
NOTICE OF PREPARATION and NOTICE OF PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

Date June 25, 2021

To: Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, and Other Interested Parties

Subject: **Notice of Preparation and Scoping Meeting for a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Proposed New Horizons Residential Project**

The City of Morgan Hill (City), acting as Lead Agency, will prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the **New Horizons Residential Project** (project) as identified above and described in the attached materials.

The City is interested in the views of your agency as to the appropriate scope and content of the Draft EIR, as well as any recommended mitigation measures related to responsible and trustee agencies' statutory responsibilities. Please note responsible and trustee agencies will need to use the EIR prepared by the City when considering permits or other approvals required for the project.

The City will consider all comments received in response to the Notice of Preparation (NOP) during the drafting of the EIR. The project location, summary description, a list of potential environmental effects, and the time and location of a public scoping meeting for the project are attached and may be viewed on-line at: <http://www.morgan-hill.ca.gov/2041/Hill---Morgan-Hill-Devco-LLC>

Pursuant to the time limits mandated by State law, responses to this NOP must be sent to the City at the earliest possible date, but not later than thirty (30) days after receipt of this notice. Please send written comments to the address below by July 25, 2021.

Morgan Hill Development Services
Attention: Tiffany Brown, Associate Planner
17575 Peak Avenue, Morgan Hill, California 95037.
[\(408\) 310-4655](tel:(408)310-4655) | Tiffany.Brown@morganhill.ca.gov

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15082(c), notice is hereby given that the City of Morgan Hill will hold a public EIR public **Scoping Meeting** on **July 13, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.** via video conference. The City will hold the Scoping Meeting to receive comments regarding the scope and content of the EIR.

Due to the current COVID-19 restrictions, this meeting will be held virtually. Members of the public and public agencies may participate remotely. All interested persons may participate by joining the video conference at <https://bit.ly/071321ScopingMeeting> or by calling into the meeting at (669) 900-9128 and entering in the Webinar ID: 889 0931 0283.

**Notice of Preparation for an Environmental Impact Report
for the Proposed New Horizons Residential Project**

Date of Distribution: June 25, 2021

A. Introduction

The purpose of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is to inform decision-makers and the general public of the environmental impacts of a proposed project that an agency (in this case, the City of Morgan Hill) may implement or approve. The EIR process is intended to: (1) provide information sufficient to evaluate a project and its potential for significant impacts on the environment; (2) examine methods (e.g., project-specific mitigations, uniformly applied development regulations) for avoiding or reducing significant impacts; and (3) consider alternatives to the proposed project.

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Draft EIR will include the following:

- A summary of the project, its potential significant environmental impacts, and mitigations required to avoid or reduce those significant impacts;
- A project description;
- A description of the existing environmental setting, potential environmental impacts, and mitigations for the project;
- Alternatives to the proposed project; and
- Other environmental consequences of the project, including:
 - (1) growth-inducing effects
 - (2) significant unavoidable impacts
 - (3) irreversible environmental changes
 - (4) cumulative impacts, and
 - (5) effects found not to be significant.

Background

The project site is part of a larger approximately 80-acre site annexed from the County of Santa Clara to the City of Morgan Hill in the late 1980's. As part of the annexation, the City prepared and certified the Morgan Hill 1988 Urban Service Area Adjustment Environmental Impact Report. Since then, a 10-acre portion of the 80-acre site has been developed with single-family residences. A development proposal has been filed to develop the remaining approximately 69.4-acre site. The 1988 EIR is over 30 years old, and new regulations and policies have been adopted since its certification. Therefore, the City is in the process of preparing a new EIR to fulfill the CEQA requirements for the proposed project.

Project Location

The approximately 69.4-acre project site (APN: 817-20-031) is located east of Hill Road, bounded by residential development to the north, Barrett Avenue to the south, and Sorrel Drive and Jackson Park to the east. The project site is mostly undeveloped and fallowed. The southwestern corner of the site is developed with barn and warehouse structures with limited pavement. Tennant Creek extends from the northwest boundary to beyond the southwest boundary of the site. A drainage feature is located at the eastern border of the site. There is an existing retention basin on the southwestern portion of the site. The project site is adjacent to single-family residential development to the north and east, Jackson Park and Jackson Academy (a K-8 school) to the north/northeast, and rural residential/agricultural land to the south and west. Regional, vicinity, and aerial maps of the project site are shown in Figures 1, 2, and 3.

B. Project Description

The project site has a General Plan designation of Residential Detached Medium (up to seven dwelling units per acre [du/ac]) and is zoned as Residential Detached Medium Density – 7,000 square feet (RDM-7,000). The project applicant proposes the following amendments:

1. General Plan Amendment to change the land use designation from Residential Detached Medium (up to seven du/ac) to Residential Attached Medium (16 to 24 du/ac) for 2.29-acres.
2. Zoning Amendment to add the Planned Development Combining District to the remaining 67.11-acres.

The purpose of amending the General Plan land use designation for the 2.29-acres is to increase the density from Residential Detached Medium (7-units/acre) to Residential Attached Medium to allow for a centrally located Senior Living Facility. A zoning amendment is proposed to the Planned Development Combining District to allow for a variety of unit types ranging from single-family detached units to multi-family attached units. The project proposal includes: 262 one- to two-story single-family residences, 20 two-story single-family age-restricted single-family residences, and a 55-unit, three-story age-restricted condominium development (2.29-acre site).

The maximum height of the single-family residences would be 32 feet above the ground surface and the condominium development would have a maximum height of 44 feet. The project proposes to replace the drainage feature on the eastern border of the site with fill and Tennant Creek would remain on-site in its existing configuration. A trail would be constructed within the Tennant Creek riparian area. The project would relocate the existing retention basin to the northern portion of the site and would construct an underground pipe to convey runoff from the project site.

The project includes a Tentative Subdivision Map for the creation of 283 residential lots with associated improvements and easements for public park amenities, trails, streets and utilities. The site would be accessible via one driveway on Hill Road and one driveway on Barrett Road (see

Figure 4, site plan). The project would also create roadway connections to Fountain Avenue and Sorrel Way, linking the proposed residences to the adjacent residential neighborhood to the north. The project would add internal private streets, courts, and alleys to provide circulation and connectivity within the proposed neighborhood.

The project would include approximately four acres of private open space and nine acres of public/park space. The private open space would include a centrally located community clubhouse, a 2.3-acre pond, and a pool. The open space area would also include an amphitheater, playground, dog parks, and senior living amenities. The project includes public park/open space dedication including improvements to the Jackson Trail, dedication of 0.4 acres of parkland to Jackson Academy, and an approximately two-acre expansion of Jackson Park (see of location of the park, trail, and Jackson Academy on Figures 3 and 4). Other off-site improvements include improvements to Hill Road, Barrett Avenue, and Sorrel Way. These improvements include new curbs, sidewalks, landscaping strips, and driveway access to the project site.

The proposed project would be constructed in three stages. Stage one includes internal roadways and off-site public roadway improvements, stage two includes recreational amenities, and stage three includes residential development. The residential development would be constructed in approximately 27 phases. Full demolition and construction of the project would take approximately 60 months.

C. Potential Environmental Impacts of the Project

The EIR will identify the significant environmental effects anticipated to result from development and operation of the project as proposed. The EIR will include the following specific environmental categories as related to the proposed project.

- **Agricultural Resources:** The project site has been used for agricultural purposes. According to the Santa Clara County Important Farmland 2016 Map, the site is designated as Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance. In November 2014, the City adopted its Agricultural Lands Preservation Program, which also applies to the sites mapped as Farmland of Local Importance, such as the project site. The EIR will discuss the project's compliance with the Preservation Program's mitigation measures as detailed in the Agricultural Mitigation Ordinance.
- **Air Quality:** The project site is adjacent to sensitive receptors, including the surrounding residential uses, and the K-8 school and park. The EIR will describe the regional air quality conditions of the San Francisco Bay Area and will evaluate air quality impacts from the construction and operation of the project, in conformance with the criteria identified by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). The project's consistency with the 2017 Bay Area Clean Air Plan will also be discussed.
- **Biological Resources:** The project is subject to the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Plan. The project site contains a Tennant Creek that is expected to support jurisdictional waters. The EIR will describe biological conditions and any sensitive biological habitats, such as potentially regulated habitats (e.g., wetlands) and special-status species that may occur

on-site. The site also contains mature trees; the EIR will discuss any impacts to trees on-site and adjacent to the site.

- **Cultural Resources:** The project site contains barn and warehouse structures over 50 years old and that would be removed as part of the project. The EIR will include a historic evaluation to evaluate the project's eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or California Register of Historic Resources. The EIR will also describe the potential for subsurface cultural resources on-site and discuss if the project would result in significant impacts to unknown subsurface cultural resources and/or human remains.
- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** The project would be subject to Senate Bill 32 greenhouse gas reduction goals set for year 2030. The EIR will utilize the most recent California Emission Estimator Model to model GHG emissions of the project. In the event the emissions exceed the 2030 targets, mitigation measures would be identified to reduce the project's GHG emissions to the extent feasible. The discussion of greenhouse gas emissions would be based on the Morgan Hill 2035 EIR and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategy, as well as Plan Bay Area and the statewide Scoping Plan implementing Senate Bill 32.
- **Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** The project site has been used for agricultural purposes and contains several associated barns and warehouses; therefore, has the potential to contain residual contaminants including pesticides. The EIR will evaluate the potential for hazardous materials contamination on and near the project site, which could be affected by project construction (including grading and excavation activities). Mitigation measures to reduce hazardous materials impacts to a less than significant level will be identified, as necessary.
- **Hydrology and Water Quality:** The project site contains a drainage feature along the eastern boundary of the site and Tennant Creek, which runs from north to south along the western portion of the site. A portion of the site lies within a regulatory flood hazard zone and experiences other flooding issues. The EIR will include a flooding and drainage evaluation, which will describe the settings, impact assessment, and mitigation measures for the proposed project.
- **Noise and Vibration:** The project site is in proximity to sensitive receptors, including adjacent residences. The EIR will include a noise and vibration assessment, which will include on-site noise monitoring of ambient noise levels, calculation of future noise levels, and evaluation of noise and land use compatibility with the project. Noise and vibration impacts from project construction and long-term occupancy will be evaluated based upon the City of Morgan Hill General Plan criteria, and mitigation measures will be identified, as necessary.
- **Population/Housing:** The EIR will address the proposed project's potential to directly or indirectly induce substantial population growth in the City.

- **Public Services:** The project proposes open space/recreational space throughout the project site, and to expand the existing Jackson Park and Jackson Trail. The project would also dedicate public open space to Jackson Academy. The EIR will address the environmental impacts of the open space improvements, and any potential impacts to demand on police and fire protection services, schools, and libraries to serve the proposed project that would result in the expansion of existing public facilities.
- **Transportation:** The EIR will describe the existing transportation network serving the project site and will evaluate whether the project’s generated vehicle trips for the potential to cause impacts related to vehicle-miles-traveled (VMT) as well as whether project traffic would cause local intersection level of service to degrade below City standards. The EIR will identify mitigation for potential VMT impacts, as well as any improvements needed to restore the level of service to pre-project conditions and will describe whether the identified improvements would lead to adverse environmental impacts.
- **Utilities:** The development from farmland to residential would require connection/extension of utilities to the site to serve future development. The EIR will evaluate the environmental impacts of any off-site utility improvements. Mitigation measures will be identified to reduce significant impacts, as necessary.

The remaining environmental topics covered in the 2021 CEQA Appendix G Checklist will also be analyzed in the EIR.

Cumulative Impacts

In conformance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15130, the EIR will include a discussion of cumulative impacts from the project in combination with other past, pending and reasonably probable future development in the area, and discuss if the project’s contribution is cumulatively considerable.

Alternatives

The EIR will evaluate possible alternatives to the proposed project based on the results of the environmental analysis. The alternatives discussion will focus on those alternatives that could feasibly accomplish most of the basic purposes of the project and could avoid or substantially lessen one or more of the significant environment effects (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6). The results of the technical analysis noted above will be used to develop a reasonable range of alternatives to be analyzed in the EIR that avoid or lessen project impacts while achieving most project objectives. The “No Project” and at least one development alternative will be included.

Other Required Sections

The above discussions identify and highlight the major issues to be addressed in the Draft EIR. In conformance with the CEQA Guidelines, the EIR will also contain other sections, including: 1) Significant Unavoidable Impacts; 2) Growth Inducing Impacts; 3) Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes; 4) EIR References and Organizations & Persons Consulted; and 5) EIR Authors.

Figure 1 – Regional Map

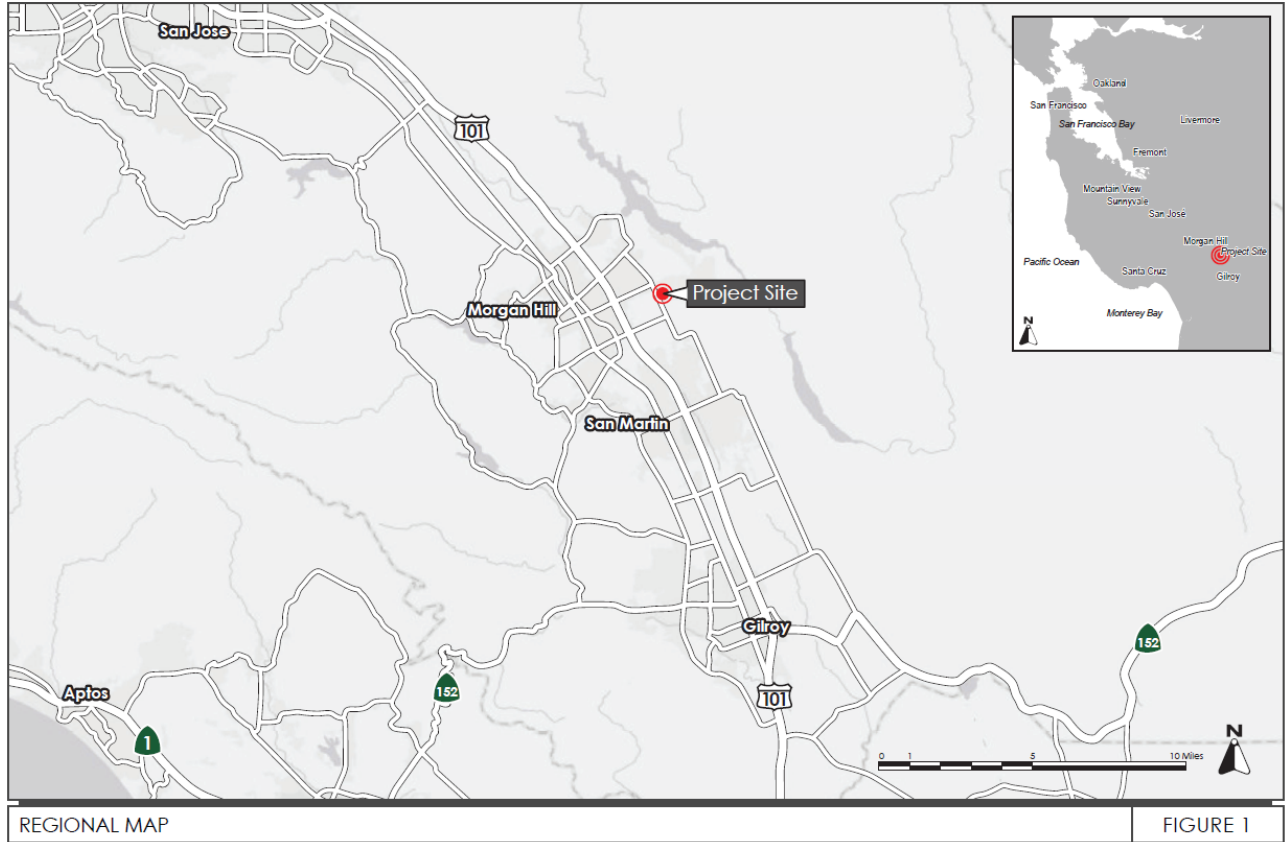


Figure 2 – Vicinity Map

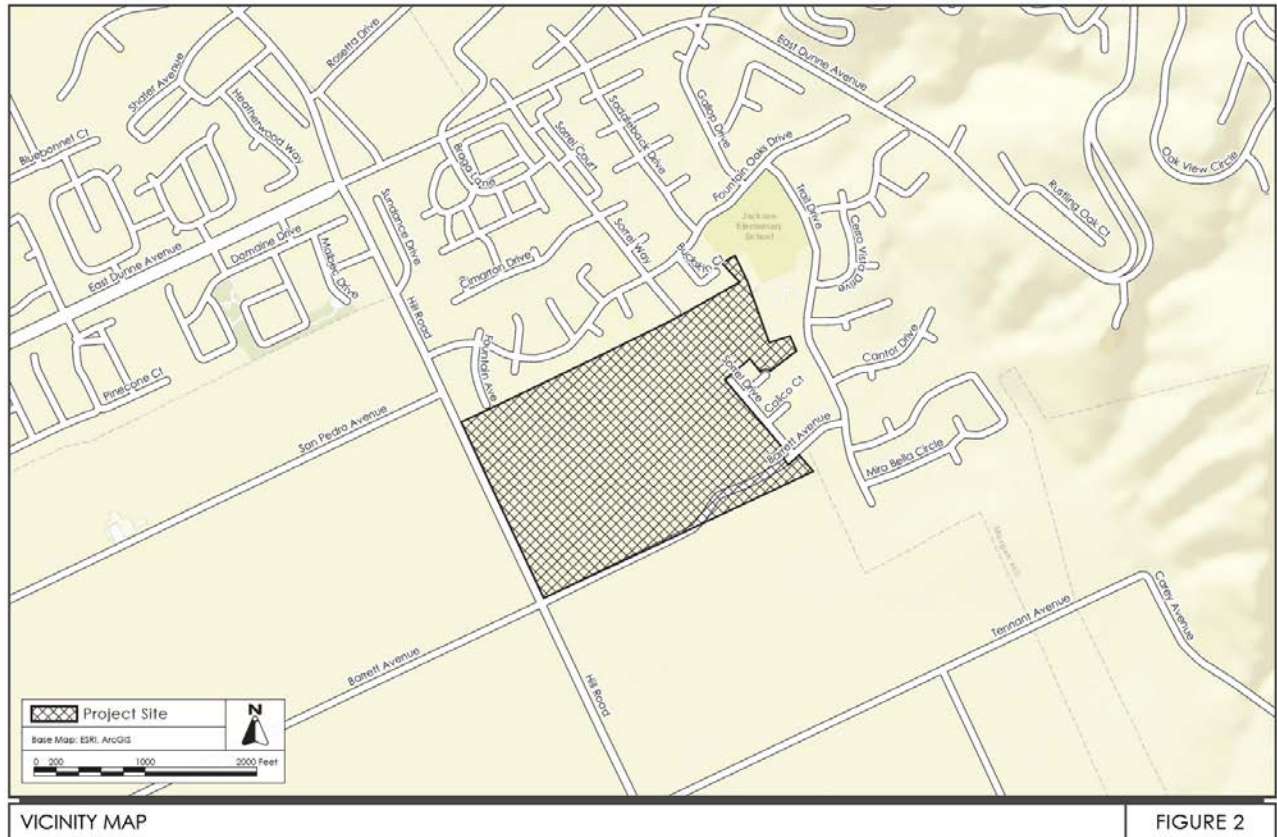


Figure 3 – Aerial Map



Figure 4 –Conceptual Site Plan

