

4.1 LAND USE

4.1.1 INTRODUCTION

This section provides information regarding current land use, land use designations and land use policies in the vicinity of the proposed reclaimed water use areas. Following an overview of the regional and existing setting in **Section 4.1.2** and the relevant federal, state, and local regulations in **Section 4.1.3**, project-related impacts and recommended mitigation measures are presented in **Section 4.1.4**.

As explained in **Section 1.0**, the discussion and analyses in this SEIR tier from the information and conclusions included within the 2006 City of Hollister Domestic Wastewater System Improvement (DWSI) and San Benito County Water District Recycled Water Project (RWP) EIR (2006 EIR). The 2006 EIR described, in general, what potential environmental effects may be expected from the development of reclaimed water sites and the extension of water distribution pipelines, and how these impacts are to be addressed and/or mitigated. The 2006 EIR anticipated no significant and unavoidable land use impacts resulting from implementation of the DWSI and RWP. Potential impacts relating to conflicts with applicable plans, policies, and regulations were found to be reduced to less than significant levels through implementation of mitigation measures. This section expands on the land use impacts discussion of the 2006 EIR as it relates specifically to the development of reclaimed water irrigation sites and associated water distribution pipelines.

4.1.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Environmental setting information for the DWTP and larger project area is incorporated by reference from Chapter 4.1.2 of the 2006 EIR (refer to **Section 1.3** of this SEIR).

Regional Setting

The City of Hollister (City) is located in northern San Benito County (County) within the inland agricultural region near the north end of California's Central Coast Region, approximately six miles east of the City of San Juan Bautista. Agricultural land uses surrounding the City include irrigated row crops, orchards, and rangeland. Rural residential uses occur within the agricultural areas. Although agricultural operations and related activities continue in the region, the pattern of urban development in the area has resulted in the incremental loss of agricultural land.

Existing Land Uses

Existing land uses in the project area include irrigated agriculture, rangeland, rural residential, urban residential, commercial, industrial, public/quasi public, recreation and open-space. Irrigated agriculture and rural residential are the dominant forms of land use in the project area. Existing land uses along the proposed reclaimed water pipeline alignments consists primarily of agriculture and single-family homes (Figure 3-3). Proposed reclamation sites are described below.

Site 1 - Hollister Municipal Airport

Site 1 is located west of State Route 156, approximately three miles from the DWTP in the northern portion of the City of Hollister. This site consists of the City of Hollister Municipal Airport property, and

approximately 148 acres of adjacent private property. Land uses within the airport include the airport terminal, runway, garage, a variety of light industrial uses, office, retail, and surrounding fields consisting primarily of native vegetation. Portions of the airport property located north and south of the main runways are currently cultivated for the production of hay grass. Adjacent private property located in the western portion of Site 1 consists of agricultural parcels that are periodically rotated between irrigated and non-irrigated crops. Currently, one of the parcels is being used for the cultivation of artichokes, and the remaining area is being used for hay grass. Adjacent private property located in the eastern portion of Site 1 consists of agricultural parcels currently cultivated for the production of hay grass. Land uses in the vicinity of Site 1 are mostly industrial east of San Felipe Road with agricultural fields located to the west. A rock-quarry operation is located directly adjacent to the western border of Site 1.

Site 2 - Brookhollow Ranch

Site 2 is located in the Flint Hills west of State Route 156 approximately one mile northwest of the DWTP in unincorporated San Benito County. Land uses on the approximately 2,800 acre site consist of hillsides used for dry land grazing, ranch homes, and the cultivation of agricultural crops in low lying areas where slopes are minimal. Sub-area A identified for reclaimed water irrigation consists of approximately 166 acres of fenced in pasture grass with moderate slopes located directly east of Brookhollow Road. Adjacent land uses consist of ranch homes and barn structures to the north, irrigated agriculture to the east, and dry grazing land the north and west. Sub-area B identified for reclaimed water irrigation consists of approximately 106 acres of rolling hillsides used for dry land grazing. Surrounding land uses consist primarily of non-irrigated, undeveloped rural lands used for cattle grazing. A clustering of residential housing is located at the base of the hills approximately 1 mile from the sub-area B.

Site 3 - Riverside Park

The Riverside Park site is comprised of approximately 50 acres located off the San Juan-Hollister Road near the San Benito River that would be developed as an irrigated public park. Existing land uses on the site consist of rural residential housing, non-irrigated pastureland, and approximately 2.3 acres of an adjacent walnut orchard that is not currently in production. Presently, the topography of the site is unbalanced, and consists of an elevated terrace to the south, with a low lying area adjacent to the San Benito River levee in the northern area of the site. Adjacent land uses include the San Benito River to the northeast, an abandoned walnut tree orchard and rural residential housing to the west, and openspace grazing land to the south. The City of Hollister Industrial Wastewater Treatment Plant (IWTP) is located across the river to the north.

Site 4 - Pacific Sod Farm

The Pacific Sod Farm is a commercial sod farm located in the San Juan Valley on Flint Road near the San Benito River. The sod farm comprises approximately 275 acres, of which approximately 94% or 258 acres is irrigated. Currently all the irrigation needs of the sod farm are met with groundwater, which has salinity levels similar to that of the initial salinity levels of the recycled water. To ensure that the sod farm's water quality needs are met, blending with Central Valley Project (CVP) water may be necessary. Blending would occur in an existing irrigation management pond located at the sod farm. A CVP supply pipeline would be extended approximately 1.1 miles from the existing CVP network south of State Route 156.

Site 5 - San Juan Oaks Golf Club

The San Juan Oaks Golf Club is located in the hills along the southeastern base of San Juan Valley. Existing land uses on the golf course property include the San Juan Oaks Golf Club and associated facilities, several man made ponds, grazing lands, permanent wildlife habitat areas, and a planted row crop area in the northeast portion of the site.

4.1.3 REGULATORY SETTING

A description of the regulatory setting is incorporated by reference from Section 4.1.1 the 2006 EIR (refer to **Section 1.3**). Section 4.1.1 of the 2006 EIR provides a description of the following:

- Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coast Basin
- Groundwater Management Plan for the San Benito
- Hollister Urban Area Water and Wastewater Master Plan
- City of Hollister General Plan
- San Benito County General Plan

Supplemental regulatory information applicable to the development of the proposed reclaimed water irrigation sites is provided below.

Local Land Use Jurisdiction

With the exception of Site 1, the proposed reclaimed water irrigation sites are located primarily within unincorporated County land, outside of the City's adopted planning area and LAFCO recognized sphere of influence. Of the overall area encompassed by Site 1, the airport property is within the City limits, while surrounding agricultural lands are located entirely within the City's planning area, and partially within the City's Sphere of Influence. Although lands within the City's planning area that are beyond the sphere of influence have been identified for future annexation by the City, these lands are currently subject to County jurisdiction and land use controls. The applicable general plan policies of both the City and the County are discussed below.

San Benito County General Plan

Figure 4.1-1 illustrates the adopted San Benito County General Plan land use designations for the proposed reclaimed water irrigation sites located within the County's jurisdiction. The following list outlines the relevant general plan land use designations that apply to the project sites and their intended purposes:

Agricultural: This designation applies to portions of Sites 1 and 3, and all of Sites 2, 4, and 5. Allowable uses include "agriculture, grazing, land in its natural state, wildlife refuges, very low intensity residential, and uses that, by their nature, must be located in undeveloped areas. Conditional uses include mineral extraction, low-density recreational facilities and institutional land uses." The agricultural land use designation is divided into two density zones:

Agricultural Productive: This designation applies to portions of Sites 1 and 3, and all of Site 4. According to the land use element of the County's General Plan, this designation

Insert Figure 4.1-1

is “applied especially to those lands, which are identified as being prime agricultural lands but also includes agriculturally productive lands of any type, including grazing lands.”

Agricultural Rangeland: This designation applies to Sites 2 and 5. According to the land use element of the County’s General Plan, this designation is assigned to “the remote hillside areas, watershed and rangeland, such as Williamson Act land, many of which have been classified as some form of open space within the Open Space and Conservation Elements.” These areas are “typified by a lack of transportation access, high to very high fire hazard and by the lack of utility services to allow for more dense types of development.”

Heavy Industrial: This designation applies to a portion of Site 3. “The intent of this land use subcategory is to recognize heavy industrial activities, such as the manufacture of explosives and productive utilization of the County’s natural resources.”

Floodplain Overlay: This overlay designation is applied to portions of both Sites 3 and 5. “This category applies to land located within the 1% flood hazard zones (100-year flood plain) on the Federal Emergency Management Agency maps adopted by the County. Uses allowed on existing lots of record within the category include agriculture, grazing, mineral extraction, wildlife refuges, land in its natural state, and selected low-intensity recreation and other such uses permitted by the San Benito County Flood Zone.”

City of Hollister General Plan

The City of Hollister General Plan Land Use designations for Site 1 and the surrounding project area are illustrated in **Figure 4.1-2**. As shown in this figure, a mix of land use designations are encompassed within Site 1, including Airport, and Airport Support, and Industrial. The purpose of these designations are described below:

Airport: The Airport designation is applied to publicly owned lands of the Hollister Municipal Airport. Uses include airport operations and support facilities as well as limited commercial and industrial uses incidental to and in support of the airport.

Airport Support: This designation allows industrial or commercial development on those areas that are adjacent to and have direct access to the Hollister Municipal Airport. Development may include industrial, commercial or recreational uses that provide support to the airport and are compatible with both airport operations and adjacent uses.

Industrial: This designation provides for a range of uses, from business and research parks, large individual corporate establishments, professional and administrative offices and industrial complexes. Other permitted uses include limited commercial uses that serve industrial and employment centers.

Insert Figure 4.1-2

4.1.4 IMPACT ANALYSIS

Thresholds of Significance

Section 15125(d) of the CEQA *Guidelines* states that “[t]he EIR shall discuss any inconsistencies between the Proposed Project and applicable general plans and regional plans.” Criteria for determining the significance of land use impacts to have been developed based on Appendix G of the CEQA guidelines. For the purposes of this SEIR, land use impacts are considered significant if the proposed project would:

- Physically divide an existing community;
- Result in a substantial inconsistency with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect; or
- Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan, or natural community conservation plan.

Methods and Assumptions

Under Sections 53091 and 53096 of the California Government Code, the location or construction of facilities for the production, generation, storage, treatment, or transmission of water are exempt from application of local zoning ordinances. Therefore, the consistency of water supply infrastructure with local zoning designations is not addressed in this impact assessment.

Land use impacts are analyzed based on an examination of the proposed project sites, surrounding land uses, and adopted land use plans. Local planning departments provided detail on existing and proposed land uses, and on relevant local planning issues. Effects that were determined to be less than significant in the Initial Study (**Appendix B**) do not warrant further analysis and are not discussed within this SEIR.

Effects Found Not to be Significant

The Initial Study concluded that the proposed project would not physically divide an established community. This effect is therefore not considered within this SEIR.

Impact Statements and Mitigation Measures

IMPACT 4.1-1. Development of the proposed reclaimed water irrigation sites could result in a change in land use that would be considered inconsistent with adopted General Plan land use designations and policies.

Site 1 At Site 1, implementation of the proposed project would result in the installation of a reclaimed water irrigation system on the airport property and adjacent agricultural lands. Land uses at the airport would not change, and therefore would remain consistent with the City’s General Plan land use designation of Airport. However, the use of reclaimed water for irrigation on adjacent lands would restrict the existing agriculture uses to the production of crops not sensitive to high levels of salinity, such as grass hay. Although this would reduce

the potential value of agricultural land uses on the site, it would still be consistent with allowable lands uses under the County's General Plan land use designation of Agricultural Productive. It should be noted that the adjacent privately owned parcels are also within the City's planning area, and have been designated as Industrial and Airport Support by the City's General Plan. Although utilizing these areas for irrigation with reclaimed water would not be consistent with the City's adopted land use plan for the area, it is anticipated that reclaimed water use at the airport would be phased out in 2016 to allow for higher value beneficial uses of Phase II recycled water. Therefore, the City's long-term land use plan for Site 1 would not be affected.

A discussion of the project's consistency with adopted City and County General Plan policies is provided in **Table 4.1-1**. As shown in the table, development of reclaimed water irrigation at Site 1 would be consistent with all applicable general plan policies. Furthermore, development of the reclaimed water irrigation would be incorporated into the updated Airport Layout Plan (an Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) required document), ensuring that proposed facilities would not result in public health or safety conflicts with on-going land uses on the airport property. Because reclaimed water irrigation at the airport site would be compatible with on-going land uses on the airport property, and would not result in any conflicts with existing and potential future land uses in the vicinity of the site, this impact is considered less than significant. **Less than Significant.**

Site 2 At Site 2, implementation of the proposed project would result in the extension of a reclaimed water supply source, and the application of reclaimed water to lands currently used for cattle grazing. This would allow for more intensive agricultural uses, which would be consistent with the County's land use designation of Agriculture for the site. As shown in **Table 4.1-1**, development of reclaimed water irrigation at Site 2 would be consistent with all applicable general plan policies. Therefore, this impact is considered less than significant. **Less than Significant.**

Site 3 At Site 3, implementation of the proposed project would change the existing rural residential and agricultural uses of the site to open space land with irrigated turf. This land use would be considered an allowable use under the County's floodplain overlay designation, however, would not be consistent with the County's adopted General Plan land use and zoning designations of Heavy Industrial. This is a potentially significant impact. However, although not consistent with the County's long-term land use plan for the area, the use of the site for turf irrigation would likely result in fewer adverse environmental consequences than development of the site with heavy industrial uses. Additionally, approximately 3 acres in the northern portion of the site adjacent to San Juan Hollister Road is located within an area designated as Agriculture Productive in the County's General Plan. This area would be developed as a gravel parking lot and maintenance building. Although not consistent with the County's land use designation, the gravel parking area would be compatible with adjacent land uses and adverse environmental consequences are not expected to result from this inconsistency. Development of the project would likely require a General Plan and zoning amendment or conditional use permit to ensure proposed uses are consistent with local land use plans. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 4.1-1 would require the City to coordinate with San Benito County to ensure proposed land uses are in compliance with County policies.

As discussed in **Table 4.1-1**, development of reclaimed water irrigation at Site 3 would be consistent with all applicable general plan policies. Therefore, after implementation of mitigation measures recommended in this SEIR, potential impacts would be reduced to less than significant. **Less than Significant with Mitigation.**

Mitigation Measure 4.1-1. The City of Hollister shall coordinate with San Benito County to ensure that the appropriate conditional use permits and other necessary procedural and compensatory requirements are fulfilled prior to development of project components at the Riverside Park project site.

Sites 4-5 Implementation of the proposed project at Sites 4 and 5 would supplement the existing irrigation water supply sources at these locations. No changes to existing land uses would occur. As discussed in **Table 4.1-1**, development of reclaimed water irrigation at Sites 4 and 5 would be consistent with all applicable general plan policies. Therefore, this impact is considered less than significant. **Less than Significant.**

IMPACT 4.1-2. Development of the proposed reclaimed water irrigation sites could conflict with an applicable habitat conservation plan, or natural community conservation plan.

Site 1, 4-5 Sites 1, and 4-5 are not located within an adopted habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan. Therefore no impact would occur. **No Impact.**

Site 2-3 Sites 2 and 3 are located within the Habitat Conservation Plan study area for the San Joaquin kit fox. As discussed in **Section 4.5-5**, under this resolution the installation of an irrigation system qualifies as the addition of an “agriculturally related structure” and is therefore subject to a fee for impacting San Joaquin kit fox habitat. Also, the conversion of pasture to irrigated pasture qualifies as “conversion of lands from an agricultural use to a more intensive agricultural use,” which is also subject to a fee. Mitigation measures have been recommended in Section 4.5 to ensure that the City complies with these measures. Therefore, with the implementation of recommended mitigation measures in this SEIR, impacts would be less than significant. **Less than Significant with Mitigation.**

Mitigation Measure 4.1-2. Implement Mitigation Measure 4.5-12b to ensure that the City provides compensatory mitigation for the conversion of land uses within the Habitat Conservation Plan study area for the San Joaquin kit fox.

TABLE 4.1-1. CONSISTENCY WITH APPLICABLE GENERAL PLAN POLICIES

Land Use Plan Policy	Consistent	Discussion
City of Hollister General Plan		
Goal LU2. Ensure that public utilities and infrastructure adequately meet the demand for services placed on them by existing and future commercial and residential users.	Yes	Sites 1-5 Implementation of the proposed project would ensure that the DWTP has the necessary disposal capacity required to accommodate the increase in wastewater flows that would result from build-out of the City's General Plan and other projected growth within the service area. Therefore, the proposed project is consistent with the goal to ensure that public facilities and infrastructure meet existing and future demands for services.
Goal LU9 Encourage development patterns that promote energy efficiency and conservation of natural resources.	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p>	<p>Sites 1 At Site 1, airport irrigation would be a low value use of reclaimed water, and although agricultural areas are suitable for long term crop irrigation, these areas have been designated by the City's General Plan for future conversion to industrial uses. Although reclaimed water use at Site 1 would not provide maximum utility of reclaimed water for the conservation of natural resources, in 2016 when the use of Site 1 is phased out to allow for higher value beneficial uses of Phase II recycled water, water supply infrastructure developed for Site 1 may be used to support the beneficial re-use of recycled water at adjacent industrial areas. Therefore, this would be generally consistent with the City's goal to encourage energy efficiency and the conservation of natural resources.</p> <p>Sites 2-5 Sites 2 through 5 are suitable for the long-term beneficial re-use of reclaimed water for agricultural and/or land-scape irrigation. Irrigation with reclaimed water could be used at these sites to offset groundwater pumping and CVP diversions. This would be consistent with the City's goal to conserve natural resources.</p>

<p>Policy OS1.1 Open Space Preservation. Retain and protect open space areas whenever practical through the protection of prime farmlands, the prevention of new development in areas subject to natural hazards, that serve as wildlife habitat or as visual assets for the community, and where the development of additional parks and trails is possible. Open space areas can also function as connections between neighborhoods, for example with the creation of pathways in environmentally appropriate areas.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Sites 1-5 Implementation of the proposed project would provide a supplemental irrigation supply source to support agricultural uses and park development. Therefore, the proposed project is consistent with the City's policy to preserve agricultural and open-space uses.</p>
<p>Policy OS2.2 Coordination with San Benito County to Preserve Prime Farmlands. Encourage the County of San Benito to maintain existing County land use policies that discourage urban development in rural areas within the County as a way to ensure continuing agricultural operations within portions of the Hollister Planning Area. Coordinate with the County of San Benito in efforts to maintain prime farmlands in active agricultural use whenever possible and in all efforts to maintain the continued economic viability of agriculture within the Hollister Planning Area.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>n/a</p>	<p>Sites 1, 4 Implementation of the proposed project will provide an irrigation supply source to support agricultural uses at Site 1 and Site 4 within areas designated as Prime Farmland. Development of a reclaimed water irrigation system at these sites would support the continued agricultural use of the land, and would therefore be consistent with this policy.</p> <p>Sites 2-3, 5 Prime farmland does not occur at these sites. Therefore, this policy is not applicable.</p>
<p>San Benito County General Plan</p>		
<p>LU Policy 2 The type of uses allowed within the agriculturally designated areas shall be related to the suitability of the soil resources, climate and water supply. The types of uses allowed on most agriculturally designated areas within the County include agriculture, agricultural processing, grazing, land in its natural state, wildlife refuges, and low intensity residential. Uses subject to use permit approval include low intensity recreational facilities, mineral extraction and processing, and also institutional uses and uses, that, by their nature, should be located in undeveloped areas.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>n/a</p>	<p>Sites 1-2, 4 The development of reclaimed water use areas at Sites 1, 2, and 4 would occur within County land designated for agricultural uses. Reclaimed water would be used in the areas to support agricultural activities and would therefore be consistent with this policy.</p> <p>Sites 3, 5 These sites are not designated for agricultural uses. Therefore, this policy is not applicable.</p>

<p>OS Goal 3 To provide for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources, including water and its hydraulic force, water quality, forests, soils, rivers and other waters, fisheries, wildlife, minerals, energy and other natural resources.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Sites 1 At Site 1, airport irrigation would be a low value use of reclaimed water, and although agricultural areas are suitable for long term crop irrigation, these areas have been designated by the City's General Plan for future conversion to industrial uses. Although reclaimed water use at Site 1 would not provide maximum utility of reclaimed water for the conservation of natural resources, in 2016 when the use of Site 1 is phased out to allow for higher value beneficial uses of Phase II recycled water, water supply infrastructure developed for Site 1 may be used to support the beneficial re-use of recycled water at adjacent industrial areas. Therefore, this would be generally consistent with the City's goal to encourage energy efficiency and the conservation of natural resources.</p> <p>Sites 2-5 Sites 2 through 5 are suitable for the long-term beneficial re-use of reclaimed water for agricultural and/or land-scape irrigation. Irrigation with reclaimed water could be used at these sites to offset groundwater pumping and CVP diversions. This would be consistent with the City's goal to conserve natural resources.</p>
<p>Source: City of Hollister General Plan, 2006; San Benito County Land Use Element, 2002; San Benito County Open Space and Conservation Element, 1995.</p>		