentially significant impacts associated with such growth. However, the role of a potential future Station 3 and fire service response times does not appear to be a barrier to growth based on historic County policy interpretation. Nonetheless, the following analysis is provided to disclose possible environmental impacts associated with the limited potential for the project to contribute to growth inducement in eastern Montecito.

As discussed below, the 2010 MGMO Extension EIR identified community wide significant impacts associated with future growth and development (County of Santa Barbara 2010). The MGMO EIR along with specific analysis of impacts in eastern Montecito as well as on the Featherhill Ranch and Rancho San Carlos is further described below. Please refer to the MGMO EIR for detailed descriptions of potential impacts associated with community wide growth.

5.2.1 Unavoidable and Significant Impacts

In the MGMO EIR (and previous 1992 MCP EIR), the County identified the following impacts as unavoidable and significant, even with application of mitigation measures:

Transportation: Future growth could generate traffic, which would exceed MCP roadway capacity standards at 5 roadway segments including Sheffield Drive between Jelinda Drive and Birnam Wood Drive within the Station 3 project site in eastern Montecito and increases in delays at 5 intersections in central and western Montecito. As most impacted roads and intersections are in central and western Montecito, traffic generated by future potential induced development in eastern Montecito is likely to contribute only incrementally to such congestion. However, Sheffield Drive would be more directly impacted by eastern Montecito development, particularly by future development of up to 97 homes and associated RSU and/ or guest house on Rancho San Carlos and the adjacent Featherhill Ranch. This roadway segment is expected to exceed its designated capacity. Mitigation measures identified by the County in the MGMO EIR include studying Montecito circulation upon completion of improvements to US Highway 101 over the next decade to see if trips are diverted from surface streets and/ or reclassifying Sheffield Drive with a higher average daily trip capacity if warranted. Widening or straightening of this road appears infeasible as mitigation due to inconsistencies with County policies, secondary impacts to oak trees and aesthetic resources, and major costs associated with such non-programmed improvement (County of Santa Barbara 2010).

Wastewater Disposal: Use of private septic systems to serve new development could impact water quality as existing wastewater disposal infrastructure is inadequate to serve community buildout (County of Santa Barbara 2010). Sewer lines and service exists throughout most of eastern Montecito; however, potential future induced growth in areas not served by sewer or with inadequate sewer infrastructure may create potential impacts. Potential future induced growth of up to 250 units in eastern Montecito could make up approximately 42 percent of projected increase in demand for sewer services, with the potential for development of up to 97 new homes and associated RSU and/ or guest house units at the Rancho San Carlos and Featherhill Ranch also contributing to increases in demand for wastewater disposal. Potential mitigation measures identified in the MGMO EIR may include requirements to connect to the Montecito Sanitary District sewer system where available and/or completion of upgrades to sewer mains and lift stations; however, potential water quality impacts attributed to septic systems would remain given should connections and/or improvements to the public sewer system not be feasible (County of Santa Barbara 2010).

Fire Protection/ Hazards: Impacts are associated with inadequate response times in eastern Montecito and high wildfire danger throughout the community, particularly in the foothills. Potential future induced growth in eastern Montecito would be exposed to high fire hazards and inadequate response time that would be at least partially mitigated or reduced through construction of Station 3. Similarly, while 97 new homes and associated RSU and/ or guest house units at the Rancho San Carlos and Featherhill Ranch potentially would be exposed to high fire hazards, construction of Station 3 would help reduce such impacts. However, development may still be located within areas without adequate fire pressure and the risk of damage to structures during a major wildfire would remain; such impacts may therefore remain significant (County of Santa Barbara 2010).

Public Facilities; Police Protection: New development would increase demand for police protection by approximately 1.8 officers. Potential future induced growth in eastern Montecito could make up approximately 42 percent of projected increased demand for police protection at full buildout of the community as identified in the MGMO EIR. Similarly, the potential development of 97 new homes and associated RSU and/ or guest house units at the Rancho San Carlos and Featherhill Ranch would incrementally increase demand for police protection services. Increased funding for police protection may or may not be available; such impacts may therefore remain significant (County of Santa Barbara 2010).

Public Facilities; Schools: Impacts to schools associated with potentially significant increase in student to teacher ratios at elementary, junior high, and high schools. Potential future induced growth in eastern Montecito could make up approximately 42 percent of projected increases in enrollment and declines in student teacher ratios at full buildout of the community. Similarly, the potential development of 97 new homes and associated RSU and/ or guest house units at the Rancho San Carlos and Featherhill Ranch would incrementally increase demand for schools. Payment of school fees would partially offset facilities impacts. However, increased funding for additional teachers may or may not be available and such impacts therefore may remain significant (County of Santa Barbara 2010).

Public Facilities; Solid Waste: Future development would contribute to greater than a 1 percent increase in total landfill volume at the Tajiguas Landfill. Potential future induced growth in eastern Montecito could make up approximately 42 percent of projected increase in solid waste generation at full buildout of the community. Similarly, the potential development of 97 new homes and associated RSU and/ or guest house units at Rancho San Carlos and Featherhill Ranch would incrementally increase solid waste generation. Although a currently proposed onsite waste to energy facility at the Tajiguas Landfill may partially mitigate such impacts by extending the life of the landfill, capacity would remain limited and full mitigation would not be available. Such impacts may therefore remain significant (County of Santa Barbara 2010).

Public Facilities, Storm water, and Flooding: New development would increase runoff that may exceed storm drain capacities. Where such development is located in 100-year flood plains, flooding impacts could occur. Development in eastern Montecito, particularly within the floodplains of Romero, Picay, and Buena Vista Creeks could be impacted by flooding and contribute runoff, which could exceed the capacity of local drainage systems. Flooding along Romero Creek, which borders Featherhill Ranch, could expose future development to flood hazards as would flood waters from Picay Creek that cross Rancho San Carlos. Increased runoff from development on these ranches could also exceed local drainage capacity and incrementally contribute to downstream flooding. The County would likely require on and offsite drainage improvements during its development review process. The MCP EIR also recommends preparation of a Master Drainage Plan; however, risk of flooding would remain and increased funding for all offsite improvements and Master Drainage Plan preparation may not be available. Therefore impacts would remain significant (County of Santa Barbara 2010).

Aesthetics and Visual Resources: New growth and development could obstruct scenic vistas, impact aesthetic resources, and create new light and glare. Potential future induced growth in eastern Montecito could make up approximately 42 percent of projected future development at full buildout of the community, with associated impacts to scenic views and community character, particularly on steep slopes or within visually sensitive areas such as oak woodlands. Similarly, potential construction of 97 new homes and associated RSU and/ or guest house units on the Rancho San Carlos and Featherhill Ranch could affect view corridors to the mountains and contribute to a change in the semi rural character of eastern Montecito. The County's development review process and application of the Montecito Architectural Review Guidelines would partially address such impacts; however, given the amount of theoretical potential development and the sensitive visual nature of the area such impacts may remain significant (County of Santa Barbara 2010).

Biological Resources: New growth and development could impact sensitive habitats, including oak and riparian woodlands, coastal sage scrub, monarch butterfly roosts, chaparral and coastal sage scrub and well as sensitive plant and wildlife species. Potential future induced growth in eastern Montecito, particularly within the native habitats such as oak and riparian woodlands along and near Picay and Romero Creeks, which traverse the Featherhill Ranch, could impact sensitive resources. Rancho San Carlos supports one of the largest ESH areas in the community, including oak woodlands, many individual oak trees, a mapped monarch butterfly roost and coastal sage scrub and chaparral, all of which could be impacted by future development of up to 97 homes and associated RSU and/ or guest house on this ranch and the adjacent Featherhill Ranch. The County's development review process and application of standard habitat protection and restoration measures would partially address such impacts; however, given the amount of theoretical potential development and the sensitive nature of biological resources in eastern Montecito, such impacts may remain significant (County of Santa Barbara 2010).

Historic Resources: New development could cause physical or aesthetic impacts to historic structures. Potential future induced growth in eastern Montecito could make up approximately 42 percent of projected new development at buildout of the community with associated potential impacts to potential historic resources such as the Valley Club Golf Course and older historic homes. Development of up to 97 new homes and associated RSU and/ or guest house units on the Rancho San Carlos and Featherhill Ranch could also impact historic resources as at least one known historic structure exists on these properties. The County's development review process and application of

standards historic resource protection policies and mitigations as well as review by the Historic Landmarks Advisory Commission would partially address such impacts; however, given the amount of theoretical potential development and the sensitivity of the few remaining historic structures and resources in this area, impacts would remain significant (County of Santa Barbara 2010).

5.2.2 Potentially Significant Impacts that can be Mitigated to Less than Significant

The following impacts from projected regional growth have been identified by the County in the MGMO EIR to be potentially significant, but subject to feasible mitigation as discussed below.

Air Quality: The MGMO EIR identifies construction and operational emissions as well as greenhouse gas (GHG) generation from new homes and associated motor vehicle traffic as having the potential to exceed adopted thresholds of significance. Potential future induced growth in eastern Montecito could make up approximately 42 percent of projected increase in pollutant and GHG emissions at full buildout of the community. Development of up to 97 homes and associated RSU and/ or guest house units of Rancho San Carlos and Featherhill Ranch could also incrementally contribute to such emissions. Implementation of mitigation measures such as transportation demand management, energy conservation and reduction in emissions under best management practices during construction would partially reduce such impacts; however, cumulative impacts would remain significant (County of Santa Barbara 2010).

Water Resources; Public Water Supply and Groundwater: New growth and development could exceed available supplies as state water has not proven as reliable as forecast and available groundwater resources are limited. While the current drought has created an emergency situation, it remains unclear if this will impact long term water supplies previously forecast by the County and MWD to be adequate to serve projected growth in Montecito. Potential future induced growth in eastern Montecito could make up approximately 42 percent of projected increases in water demand, potentially contributing to the potential to exceed available supply. Development of up to 97 homes and associated RSU and/ or guest house units of Rancho San Carlos and Featherhill Ranch could also impact supplies, but high levels of historic agricultural water use onsite may limit any net increase in demand. Implementation of mitigation measures such as monitoring of long- and short-term water availability at the state and local level, improvements in water conservation, and adjustments in policies may partially address these issues. If water demand approaches or exceeds water supply, MGMO growth

allocation may be reduced. Moreover, MWD is currently investigating water conservation and securing supplemental supplies. Additional long term efforts include expanding the reliable local supply, such as continuing to work with the City of Santa Barbara to explore reactivation of the City's desalination plant, increasing storage capacity, capital facility improvements and improved financial planning. The County has found that these measures would reduce impacts to long term water supply to less than significant and MWD has not determined that a long term supply deficit exists outside of the current drought crisis (County of Santa Barbara 2010).

Transportation: Impacts to multi-modal uses and pedestrian and bike safety could occur through increased development. Potential future induced growth in eastern Montecito could make up approximately 42 percent of projected increase in overall development in community, with impacts along roads such as Sheffield Drive and East Valley Road. Development of up to 97 homes and associated RSU and/ or guest house units of Rancho San Carlos and Featherhill Ranch could also contribute to such impacts. A proposed on-road trail along East Valley Road bordering the Rancho San Carlos and Featherhill Ranch would help address this safety concern (County of Santa Barbara 2010).

Recreation: New development would increase demand for parks, recreation and trails, with impacts to coastal access and trails of particular concern. Potential future induced growth in eastern Montecito could make up approximately 42 percent of projected increase in overall development in community, with impacts of increase demand for trail access. Rancho San Carlos and Featherhill Ranch support the largest remaining undeveloped area in the community, although with the exception of a road shoulder trail along East Valley Road, no trails are currently plan to serve future development of up to 97 homes on these properties (County of Santa Barbara 2010).

Geologic Resources: Construction of new development on steep slopes, unstable soils or near earthquake faults may expose future homes to geologic hazards. Potential future induced growth in eastern Montecito could make up approximately 42 percent of projected increase in overall development in the community with impacts associated with excessive grading, increased erosion and sedimentation and damage from seismic shaking or earth movement. Development of up to 97 homes and associated RSU and/ or guest house units of Rancho San Carlos and Featherhill Ranch could be located on steep slopes where excessive grading, erosion and slope failure could occur. The potentially active or active Arroyo Parida and Fernald Point Faults cross portion of Rancho San

Carlos and may expose future development to seismic hazards (County of Santa Barbara 2010).

Cultural Resources: New development could impact recorded or not previously identified subsurface archaeological sites. Potential future induced growth in eastern Montecito could make up approximately 42 percent of projected increase in overall development in the community with impacts associated with associated impacts to cultural resources. Development of up to 97 homes and associated RSU and/or guest house units on Rancho San Carlos and Featherhill Ranch could also impact cultural resources (County of Santa Barbara 2010).

Risk of Upset/ Hazardous Materials (Electromagnetic Radiation): New development may be exposed to hazards from electromagnetic radiation from major power lines which run through Montecito in the foothills north of most new potential development.

Land Use and Agriculture: In adopting the MCP and certification of the accompanying EIR, the Board of Supervisors found that the MCP would result in significant and unavoidable impacts to agriculture with no feasible mitigation available (see Appendix K). As part of its approval of the MCP, the Board of Supervisors adopted accompanying Findings and a Statement of Overriding Considerations regarding the loss of prime agricultural land. Potential future induced growth in eastern Montecito could make up approximately 42percent of projected increase in overall development in the community with associated potential impacts to agriculture. As discussed in detail in Section 3.2, *Agricultural Resources*, eastern Montecito supports two areas of agricultural activity. The largest of these, including both Featherhill Ranch and Rancho San Carlos, supports substantial areas of orchards, but these areas are zoned for residential use. The Montecito Avocado Ranch also supports orchards and is zoned for agriculture but has been subdivided, allowing up to 12 new homes. Both Rancho San Carlos and Featherhill Ranch are designated and zoned for residential use, support prime agricultural soils and active agriculture and the County has identified future residential development in Montecito as having significant and unavoidable impacts to agriculture. Accordingly, development of up to 97 homes and associated RSU and/ or guest house units on Rancho San Carlos and Featherhill Ranch could impact active agricultural use. To the limited extent that construction of a fire station may reduce a barrier to growth it may also facilitate conversion of agricultural land, with associated potentially significant impacts. However, as discussed above, fire services do not appear to have a limiting effect on growth based on historic County actions.

The MCP and MGMO EIRs also identify a ranges o impacts that are less than significant.

Employment Generation and Growth Inducement: The proposed project could also result in a potential increase of 10 new employees for MFPD. This increase would be associated with three shifts of three fire fighters per shift and potentially one paramedic working at Station 3. Based upon average household size of approximately 2.4 residents per household, these new employees could generate an increase in population of up to 24 new residents to the South Coast. However, it is currently unknown whether these new emergency personnel would come from the existing labor pool or in-migrate from another community and increase demand for housing. Anecdotal evidence for recent emergency personnel hires in the area has consisted of employees either already living the community or living in a neighboring community from which they can commute (e.g., Ventura) (Wallace 2011).

Demand for housing associated with these new employees could increase by as many as 10 new units. Although the County historically has tracked the link between employment growth and housing demand, no current housing demand estimate exists for the link between non-residential developments such as Station 3 with increases in housing demand for unincorporated areas of the County of Santa Barbara. The County has identified projects such as the proposed fire station, with highly-trained and skilled emergency service workers, as incrementally contributing to an increased demand for housing, particularly affordable housing (County of Santa Barbara 2010). However, given a South Coast population in excess of 200,000 residents, with 8,965 persons in Montecito (U.S. Census Bureau 2015), a total population increase of up to 24 new residents potentially associated with construction of Station 3 would not be considered as significantly growth-inducing. MFPD has set aside three rental units to help accommodate such additional housing needs. For these reasons, the project's contribution to employment growth and related growth inducement would be less than significant.

5.3 GLOBAL WARMING/CLIMATE CHANGE

Recent state legislation and opinions by the California Attorney General have indicated that CEQA evaluations are to include an assessment of a proposed project's potential to contribute to global climate change (also known as "global warming") impacts. CEQA requires that Lead Agencies inform decision-makers and the public about potential significant environmental effects of the proposed project.

Global climate change can be measured by changes in wind patterns, storms, precipitation, and temperature. Scientific consensus is that human-related emission of GHGs above natural levels is a significant contributor to global climate change. GHGs are substances that trap heat in the atmosphere and regulate the Earth's temperature, and include water vapor, carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), ground level ozone, and fluorinated gases, including chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), and Halons.

Primary activities associated with GHG emissions include transportation, utilities (e.g., power generation and transport), industry/manufacturing, agriculture, and residential. End-use sector sources of GHG emissions in California are as follows: transportation (37 percent), electricity generation (20 percent), industry (23 percent), agriculture and forestry (8 percent), and other (12 percent) (California Environmental Protection 2015). The main sources of increased concentrations of GHGs due to human activity include the combustion of fossil fuels and deforestation (CO₂); livestock and rice paddy farming, land use and wetland depletions, and landfill emissions (CH₄); refrigeration systems and fire suppression systems use and manufacturing (CFCs); and agricultural activities, including the use of fertilizers.

Climate change could potentially affect other resource areas, including hydrologic, economic, and biologic resources. Projected impacts to the region caused by climate change include: decreases in the water quality of surface water bodies, groundwater, and coastal waters; rising sea levels; increased flooding and fire events; declines in aquatic ecosystem health; lowered profitability for water-intensive crops; changes in species and habitat distribution; and impacts to fisheries (The California Regional Assessment 2002). Construction of a fire station would incrementally improve the community's ability to respond to climate change and related impacts such as wildfires and floods.

As discussed in Section 3.3, *Air Quality*, long-term operation of the proposed project would result in the generation of GHG emissions from vehicle trips and area sources (e.g., use of appliances, landscaping, and heating/cooling) associated with the operation of the fire station. Under the proposed project, operational vehicular and area sources would generate approximately 88.2 tons/year of CO₂ emissions (see Table 3.3-5). The generation of GHGs would be relatively minor and below the 10,000 metric tons of CO₂ per year threshold; the proposed project would incrementally contribute to the challenge of meeting the State's attainment goals of reducing GHG emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2020 as stated in Assembly Bill (AB) 32. Mitigation Measure AQ-2b described in

Section 3.3 *Air Quality* would further reduce GHG emissions and ensure that project-level impacts are less than significant. In combination with existing GHG emissions, direct emissions from the proposed project would incrementally add to cumulative GHG emissions. Recent State legislation pertaining to climate change is summarized in Section 3.3 *Air Quality*.

5.4 ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL EFFECTS

Section 15131(a-c) of the CEQA Guidelines sets forth standards for the assessment of economic or social effects in an EIR and mandates that “economic or social effects of a project shall not be treated as significant effects on the environment.” However, because public concerns have been raised over the potential impacts of a new fire station on property values, in the interest of full disclosure, this EIR provides a brief discussion of issues related to property values. Consistent with the guidance provided in CEQA Guidelines Section 15131, the following discussion briefly summarizes potential economic issues.

It is widely recognized that certain types of land uses may adversely impact property values and a considerable body of literature exists regarding possible effects of locally undesirable land uses on property values. Such land uses typically include nuclear power plants, hazardous waste facilities, landfills, airports and major industrial facilities. Economic analyses of such effects employ “hedonic” assessment of potential effects of these land uses based on factors including proximity, visibility, and area of potential effects from noise or emissions, and provide mathematical models to assess potential changes in property values associated with such uses. However, none of the studies reviewed as part of the research for preparation of this EIR identifies fire stations as an adverse land use.

In order to determine possible effects of Station 3 on surrounding property values, Amec Foster Wheeler staff conducted an initial review of available literature on this issue. Subsequent to Amec Foster Wheeler’s initial review, Amec Foster Wheeler contracted with Phillips Fractor Gorman, a well-known real estate economics and finance research firm to conduct a more detailed literature search and preliminary analysis. This report concluded that “[a] broad investigation of academic literature revealed that fire station presence in a neighborhood typically adds to the value of that neighborhood rather than detracting from it.” Information from this research is included in Appendix J. Relevant information sources from the initial review included:

- Office of Planning and Research- State Clearinghouse: The state repository for all environmental documents prepared in the state contained no references for analysis of the economic effects of fire stations. Three EIRs have been prepared for fire station construction within the state over the last decade; although property value issues were raised as items of concern in at least one EIR, none of these documents analyzed economic effects of station construction.
- CEQAnet Online Document Repository: No relevant documents were available on this website.
- American Planning Association: A review of all available online studies and publications available did not locate any studies of the effects of fire stations on property values.
- Urban Lands Institute Document Archives: The Urban Lands Institute is a nationally recognized organization that studies urban planning issues. This organization's document archives contained no relevant documents that addressed the economic effects of fire stations.
- Google Search: A Google search was performed for links related to economic and property value impacts related to new fire stations. Anecdotal discussions of potential impacts of fire stations on property values exist, including appraisers chat rooms (Appraisers Forum 2009). In addition, a review of public documents indicated that possible effects of fire stations on property values are often raised by neighbors of such projects.

One economic analysis for the impacts of a fire station was reviewed (Portland Development Commission 2004). Conducted in an urban area of Portland, this analysis found that a fire station would have a beneficial effect on property values and noted the following:

“Introduction of a new, full-block development incorporating a fire station that is operated twenty-four hours, seven days per week, Fire Department administrative offices, a museum, and a learning center, as well as offices or housing, and street-level retail can only serve as a stabilizing factor for the study area overall, and the immediately surrounding buildings and businesses in particular. The Blagen Block to the south of the site has been redeveloped for some years and is not close to full occupancy. The Fleischer Building to the west is in much the same situation. Attracting tenants to the area is not considered an easy sell, due to the character of the neighborhood discussed previously; therefore, the addition of a

fire station that can serve as a catalyst for neighborhood improvement is seen as particularly positive for existing businesses.

As noted in the case studies for Charlotte, North Carolina and Austin Texas, fire stations in mixed-use areas can prove beneficial for commercial and residential uses alike. Their impact can be particularly positive where the design of the fire station is open and encourages interaction with the surrounding community. The presence of a fire station diminishes concerns about safety and increases the perception of overall protection, thus reducing concerns about risk within the area. As noted earlier, the perception of risk directly impacts both personal and professional investment in a property or area, and hence directly impacts rental levels and property values.

In each and every case we investigated, a fire station is viewed as a valuable member of its community; property values have continued to increase even with the infrequent inconvenience of sirens or large trucks – the benefit of having the facility close by outweighing any of the acknowledged negatives. Further, in each instance we found fire fighters are integral participants in community activities and considered welcome neighbors.”

Because this study took place in an urban context and the fire station was part of a larger mixed-use redevelopment effort, it may not be directly applicable to construction of a new fire station in the semi-rural context of Montecito.

A summary appraiser’s report was also prepared for the Rancho San Carlos property to assess potential economic impacts of locating Station 3 (Appendix J). The report includes a review and comparison of listed asking prices and actual sales prices as well as inquiries of both listing agents and buyers regarding any concerns about proximity to a fire station. The qualitative evidence from that report is that the proximity to fire stations had no impact on property values.

Our analysis reveals that potential effects of a new fire station on property values center on the project’s potential visual compatibility with the community and changes or increases in noise levels. As discussed in this EIR (refer to Section 3.1, *Aesthetics and Visual Resources*), the design of Station 3 would include substantial landscaping and new buildings would be well setback from East Valley Road. Project design and architecture would be largely consistent visually with surrounding residential uses. Based on this analysis, it does not appear that project design and aesthetic characteristics would have demonstrable negative effects on the neighborhood.

Potential changes in noise levels may also be of concern. As discussed in Section 3.9 *Noise*, Station 3 is projected to have an average of 1.1 emergency responses per day.

Exterior/outdoor siren noise levels during the average of 1.1 responses per day would be in the range of 95 to 100 decibels affecting surrounding residences for 10 seconds. Interior noise levels would be substantially lower. These noise levels would not exceed any adopted local ordinances or thresholds, but would create very short-duration noise impacts. Based on a review of existing literature, it is unclear if such low frequency short-duration nuisance noise would have a demonstrable effect on property values. However, existing studies indicate that such low frequency short-duration noise becomes part of the accepted environment for surrounding residents.

Finally, it should also be noted that in high fire hazard areas such as Montecito, construction of a new fire station may also have beneficial effects on property values due to enhanced protection provided to area homes. A new fire station may also reduce or stabilize insurance rates in the area, thereby potentially lowering costs for area homeowners ((Insurance Services Office 1996)).

5.5 UNAVOIDABLE SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.2(b) requires a description of any significant impacts resulting from implementation of a project, including impacts that cannot be mitigated to below a level of significance. The proposed project was evaluated with respect to specific resource areas to determine whether implementation would result in significant adverse impacts. A detailed discussion of each of the impacts can be found in Section 3.0, *Environmental Impact Analysis and Mitigation Measures*.

Specific significance thresholds were defined for each potential impact associated with each resource area. Based on the environmental impact assessment presented in Section 3.0, *Environmental Impact Analysis and Mitigation Measures*, of this EIR, the proposed project's impacts to biological resources, geologic processes, and water resources would be potentially significant. Mitigation measures were developed that would reduce all impacts to less than significant levels. Therefore, MFPD will not be required to adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations for the proposed project.