3.7 - Hazards and Hazardous Materials

3.7.1 - Introduction

This section describes the existing hazards and hazardous materials setting and potential effects from project implementation on the site and its surrounding area. Descriptions and analysis in this section are based on information provided in the Fire Safety Review prepared by Citygate Associates and provided in Appendix F. Additional information was provided by the City of Atascadero General Plan, the San Luis Obispo County General Plan, and the State Water Resources Control Board.

3.7.2 - Environmental Setting

Hazardous Materials

Hazardous materials, as defined by the California Code of Regulations, are substances with certain physical properties that could pose a substantial present or future hazard to human health or the environment when improperly handled, disposed, or otherwise managed. Hazardous materials are grouped into the following four categories, based on their properties:

- Toxic—causes human health effects
- Ignitable—has the ability to burn
- Corrosive—causes severe burns or damage to materials
- Reactive—causes explosions or generates toxic gases

A hazardous waste is any hazardous material that is discarded, abandoned, or slated to be recycled. The criteria that define a material as hazardous also define a waste as hazardous. If improperly handled, hazardous materials and hazardous waste can result in public health hazards if released into the soil or groundwater or through airborne releases in vapors, fumes, or dust. Soil and groundwater having concentrations of hazardous constituents higher than specific regulatory levels must be handled and disposed of as hazardous waste when excavated or pumped from an aquifer. The California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Sections 66261.20-24 contains technical descriptions of toxic characteristics that could cause soil or groundwater to be classified as hazardous waste.

Database Search

The State Water Resources Control Board GeoTracker database lists sites that handle hazardous materials or are the subject of clean-up efforts from past hazardous materials use. A search of the GeoTracker database yielded no listings for Eagle Ranch.

Hazardous Building Materials

Asbestos

Asbestos is the name given to a number of naturally occurring, fibrous silicate minerals mined for their useful properties, such as thermal insulation, chemical and thermal stability, and high tensile strength. Asbestos is commonly used as an acoustic insulator, thermal insulation, fireproofing, and in other building materials. Asbestos is made up of microscopic bundles of fibers that may become airborne when asbestos-containing materials are damaged or disturbed. When these fibers get into
the air, they may be inhaled into the lungs, where they can cause significant health problems. The California Occupational Health and Safety Administration (CalOSHA) defines asbestos-containing construction materials as any material that contains more than 0.1 percent asbestos by weight.

Most, if not all, of the structures on the project site predate the federal prohibition on asbestos. As such, it is likely that structures may contain asbestos-containing materials.

**Lead**

Lead is a highly toxic metal that was used until the late 1970s in a number of products, most notably in paint. Lead may cause a range of health effects, from behavioral problems and learning disabilities to seizures and death. Primary sources of lead exposure are deteriorating lead-based paint, lead-contaminated dust, and lead-contaminated soil. Both the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the California Department of Health Services define lead paint as containing a minimum of 0.5 percent by weight. Lead-containing waste materials with a concentration greater than 0.1 percent are considered hazardous waste by California law. Both the federal and California OSHA maintain regulations regarding the disturbance of paints that contain any amount of lead.

Most, if not all, of the structures on the project site predate the federal prohibition on lead-based paint. As such, there is a likelihood that structures may contain lead-based paint.

**Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)**

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) are mixtures of synthetic chemicals with similar chemical structures. PCBs can range from oily liquids to waxy solids. Because of their non-flammability, chemical stability, high boiling point, and electrical insulating properties, PCBs were used in hundreds of industrial and commercial applications, including electrical, heat transfer, and hydraulic equipment; as plasticizers in paints, plastics, and rubber products; in pigments, dyes, and carbonless copy paper; and many other applications.

The project site may contain transformers or other electrical devices that contain PCBs.

**Mercury**

Mercury is a naturally occurring element that is found in air, water, and soil that has traditionally been used to make products such as fluorescent lamps, switches, and thermometers. Mercury exposure at high levels can harm the brain, heart, kidneys, lungs, and immune system of people of all ages. Scientific studies have shown that high levels of mercury in the bloodstream of unborn babies and young children may harm the developing nervous system, making a child less able to think and learn.

Several of the structures on the project site may have fluorescent lighting and HVAC thermostats that contain mercury.

**Aboveground Storage Tanks**

Four aboveground storage (ASTs) tanks are present in a woodshed in the ranch operations area. The ASTs are elevated on racks and used for the storage of petroleum products used by motorized ranch
equipment (e.g., tractors). Barren soil is located beneath the ASTs; no concrete pads or containment systems were observed.

**55-Gallon Drums**

Four 55-gallon drums are located in the woodshed that contains the ASTs. The drums are associated with the ASTs. Barren soil is located beneath the drums; no concrete pads or containment systems were observed.

**Radon**

Radon is a carcinogenic, radioactive gas resulting from the natural breakdown of uranium in soil, rock, and water. Radon gas enters a building through cracks in foundations and walls. Once inside the building, radon decay products may become attached to dust particles and inhaled, or the decayed radioactive particles alone may be inhaled and cause damage to lung tissue. The EPA has established a safe radon exposure threshold of 4 picocuries per liter of air (pCi/l).

The California Department of Health Services has conducted 192 indoor radon tests within the 93422 zip code (Atascadero). Of this figure, 38 (20 percent) yielded concentrations in excess of 4.0 pCi/l. The highest reported reading was 57.6 pCi/l. The California Department of Health Services classifies zip codes with more than 20 percent of samples exceeding 4.0 pCi/l to be areas of high radon potential.

**High-Voltage Power Lines**

High-voltage power lines emit extremely low-frequency electromagnetic fields (EMFs), which have been suspected to be linked to cancer; however, scientific research has never conclusively established a link between EMFs and cancer. In 2007, the World Health Organization issued a report titled “Extremely Low Frequency Fields, Environmental Health Criteria Monograph No. 238,” which concluded that evidence connecting extremely low-frequency EMFs to childhood leukemia is not strong enough to be considered causal, although it did note that the issue still was of concern. The same report indicated that there is inadequate evidence or no evidence linking low-frequency EMFs and health effects associated with all other diseases.

A high-voltage power line parallels the eastern boundary of the Specific Plan area near US 101. Pacific Gas and Electric Company relocated a portion of this line eastward towards the freeway in mid-2013.

**Wells and Septic Systems**

The existing structures within Eagle Ranch rely on on-site wells for potable water. These same structures also use septic systems for on-site wastewater disposal.
3.7.3 - Regulatory Framework

Federal

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
The EPA leads the nation's environmental science, research, education, and assessment efforts. The EPA's mission is to protect human health and to safeguard the natural environment, related to air, water, and land. The EPA works closely with other federal agencies, state and local governments, and Indian tribes to develop and enforce regulations under existing environmental laws. The EPA is primarily responsible for researching and setting national standards for a variety of environmental programs and delegates to states and tribes responsibility for issuing permits, and monitoring and enforcing compliance. When national standards are not met, the EPA can issue sanctions and take other steps to assist the states and tribes in reaching the desired levels of environmental quality. The EPA also works with industries and all levels of government in a wide variety of voluntary pollution prevention programs and energy conservation efforts.

EPA Region 9 has jurisdiction over the City of Atascadero and the southwestern United States (Arizona, California, Nevada, and Hawaii).

EPA programs related to hazardous materials include:

- Community Right-to-Know Information
- Pesticide Management
- Toxic Release Inventory
- Brownfields (CalSites Database)
- Cleanup Technologies
- Compliance Assistance
- Emergency Response
- Hazardous Waste
- Oil Spills

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
The 1976 Federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) and the 1984 RCRA Amendments regulate the treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous and non-hazardous wastes. The legislation mandated that hazardous wastes be tracked from the point of generation to their ultimate fate in the environment. This includes detailed tracking of hazardous materials during transport and permitting of hazardous material handling facilities.

The 1984 RCRA amendments provided the framework for a regulatory program designed to prevent releases from USTs. The program establishes tank and leak detection standards, including spill and overflow protection devices for new tanks. The tanks must also meet performance standards to ensure that the stored material will not corrode the tanks. Owners and operators of USTs had until December 1998 to meet the new tank standards. As of 2001, an estimated 85 percent of USTs were in compliance with the required standards.

Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)
The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 introduced active federal involvement to emergency response, site remediation, and spill prevention, most notably the Superfund program. The act was intended to be comprehensive in encompassing both the prevention of, and response to, uncontrolled hazardous substances releases. The act deals with
environmental response, providing mechanisms for reacting to emergencies and to chronic hazardous material releases. In addition to establishing procedures to prevent and remedy problems, it establishes a system for compensating appropriate individuals and assigning appropriate liability. It is designed to plan for and respond to failure in other regulatory programs and to remedy problems resulting from action taken before the era of comprehensive regulatory protection.

**U.S. Department of Transportation**

The Hazardous Materials Transportation Act of 1974, as amended, is the basic statute regulating hazardous materials transportation in the United States. This law gives the U.S. Department of Transportation and other agencies the authority to issue and enforce rules and regulations governing the safe transportation of hazardous materials.

State agencies are authorized to designate highways for the transport of hazardous materials. Where highways have not been designated, hazardous materials must be transported on routes that do not go through or near heavily populated areas.

**State**

**California Health and Safety Code**

The California Environmental Protection Agency has established rules governing the use of hazardous materials and the management of hazardous wastes. California Health and Safety Code Sections 25531, et seq. incorporate the requirements of Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act and the Clean Air Act as they pertain to hazardous materials. Health and Safety Code Section 25534 directs facility owners storing or handling acutely hazardous materials in reportable quantities to develop a Risk Management Plan. The plan must be submitted to the appropriate local authorities, the designated local administering agency, and the EPA for review and approval.

**CEQA and the Cortese List**

The Cortese List (Hazardous Waste and Substances Site List) is a planning document used by the state, local agencies, and developers to comply with CEQA requirements to consider Government Code Section 5962.5 in evaluating proposed development projects. Section 65962.5 states that:

The list should contain all hazardous waste facilities subject to corrective action, all hazardous waste property or border zone property designations, all information received on hazardous waste disposals on public land, all hazardous substance release sites listed pursuant to Government Code Section 25356, and all sites that were included in the former Abandonment Site Assessment Program.

**California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal EPA)**

Government Code Section 65962.5 requires the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal EPA) to develop a Cortese List at least annually. The Department of Toxic Substances Control is responsible for a portion of the information on the list, and other local and state government agencies are required to provide additional information. Cal EPA operates the Air Resources Board,
the Department of Pesticide Regulation, the Department of Toxic Substances Control, the Integrated Waste Management Board, the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, and the State Water Resources Control Board. The function of each of these six offices is discussed below.

**Air Resources Board (ARB):** To promote and protect public health, welfare, and ecological resources through the effective and efficient reduction of air pollutants in recognition and consideration of the effects on the economy of the State.

**Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR):** Regulates all aspects of pesticide sales and use to protect the public health and the environment for the purpose of evaluating and mitigating impacts of pesticide use, maintaining the safety of the pesticide workplace, ensuring product effectiveness, and encouraging the development and use of reduced risk pest control practices.

**Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC):** The Department’s mission is to restore, protect, and enhance the environment, to ensure public health, environmental quality, and economic vitality, by regulating hazardous waste, conducting and overseeing cleanups, and developing and promoting pollution prevention. DTSC protects residents from exposures to hazardous wastes. DTSC operates programs to:

- Deal with the aftermath of improper hazardous waste management by overseeing site cleanups.
- Prevent releases of hazardous waste by ensuring that those who generate, handle, transport, store, and dispose of wastes do so properly.
- Take enforcement actions against those who fail to manage hazardous wastes appropriately.
- Explore and promote means of preventing pollution, and encourage reuse and recycling.
- Evaluate soil, water, and air samples taken at sites, and develop new analytical methods.

**Cal Recycle:** Protects the public health and safety and the environment through waste prevention, waste diversion, and safe waste processing and disposal. Cal Recycle is responsible for managing California’s solid waste stream. Cal Recycle is helping California divert its waste from landfills by:

- Developing waste reduction programs.
- Providing public education and outreach.
- Assisting local governments and businesses.
- Fostering market development for recyclable materials.
- Encouraging used oil recycling.
- Regulating waste management facilities.
- Cleaning up abandoned and illegal dumpsites.

**Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA):** OEHHA is responsible for developing and providing risk managers in state and local government agencies with toxicological and medical information relevant to decisions involving public health. OEHHA also works with federal agencies, the scientific community, industry, and the general public on issues of environmental as well as public health. Specific examples of OEHHA responsibilities that directly relate to Manteca include:
• Developing health-protective exposure standards for air, water, and land to recommend to regulatory agencies, including ambient air quality standards for the Air Resources Board and drinking water chemical contaminant standards for the Department of Health Services.

• Assessing health risks to the public from air pollution, pesticide and other chemical contamination of food, seafood, drinking water, and consumer products.

• Providing guidance to local health departments, environmental departments, and other agencies with specific public health problems, including appropriate actions to take in emergencies that may involve chemicals.

**State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB):** Preserves and enhances the quality of California’s water resources, and ensure their proper allocation and efficient use for the benefit of present and future generations. The SRWQCB maintains the Leaking Underground Storage Tank Information System (LUTIS) Database, which contains information on registered leaking underground storage tanks (LUSTs) in the State.

**California Occupational Safety and Health Agency (CalOSHA)**

CalOSHA sets and enforces standards that insure safe and healthy working conditions for California’s workers. The Division of Occupational Safety & Health is charged with the jurisdiction and supervision over workplaces in California that are not under federal jurisdiction. CalOSHA regulates issues involving unsafe workplace conditions, worker exposure to chemicals, illness due to workplace exposure, or improper training.

**State Regulatory Programs Division (SRPD)**

The SRPD oversees the technical implementation of the State’s Unified Program; a consolidation of six environmental programs at the local level, and conducts reviews of Unified Program agencies to ensure their programs are consistent statewide, conform to standards, and deliver quality environmental protection at the local level. SRPD also carries out the State’s hazardous waste recycling and resource recovery program designed to facilitate recycling and reuse of hazardous waste. SRPD conducts a corrective action oversight program that assures any releases of hazardous constituents at generator facilities that conduct on-site treatment of hazardous waste are safely and effectively remediated, and oversees the hazardous waste generator and on-site waste treatment surveillance and enforcement program carried out by local Unified Programs.

**California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and California Highway Patrol (CHP)**

The California Vehicle Code Section 31303 requires that hazardous materials be transported via routes with the least overall travel time, and prohibits the transportation of hazardous materials through residential neighborhoods. In California, the CHP is authorized to designate and enforce route restrictions for the transportation of hazardous materials. To operate in California, all hazardous waste transporters must be registered with the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). Unless specifically exempted, hazardous waste transporters must comply with the California Highway Patrol Regulations, the California State Fire Marshal Regulations, and the United States Department of Transportation Regulations. In addition, hazardous waste transporters must comply with Division 20,
Chapter 6.5, Article 6 and 13 of the California Health and Safety Code, and the Title 22, Division 4.5, Chapter 13 of the California Code of Regulations, both of which are administered by DTSC.

Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)
There are nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs) throughout the State. The Central Coast RWQCB has jurisdiction over the City of Atascadero. Individual RWQCBs function as the lead agencies responsible for identifying, monitoring, and cleaning up LUSTs. Storage of hazardous materials in USTs is regulated by the SWRCB, which oversees the nine RWQCBs.

California Fire Code
The California Fire Code sets forth requirements for emergency access for fire apparatus. The Fire Code limits roadway grades to 10 percent unless otherwise approved by the local Fire Chief. Additionally, The Fire Code requires access roads and Emergency Vehicle Accesses to provide at least a 20-foot clear width and a minimum vertical clearance of 13 feet 6 inches.

Local
San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District
The San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District (SLO County APCD) has jurisdiction over the City of Atascadero and deals with pollutants, including hazardous air pollutants such as asbestos. Information on the SLO County APCD and air quality is provided in Section 3.2, Air Quality of this EIR.

San Luis Obispo County
Certified Unified Program Agencies (CUPA)
Senate Bill 1082 (1993) required the establishment of a unified hazardous waste and hazardous materials management program. The result was Cal EPA’s United Program, which consolidates the actions of the Department of Toxic Substances Control, the State Water Resources Control Board, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, the Office of Emergency Services, and the State Fire Marshall. The Department of Toxic Substances Control oversees the implementation of the hazardous waste generator and on-site treatment program, one of six environmental programs at the local level, through Certified Unified Program Agencies (CUPAs). CUPAs have authority to enforce regulations, conduct inspections, administer penalties, and hold hearings. San Luis Obispo County implements the CUPA that has enforcement authority over the City of Atascadero. Offices are located in San Luis Obispo.

City of Atascadero
General Plan
The City of Atascadero General Plan established the following goals and policies related to hazardous materials that are applicable to the proposed project:

Chapter 2: Land Use, Open Space and Conservation
- Policy 15.7: Continue to support effective regional planning for solid and hazardous waste.

Chapter 4: Safety and Noise Element
- Goal SFN-3: Reduce the threat to life, structures, and the environment caused by fire.
- Policy 3.1: Carefully site and configure new development in higher fire risk areas.
• Goal SFN-5: Reduce the potential for harm to individuals and damage to the environment from hazardous materials, radiation, electromagnetic fields, radon, and unsafe trees and structures.

• Policy 5.1: Reduce the potential for exposure to humans and the environment from hazardous substances.

3.7.4 - Methodology

FCS evaluated potential hazardous materials impacts through site reconnaissance and review of the State Water Resources Control Board GeoTracker online database. FCS performed site reconnaissance in October 2013, which included visual inspection of various ranch facilities including the ranch operations areas. On-site conditions were documented with digital photographs. FCS reviewed the GeoTracker database to determine if the site is listed on a regulatory database that pertains to use, transport, storage, or release of hazardous materials.

Citygate Associates, LLC prepared a Fire Safety Review for Eagle Ranch that evaluated (1) project roadways and Emergency Vehicle Access (EVA), (2) firefighting water system, and (3) Wildland-Urban Interface wildfire safety and vegetation management requirements. Citygate staff met on-site with Atascadero Fire Department staff to tour the existing road system and to review the conditions and terrain of the proposed design and discuss fire service issues in person. The complete report is provided in Appendix F.

3.7.5 - Thresholds of Significance

According to Appendix G, Environmental Checklist, of the CEQA Guidelines, hazards, and hazardous materials impacts resulting from the implementation of the proposed project would be considered significant if the project would:

a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the likely release of hazardous materials into the environment?

c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working the project area? (Refer to Section 7, Effects Found Not To Be Significant.)
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area? (Refer to Section 7, Effects Found Not To Be Significant.)

g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?

3.7.6 - Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This section discusses potential impacts associated with the development of the project and provides mitigation measures where appropriate.

Transport, Use, or Disposal of Hazardous Materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact HAZ-1:</th>
<th>Buildout of the Specific Plan may involve the transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials that could create a hazard to the public or to the environment.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Impact Analysis**

This impact will evaluate the proposed Specific Plan’s potential to create hazards caused by the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials (Checklist Question a) or through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment (Checklist Question b).

**Hazardous Building Materials**

The project site contains several structures that may contain asbestos-containing materials, lead-based paint, PCBs, or mercury. At the time of this writing, few—if any—demolition activities are contemplated, as most of the existing ranch buildings would be retained as part of the continuation of the Eagle Ranch grazing operation. However, any demolition and renovation activities are required to comply with SLO County APCD Rule 701 (National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants). The applicant is required to determine if the structures are considered “regulated facilities” under NESHAP by contacting the SLO County APCD. If there are regulated facilities to be demolished, the facilities must be inspected to determine if any hazardous building materials are present. If such materials are present, the project must follow the SLO County APCD requirements and, potentially, Cal OSHA and Cal EPA regulations.

Based on the age of the structures on-site, there is the likelihood of encountering building materials containing asbestos, lead, PCBs, or mercury. Mitigation Measure HAZ-1a is proposed requiring that these materials be properly removed and disposed of by a certified contractor prior to demolition activities. The implementation of this mitigation measure would reduce impacts to a level of less than significant.
ASTs and 55-Gallon Drums

Four ASTs and four 55-gallon drums used for the storage of petroleum products are present in a woodshed in the ranch operations area. Because the Specific Plan contemplates continued ranching activities within Eagle Ranch over all phases of the Specific Plan, it would be expected that these ASTs and 55-gallon drums would continue to be used. Ultimately, the Specific Plan contemplates the development of a resort hotel in the final phase where the ranch operations area is currently located. Thus, it is anticipated that the woodshed containing the ASTs and 55-gallon drums would be demolished. As such, Mitigation Measure HAZ-1b is proposed requiring the applicant to retain a qualified hazardous materials contractor to conduct soil testing for petroleum hydrocarbons and, if necessary, undertake remediation efforts. The implementation of this mitigation measure would reduce impacts to a level of less than significant.

Radon

Indoor radon tests in the 93422 zip code indicate that 20 percent of the samples contained radon concentrations in excess of the EPA threshold of 4.0 pCi/l. The California Department of Public Health classifies zip codes with 20 percent or more samples exceeding 4.0 pCi/l to be areas of high radon potential.

Indoor radon concentrations are of most concern in sub-surface, enclosed structures such as basements and underground garages, because these spaces are of lower pressure than surrounding exterior conditions and, therefore, have the ability to draw radon indoors. In contrast, most project buildings are anticipated to consist of slab-on-grade construction, which has less potential to draw radon indoors because of a lower pressure differential. Moreover, the multi-family residential and non-residential buildings (e.g., highway commercial uses) would employ heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems that would circulate air through the buildings. Such systems would be sufficient to disperse indoor radon concentrations, which would minimize the risk to human health.

Because residential lots would be sold to individual buyers, it is unknown if the future property owners would elect to install subsurface, enclosed areas such as basements or wine cellars. Accordingly, Mitigation Measure HAZ-1c is proposed requiring the project applicant to evaluate potential indoor radon exposure for any sub-surface spaces to be completed by the project applicant, as well as requiring disclosure to future property owners within the purchase and sale documents, notifying them of the high radon potential, and advising similar evaluation of indoor radon exposure for any future sub-surface spaces that may be completed by the property owner after purchase of the property.

High Voltage Power Lines

A high-voltage power line parallels the eastern boundary of the Specific Plan area near US 101. Pacific Gas and Electric Company relocated a portion of this line eastward towards the freeway in mid-2013. The closest Specific Plan use to this power line is the highway commercial area, which would contain nonresidential uses (e.g., hotel and restaurant).

As previously discussed, no authoritative medical or scientific body has ever established a causal link between the types of extremely low-frequency EMFs emitted by high-voltage power lines and diseases such as cancer. Moreover, extremely low-frequency EMFs emitted from common
household appliances and electronics such as microwaves, clothes washers, and electric ranges occur at levels equivalent to those found at the edge of high-voltage power line rights-of-way. As such, human exposure to extremely low-frequency EMFs is quite common in modern society and is not limited to areas near high-voltage power lines. For these reasons, the presence of this power line in this area would not be considered a significant hazard to employees or patrons of the highway commercial uses, or persons elsewhere within Eagle Ranch. Impacts would be less than significant.

**Wells and Septic Tanks**

The existing structures on the project site are supplied with water from on-site wells. Additionally, these same structures use septic systems on-site wastewater disposal. Improperly abandoned wells and septic tanks can create risks to human health and the environment. Mitigation Measure HYD-3b in Section 3.7, Hydrology and Water Quality requires the project applicant to properly abandon or remove the septic systems in accordance with applicable regulatory requirements prior to grading activities. The implementation of this mitigation measure would ensure that potential health hazard impacts are reduced to a level of less than significant.

**Level of Significance Before Mitigation**

Potentially significant impact.

**Mitigation Measures**

Implement Mitigation Measure HYD-3b and:

**MM HAZ-1a**

Prior to demolition activities of any existing structures located on the project site, the project applicant shall retain a licensed hazardous waste contractor to determine the presence or absence of building materials or equipment that contains hazardous waste, including asbestos, lead-based paint, mercury, and PCBs. If such substances are found to be present, the contractor shall properly remove and dispose of these hazardous materials in accordance with federal and state law. All removal activities shall be completed prior to commencement of demolition activities. The applicant shall submit documentation to the City of Atascadero as part of the demolition permit application verifying that all hazardous materials were properly removed and disposed.

**MM HAZ-1b**

Prior to demolition of the woodshed that contains the ASTs and 55-gallon drums in the ranch operations area, the project applicant shall retain a qualified hazardous materials consultant to conduct soil testing for petroleum hydrocarbons. Should petroleum hydrocarbons be detected above acceptable limits, soil remediation shall be conducted in accordance with California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) guidelines. Contaminated soil shall be excavated and disposed of at an approved disposal facility. Following excavation, confirmation sampling shall be conducted to confirm whether remaining soil meets acceptable applicable regulatory levels. The excavation shall be backfilled with clean soil.

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1 For example, A 2010 EPRI Appliance Measurement Study found that an electric range emits EMFs between 66 and 2,000 milligauss at a distance of 1.2 feet, while high-voltage power lines emit EMFs between 1 to 300 milligauss at the edge of right-of-way.
Prior to issuance of building permits for any residential or nonresidential structure with a subsurface space (basements, garages, wine cellars, etc.), the project applicant shall retain a qualified consultant to investigate indoor radon exposure levels. The consultant shall determine whether the proposed subsurface spaces would be exposed to indoor radon concentrations of 4.0 picocuries per liter of air in accordance with United States Environmental Protection Agency and California Department of Public Health guidelines. If the consultant determines that exposure would occur at or above 4.0 picocuries per liter of air, the applicant shall revise plans to (1) eliminate all subsurface spaces or (2) install appropriate ventilation and detection systems for indoor radon in subsurface spaces. The applicant shall submit documentation to the City of Atascadero verifying that this has been successfully completed.

The project applicant or its agent shall also provide a disclosure to any prospective purchaser, which shall advise of the high radon potential in the vicinity, and advise the purchaser that prior to any future addition of a subsurface space (basement, garage, wine cellar, etc.) to a residential or nonresidential structure, the property owner is advised to retain a qualified consultant to investigate indoor radon exposure levels.

**Level of Significance After Mitigation**

Less than significant impact.

**Risk of Upset**

**Impact HAZ-2:** Buildout of the Specific Plan may have the potential to result in reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment.

**Impact Analysis**

This impact will evaluate the proposed Specific Plan’s potential to create hazards caused by reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment (Checklist Question b).

**Short-term Impacts**

Project construction activities may involve the use and transport of hazardous materials. These materials may include fuels, oils, mechanical fluids, and other chemicals used during construction. Transportation, storage, use, and disposal of hazardous materials during construction activities would be required to comply with applicable federal, state, and local statutes and regulations. Compliance would ensure that human health and the environment are not exposed to hazardous materials. In addition, Mitigation Measure HYD-1 in Section 3.8, Hydrology and Water Quality requires the project applicant to implement a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan during construction activities to prevent contaminated runoff from leaving the project site.

Because of the age of the on-site structures, there is the potential for exposure to hazardous waste containing building materials and equipment, which if disrupted can become a hazard. As discussed in Impact HAZ-1, Mitigation Measures HAZ-1a through HAZ-1c are proposed to require the proper
removal and disposal of these hazardous materials in accordance with federal and state law. The implementation of this mitigation would reduce impacts to a level of less than significant.

Note that the potential for naturally occurring asbestos to be encountered is addressed in Section 3.3, Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

**Long-term Impacts**

Typically, residential land uses do not generate, store, or dispose of significant quantities of hazardous materials. Such uses also do not normally involve dangerous activities that could expose persons on-site or in the surrounding areas to large quantities of hazardous materials. While the specific tenents are not known, cleaning solvents (such as degreasers, paint thinners, and aerosol propellants), paints (both latex- and oil-based), acids and bases (such as many cleaners), disinfectants, and fertilizers could be used on-site. These substances would be stored in secure areas and would comply with all applicable storage, handling, usage, and disposal requirements (e.g., California Health and Safety Code Section 25531). General landscaping and maintenance are likely to occur on-site, which would include the use of pest control, herbicide, and janitorial products such as commercial cleaners.

Small quantities of hazardous materials would be used on-site, including cleaning solvents (such as degreasers, paint thinners, and aerosol propellants), paints (both latex- and oil-based), acids and bases (such as many cleaners), disinfectants, and fertilizers. These substances would be stored in secure areas and would comply with all applicable storage, handling, usage, and disposal requirements (e.g., California Health and Safety Code Section 25531). The potential risks posed by the use and storage of these hazardous materials are primarily limited to the immediate vicinity of the materials. Transport of these materials would be performed by commercial vendors who would be required to comply with various federal and state laws regarding hazardous materials transportation (e.g., Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Regulations and 49 Code of Federal Regulations Parts 100-185).

In summary, the proposed project would not potentially create a significant hazard to the public or the environment from routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials or through the reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions. Impacts would be less than significant.

**Level of Significance Before Mitigation**

Potentially significant impact.

**Mitigation Measures**

Implement Mitigation Measures HAZ-1a, HAZ-1b, HAZ-1c, and HYD-1.

**Level of Significance After Mitigation**

Less than significant impact.
Government Code Section 65962.5

Impact HAZ-3: The project site is not included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.

Impact Analysis
This impact addresses whether the proposed project is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 (Checklist Question d).

FCS queried the GeoTracker database and determined that the project site is not listed on any databases. This includes all databases that list hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. Impacts would be less than significant.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation
Less than significant impact.

Mitigation Measures
No mitigation is necessary.

Level of Significance After Mitigation
Less than significant impact.

Emergency Response and Evacuation

Impact HAZ-4: The proposed project would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

Impact Analysis
This impact will evaluate the proposed project’s potential to impair or physically interfere with an emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. Citygate Associates, LLC prepared a Fire Safety Review that evaluated emergency response to the project site. The findings of the evaluation are provided herein.

Proposed Road System and Emergency Vehicle Access
Primary Road System—Grades, Turning Radii and Angles
Because of the change in elevation from US 101 to the various developed areas of the site, the maximum grade permitted in the California Fire Code 2010 Edition (CFC) would be exceeded on occasion. The Fire Code maximum grade is 10 percent unless otherwise approved by the Fire Chief. Upon review of the project application documents and exhibits, the Atascadero Fire Chief has approved exceeding the grade in certain areas (main loop, rural collector, and local roads with cul-de-sac, and private access roads).

Internal road grades change from 3 to nearly 20 percent, and average 3 to 12 percent overall. The distance from the Atascadero Road connection to San Carlos Road is approximately 3.35 miles and forms the main loop road. The rural collector road is about 4.25 miles with grades generally below 10 percent, with some variation due to topography exceeding 15 percent and sometimes reaching
20 percent. While the road grade averages 8 to 12 percent overall, much of the significant variation of up to 19 percent is located on private access roads.

In addition, there would be two EVA points at Ortega Road and Atascadero Road (Santa Barbara Road where the existing gated ranch access road/gate is located). Ortega Road is noted to have an automatic opening EVA gate. Gated access, including road bends and roundabouts (intersections) where the fire apparatus or ambulance would have to slow down, would impact response times at the site.

The project layout minimizes impacts from road design and building location and maximizes the integrity of the natural resources. The proposed road system periodically follows existing unimproved trails throughout the site. Based on elevations and the site plan lot layout previously approved by the County, these grades leave little room for change. The fire apparatus can climb these grades, but more slowly.

The turning radius of the responding Atascadero front-line structure fire engine is 67 feet. The turning radii at certain locations on project roads are less than 67 feet. Accordingly, Citygate recommended that the roadway and access improvements (curb height, stem walls, retaining walls, etc.) be reviewed to ensure that fire engines can safely make turns with adequate bumper and overhang clearances. The recommendation is reflected in Mitigation Measure HAZ-4a.

The multiple project access points and connections to the existing network of city roads is critical for both the project and the existing surrounding neighborhoods, in order to provide a cohesive city road network for emergency access. Citygate found that the San Diego Road (West)/San Dimas connection is critical to providing a western access point to the project area in the event that wildfires or other emergency causes other access points to close. Citygate recommended that at each phase of the project, the applicant shall demonstrate compliance with applicable state and local fire code regulations related to secondary access, emergency access, and maximum dead-end road length. The recommendation is reflected in Mitigation Measure HAZ-4b.

The Fire Department has also adopted the 2010 Edition of the California Fire Code Appendix D, with additional city standards. The City of Atascadero Engineering Department Fire Access Standards F-1 through F-4 define the minimum standards for fire apparatus in residential and commercial projects. Based on the current plans, the minimum standards have been provided for the collector and local roads. Private access easements would be required to meet Atascadero Engineering Standard F-4.

Access and EVA roads for fire apparatus, under the adopted City Codes and Standards, as well as the California Fire Code 2010 Edition, require a 20-foot clear width and a minimum vertical clearance of 13 feet 6 inches.

For the resort area proposal, Citygate recommends no deviation from the minimum access road widths as described in the Codes. In the event of an evacuation at the site (due to fire, earthquake, medical emergency, etc.), emergency fire apparatus or ambulances would attempt to respond. Large parties, concerts, or other special events would cause congestion while evacuating. Congestion on the resort access road must be avoided. The City and Fire Department will require fire hydrants on
the access road leading to the resort. Should a wildland fire require fire apparatus to access these fire hydrants, it is imperative that two 8-foot-wide emergency vehicles, as well as routine passenger vehicles, can pass under extreme conditions.

Additionally, private access easements at the project site would be longer than 300 feet. Because of these extreme driveway lengths serving the individual residential building sites, consideration should be given to providing turnouts/wideouts. These would be provided to assure emergency vehicles and evacuating residents can pass in light of the narrow roadways serving the location. These can also serve as parking locations for fire apparatus to work vegetation fires without creating an impassible lane under emergency conditions. These turnouts/wideouts should be located to least impact ridge-cutting or slope-filling, and they should be on relatively flat ground. Consideration should also be given to the tree canopy overhang in these areas so that branches do not interfere with fire apparatus.

Roads should have wideouts/pullouts at predetermined locations as required by the Fire Department. These might include locations with fire hydrants or for staging areas.

The Fire Department should consider site plan approval covenants for each affected lot to ensure that future construction considers the use of residential driveways as part of the turnaround system. As each single-family home site is submitted to the City for review, the Fire Department should consider access to and around each home. Driveway access accommodating a fire engine should be required within 150 feet of all portions of the residence and other structures (detached garages, outbuildings, etc.) that are permitted on the site. City of Atascadero Standard F-3 denotes specific fire hose requirements that shall be met. Second units, as permitted, on lots of 1 acre or greater, shall also be considered when access and fire hose restrictions apply.

Where cul-de-sacs, circles/roundabouts, hammerheads, etc. exist, it is recommended that they are marked using fire lane signage. Alternatively, they can be marked as “No Parking” areas with red curbing, or a painted band on the road surface. Because of the reduced width provided in the City standards, clearly marking these areas is important to preclude parking. Additionally, when driveways are provided with shoulders as noted in City of Atascadero Standard F-4, shoulder construction shall be capable of supporting the imposed loads of fire apparatus in all weather conditions. Ongoing maintenance of shoulders shall be considered as part of any lighting and landscaping maintenance district (Mello Roos) or any agreement the City has with the developer.

Because of the width of rural collector streets, the same recommendation of providing turnouts/wideouts for emergency vehicles and civilians to use under evacuation conditions is recommended. Locations should be determined on the basis of Fire Department requirements to accommodate fire hydrants or staging areas, and they should be placed where topographical conditions are best suited to minimize grading and the construction of retention walls. The minimum width of a turnout should be 12 feet of all-weather surface and no shorter than 40 feet, similar to a bus stop configuration.

Finally, the connection to the northerly side of the project creates improved access to the existing residential neighborhood and offers a second access connection to this neighborhood.
Emergency Vehicle Access Roads
The current Fire Code and City requirements for fire apparatus access roads and EVAs state that they are to be 20 feet wide and shall be constructed of an all-weather surface capable of supporting the imposed load of the heaviest fire apparatus in use. EVA is identified on the project plan from two locations. The first is Ortega Road, which would be extended from its current termination. It is noted to have a “motorized gate.” Citygate recommends that any powered gate have public-utility-provided power as its primary source, as well as an approved battery back-up system capable of operating the gate under all weather conditions. A number of optical readers, similar to those used at street intersections, can be adapted for EVA gates so that approaching emergency vehicles open the gate automatically. This dramatically reduces the time needed to manually open a gate. All gates (powered or not) should also have an approved lock box system (Knox Box) and override for emergency personnel use.

A second EVA from Atascadero Road (Santa Barbara Road) is also proposed. It is recommended that the same conditions that applied to Ortega Road EVA apply here. Minimum gate clear width shall be 20 feet and minimum vertical clearance should be 13 feet 6 inches, as specified in the Fire Code. Fire lanes shall be posted in accordance with Fire Code Appendix D, section D103.6.

Should any barriers be installed to control traffic to or from the EVA, such as gates (bollards at pedestrian openings), they shall be installed to city specifications with a clear width of 20 feet and have an approved locking system (lock box, Knox Box, etc.) meeting City or Fire Department standards.

Any powered gate or control apparatus shall have back-up power and have Fire Department override control (electronic/optical and Knox Box key override), thereby meeting Fire Department standards.

Citygate recommends those road segments in excess of a 13- to 15-percent grade be constructed with a surface that is grooved or scored to prevent skidding and slipping.

These recommendations are reflected in Mitigation Measures HAZ-4c, HAZ-4d, and HAZ-4e.

Other Road Design Considerations
Based on the adopted City Fire Code, the width of access roads where fire hydrants are located may be less than 20 feet. It is highly recommend that where private access roads are less than 20 feet wide and near fire hydrants, they be widened to ensure fire apparatus access to the fire hydrant and the ability to pass a stopped fire truck using a fire hydrant.

In general, the typical cross-section would meet the intent of the Code, provided that the area is appropriately marked “No Parking–Fire Truck Only” (or equivalent City Standard detail) to ensure that resident/guest parking does not occur at fire hydrant locations. Additionally, concrete pads around a hydrant must be a minimum least 4 inches thick over a 10-inch base. This ensures the hydrant is locked in place if there is no sidewalk. Breakaway spool or bolts above the concrete pad are required, consistent with City and Atascadero Mutual Water Company standards. The entire street cross-section at the fire hydrant sections shall be an all-weather surface capable of supporting the heaviest fire apparatus in use. Design specifications are contained in the City Standard Engineering Detail F-6.
These recommendations are reflected in Mitigation Measure HAZ-4f.

Fire Department Response

In the United States, there are no federal or state minimum fire department response time requirements. Instead, establishing minimum response times are at the discretion of local government. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)-recommended policy for career fire departments is 4 minutes travel for the first-due fire apparatus, and 8 minutes for multiple apparatus to serious incidents (commonly called the First Alarm).

The home insurance industry recommends that fire engines be within 1.5 miles driving distance of developed properties and that aerial ladder trucks be within 2.5 miles driving distance.

The City of Atascadero has not adopted specific fire department response time, polices in local ordinances, or in the Safety Element of the City's General Plan. The Atascadero Fire Department policy is that the first-due unit arrives within 6 minutes driving time and the follow-up unit(s) within 8 minutes travel time.

Based on the recommended measures above, and the Atascadero Fire Department performance goals, Citygate used geographic mapping to measure both distance and travel time from the existing City fire stations into the Eagle Ranch project area.

Exhibit 3.7-1 displays the overall Eagle Ranch location in relation to the existing City and road network. One road that currently enters the project area that would not be gated as an EVA point is labeled as a restricted point, so the fire unit routing time on the following maps do not use this street segment.

Exhibit 3.7-2 uses realistic fire truck speeds of 25 to 35 miles per hour over the roads and topography to show the travel time, in minutes, from the closest city fire stations. As measured, almost none of the project is within 1.5 miles of a fire station. The eastern half of the project ranges from 1.5 to 2.5 miles from a fire station, leaving the western half of the project 2.5 to 5.0 miles from a fire station.

Exhibit 3.7-3 displays the computer-estimated travel times in increments from 4 minutes to 8 minutes. This measure shows that a small number of the eastern streets are within 4 minutes of the closest fire station, which is a typical suburban fire unit travel time goal. The balance of the eastern third of the project is within 4 to 6 minutes of a city fire station, which meets the Atascadero Fire Department response policy goal. The western third of the project is greater than 8 minutes travel time from a city fire station.

Response Analysis

The City of Atascadero is difficult to serve using only two fire stations because of its topography and historic road network design. Given no state or federal minimums for the duration of response times for fire services, communities maintain the level of fire services that they can afford. Thus, Atascadero provides two fire stations with a minimum career staff of five firefighters per day, supplemented with paid call and auxiliary staff. There are three 40-hour employees: a Fire Chief, a Fire Marshal, and a Secretary.
The daily career staff of a minimum of five (three firefighters at Station 1 and two at Station 2) is insufficient by itself to control a serious building or wildland fire. At any given time, it is not possible to expect that a significant number of paid-call or auxiliary firefighters will respond.

The Eagle Ranch project further stretches this thin force by introducing large residential buildings, people, and automobiles into a rolling set of hills containing grasses and trees susceptible to wildfire. Urbanizing these ranch lands and annexing them to the City means that the City Fire Department area of responsibility will increase upon annexation. A serious wildfire can become very expensive if it requires the use of hand crews, bulldozers, and aircraft.

Humans tend to cause wildfires; open grazing lands do not usually combust for natural reasons. A wildfire in Eagle Ranch with a southwest to west wind behind it will threaten the existing city. The best mitigation for this hazard, after the preemptive fuel abatement program, is the response of an adequate force to quickly suppress a small, emerging fire. The response of an initial two-firefighter team from Station 2 is only adequate for a single-patient medical emergency or small, incipient fire.

Additionally, proposals for a section of the multi-family portion of the project have considered up to 80 senior units. Such complexes will definitely generate more emergency medical calls, further straining the City Fire Department’s limited staffing.

The Fire Department uses up-to-date structure and wildland fire apparatus, both front-line and reserves, for maintenance downtime or large fires. The Fire Department has adopted excellent, up-to-date fire and wildland defense codes. The weed and fuel abatement program is one of the best, if not the best, Citygate has observed in departments of all sizes. The more rural developed areas of the City on the west side have abated native vegetation and weeds, and residents make extensive use of the free chipping/mulch program for their cuttings.

The City’s adopted Building and Fire Codes will require automatic fire sprinklers in all enclosed buildings, including residences. The Codes will also provide requirements for the use of flammable materials and landscaping on the outside of structures in wildland-fire-prone neighborhoods. All of these measures, along with public educations, combine in a community fire-safe program.

Some of the City’s western neighborhoods are also outside the Department’s 6-minute policy, as seen on Exhibit 3.7-3, and some of them have topographic challenges similar to the Eagle Ranch area. As a result, the City has accepted that its two fire stations can cover what they can outside of the downtown core. The response times to the western city limits, and possibly Eagle Ranch, are less than 10 minutes, which is better than many rural areas of the State that receive service in 10 to 20 minutes, or worse.

Citygate concluded that the Fire Department’s fire apparatus will be able to access the Eagle Ranch parcels if city street and driveway standards are followed. For all of these reasons, the fire suppression impacts of the Eagle Ranch project would be mitigated to a best-practice reasonable level, consistent with existing western Atascadero neighborhoods.
Eagle Ranch Proposed Roadway System

Exhibit 3.7-1

Sources: Citygate Associates, LLC 2013

CITY OF ATASCADERO • EAGLE RANCH SPECIFIC PLAN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
Exhibit 3.7-2
Distance to Nearest Fire Station
Beyond 8 minutes

Emergency Vehicle Access

Exhibit 3.7-3
Travel Time from Nearest Fire Station

Sources: Citygate Associates, LLC 2013
Refer to Section 3.12, Public Services and Recreation for further discussion of the Atascadero Fire Department staffing and facilities. Citygate recommended that Fire Station 2 should have its staffing increased from 2 to 3 career firefighters per day to achieve parity with Station 1, as well as most other suburban fire stations in the State. Mitigation Measure PSR-1a has been included to require the project to provide funding for the modification of Fire Station 2 to accommodate additional living quarters and facility upgrades associated with the increased demand in the Fire Department staffing that will be required to serve the project.

Refer to Section 3.12, Public Services and Recreation for further discussion of emergency communications coverage and facilities. Radio frequency propagation tests performed by the City Fire Department in 2013 determined that the interior portions of the project site lack sufficient radio coverage. In the event of an on-site emergency or wildfire, emergency services staff need radio coverage in order to communicate on site. Mitigation Measure PSR-1b has been included to require that the project fund an emergency communications radio repeater station in order to provide public safety radio coverage throughout the project site at the time determined necessary by the City to serve the project.

**Level of Significance Before Mitigation**

Potentially significant impact.

**Mitigation Measures**

Implement Mitigation Measures PSR-1a and PSR-1b, and:

**MM HAZ-4a** Prior to approval of subdivision improvement plans for each phase, the applicant shall prepare and submit roadway improvement plans to the City of Atascadero for review and approval that demonstrates that fire engines can safely make turns with adequate bumper and overhang clearances to the satisfaction of the Fire Chief or the Fire Chief’s designee. As appropriate, the applicant or City shall use “Auto Turn” software (or equivalent) to demonstrate that fire apparatus can safely perform all turning movements. As appropriate, the Fire Department shall have the discretion to consider the turnout/wideout concept on specific driveway and rural/local collector streets as a measure to reduce potential evacuation congestion.

**MM HAZ-4b** Prior to approval of subdivision improvement plans for any phase or sub-phase within the interior of Eagle Ranch, the applicant shall demonstrate compliance with applicable state and local fire code regulations related to secondary access, emergency access, and maximum dead-end road length. All required secondary access connections shall be open prior to issuance of certificates of occupancy for any structure in a location requiring secondary access.

**MM HAZ-4c** Prior to approval of subdivision improvement plans for any phase or sub-phase requiring the Ortega Road connection, the applicant shall prepare and submit plans to the City of Atascadero for review and approval demonstrating that the Emergency Vehicle Access (EVA) between Ortega Road and the main loop road provides a minimum of 20 feet paved in clear width unless reduced by the Atascadero Fire Chief.
or the Fire Chief’s designee. The outside turning radii shall be increased where needed along the EVA to accommodate the current structure fire engine. Grades in excess of 15 percent shall be constructed with a surface that is grooved or scored to prevent skidding and slipping. The EVA shall be constructed using an all-weather surface.

**MM HAZ-4d**
Prior to approval of subdivision improvement plans for any phase that includes an EVA with powered gate, the City of Atascadero shall verify that the gate site provides (1) 20 feet paved in clear driveable width; (2) 13 feet, 6 inches in vertical clearance, and (3) a back-up power supply to power the gate motor in the event of an electrical outage. Additionally, the Fire Department shall have the discretion to require an optical electronic gate override (OptiCom) and lock box (Knox Box) control for each EVA gate. Pad locking motorized gates shall not be employed.

**MM HAZ-4e**
Prior to approval of subdivision improvement plans for residential development in the western portion of Eagle Ranch where the connection to the resort access is provided (resort loop road), the applicant shall prepare and submit plans to the City of Atascadero for review and approval demonstrating that the resort access road would provide a minimum width of no less than 20 feet paved. Where fire hydrants are located on this access road, turnouts/pullouts shall be provided at maximum cross slope locations so that fire apparatus can access fire hydrants without hindering emergency or passenger vehicle movements. Location and slope of turnouts/pullouts shall be approved by the City Fire Chief to ensure proper operation of fire apparatus.

**MM HAZ-4f**
Prior to approval of subdivision improvement plans for each phase, the City of Atascadero shall verify that that “No Parking–Fire Truck Only” signage is posted at hydrant locations and wideouts/pullouts. Additionally, the City shall verify that (1) a minimum of 20 feet of width is provided at hydrant locations along private access roads that are otherwise proposed for less than 20 feet of paved width; and (2) the entire street cross-section at the fire hydrant sections shall be an all-weather surface capable of supporting the heaviest fire apparatus in use.

**Level of Significance After Mitigation**
Less than significant impact.

**Wildland Fires**

**Impact HAZ-5:** The proposed project may expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires.

**Impact Analysis**
This impact will evaluate the proposed project’s potential to expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires. Citygate Associates, LLC prepared a Fire Safety Review that evaluated emergency response to the project site. The findings of the evaluation are provided in Appendix F.
Eagle Ranch contains rugged, well-vegetated terrain, and is immediately adjacent to the Los Padres National Forest to the west and privately owned grazing land to the south. As such, it is susceptible to wildland fires, including fires that originate off-site.

Fire Water Supply
The project plans identify a new water tank within the western portion of Eagle Ranch. This tank would provide a looped water system with flow from multiple connections. Establishing fire-flow at a residual pressure of 20 pounds per square inch is critical at the higher and lower elevations, and at the resort and commercial complexes. Citygate recommended that no reduction in fire-flow be permitted, based on the idea that the project would be provided fire protection that is consistent with city ordinance because it is in a Wildland-Urban Interface area.

Citygate recommended that the existing water supply system be evaluated for reliability in the event any Atascadero Mutual Water Company water supply connections are compromised. The redundancy concern is based on the concurrent series of events that would include (1) refilling an empty storage tank at the project after a fire, (2) the City’s daily peak domestic demand in progress, and (3) a fire taking place in the north/northwestern portion of the City. Infrastructure improvements to resolve the City’s redundancy and supply concerns include installing a new water tank in the western portion of Eagle Ranch. These recommendations are reflected in Mitigation Measure HAZ-5a.

The Fire Chief can assess the site’s fire access and water supply constraints and could additionally require that the minimum design specifications for all buildings be enhanced to ensure any foreseeable fire is controlled. One alternative would be to establish a minimum fire sprinkler hydraulic design area of 3,000 square feet in all commercial structures as the NFPA 13 design specification for that use, instead of applying the Fire Code minimum (12,000 square feet or more for most commercial buildings).

Another safety enhancement due to site location is to require a minimum four-sprinkler design area for all hotel/residence club occupancies, rather than a two-sprinkler design area, that conforms to the minimum NFPA 13D/NFPA 13R design. For custom homes, design criteria of up to six fire sprinklers in the largest design area should be used. As there are likely to be rooms with six sprinklers or more, the assurance that a fire in a large custom home is contained to the room of origin is extremely important. The fire main water supply design specifications should accommodate these fire sprinkler design enhancements.

Accordingly, all residences, including accessory buildings, shall be protected with an automatic fire sprinkler system with a minimum fire-flow that shall comply with the requirements set forth in the current California Fire Code and city ordinances. This recommendation is reflected in Mitigation Measure HAZ-5b.

Wildland-Urban Interface
This section evaluates the Wildland-Urban Interface safety program, including the creation of a Wildland Fire Protection Plan. This requirement is applied to the project based on the City’s local amendment to the 2010 California Fire Code.
In general, the City’s local amendment requires that the applicant meet the California Fire Code, Chapter 49, and Requirements for Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Areas. It also mandates that the construction conform to California Building Code, Chapter 7. There are numerous ways to address the options in the codes for construction type, such as using ignition-resistant materials, protected eaves, residential fire sprinklers, fire-resistant landscaping, tree pruning and thinning, management of the forested areas within 100 feet of structures, roof type, and others.

Included in the Wildland Fire Protection Plan are guidelines for defensible space, vegetation management in a fire safe manner, and financial responsibility for maintenance of landscaping and open space parcels (forest), etc. It is noted that the entire open space specified as part of this development will also include “wildlife and domestic animal corridors” to open space surrounded by development. The intent is to maintain the capability to use the open space as part of the ongoing cattle ranching operation and ensure that the corridors provide a permanent means of access for grazing. A wildfire behavior model is required to specify building setbacks and fire-resistive ratings. Based on the information provided at this point, there is little to review, because no building plans have been prepared or documents presented addressing the City requirements.

The Atascadero City Fire Department’s aggressive fuel management and abatement plan has been in place for many years. Public response to the requirements of the fuel management and abatement plan has been nearly 100 percent positive. Where unwilling or non-compliant sites exist, the City abates the vegetation hazard in accordance with city standards and invoices the property owner. Additionally, the City provides a wood “chipper” service to residents requesting the need to mulch their cuttings. The waste materials are returned to the site as a soil amenity or a decorative landscaping feature.

Citygate recommends that that the applicant prepare a Wildland Fire Protection Plan and fuel management plan. The forester can evaluate the best approach to manage the open spaces, considering the desire for continued grazing in the Specific Plan, and design the ideal framework with which a landscape architect can use within prescribed areas of the project. Such a plan will discuss architectural issues to meet City Code requirements. These recommendations are reflected in Mitigation Measure HAZ-5c.

**Level of Significance Before Mitigation**
Potentially significant impact.

**Mitigation Measures**

**MM HAZ-5a** Prior to approval of subdivision improvement plans for any phase or sub-phase, the project applicant shall prepare and submit plans to the City of Atascadero demonstrating that the proposed water system complies with applicable Fire Code requirements, including those pertaining to connection size, flow, pressure capacity, and redundancy. As part of this process, a detailed plan and specifications review of the entire fire protection water system, including fire hydrant locations, fire department connections, and minimum/maximum pressures at various locations, will be prepared and submitted to the City.
MM HAZ-5b  Prior to issuance of building permits for all residences and accessory buildings, the City of Atascadero shall verify that each structure is protected with an automatic fire sprinkler system as required by all applicable codes in place at time of building permit submittal. Fire sprinkler systems and minimum fire flows shall comply with the requirements set forth in the California Fire Code and city ordinances in place at time of building permit submittal.

MM HAZ-5c  Prior to approval of subdivision improvement plans for portions of the project that abut wildland areas, the applicant shall prepare a Wildland Fire Protection Plan and fuel management plan in accordance with the City of Atascadero’s local amendment to the California Fire Code. The plan shall evaluate approaches towards continued maintenance and management of open space, agriculture and undeveloped parcels. It shall include a management plan for forested areas that abut areas of existing and proposed development. The plan shall include guidelines for defensible space, vegetation management in a fire safe manner, financial responsibility for maintenance of landscaping and open space areas, fire-resistive landscaping solutions, and evaluation of architectural issues to meet City Code requirements. A California licensed forester shall be consulted in the preparation of the Wildland Fire Protection Plan and fuel management plan. The Wildland Fire Protection Plan shall be updated with each phase of development as necessary and as required by the City Fire Chief.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant impact.
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