NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE HALE AVENUE EXTENSION AND SANTA TERESA CORRIDOR WIDENING AND REALIGNMENT PROJECT

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Hale Avenue is part of the Santa Teresa Corridor, which is a north-south arterial through Morgan Hill from Tilton Avenue to Watsonville Road that parallels US Highway 101. While the City's General Plan identifies this continuous corridor as Santa Teresa Boulevard, it is currently a disjointed thoroughfare with significant portions missing and other portions being made up of a series of north-south streets of different names. To make Santa Teresa corridor continuous, Hale Avenue needs to be extended and the Santa Teresa Corridor between Dewitt Avenue and Watsonville Road needs to be realigned and widened. These improvements would be constructed in two phases; Phase I and Phase II. Phase I is the extension of Hale Avenue from West Main Avenue to Dewitt/Spring Avenue intersection and is anticipated to be constructed within the next two to three years, depending on funding availability. Phase II is the realignment and widening of the Santa Teresa Corridor from the Dewitt/Spring Avenue intersection to Watsonville Road, and is anticipated to be constructed in the next 10 to 15 years. Phase I is entirely within the City of Morgan Hill. Approximately one-half of Phase II is within unincorporated Santa Clara County. Therefore, approval of the proposed project will require actions by both the City of Morgan Hill and County of Santa Clara. In coordination with the County of Santa Clara, it has been determined that the City of Morgan Hill will be the Lead Agency for the proposed project and the County will be a Responsible Agency.

A Public Scoping Meeting will be held to take comments regarding the scope and content of the Draft EIR as follows:

Public Scoping Meeting
Wednesday, June 8, 2016
7:00 p.m. to 8:00 pm.
City Council Chambers
17575 Peak Ave.
Morgan Hill, CA 95037

As the Lead Agency, the City of Morgan Hill will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the above referenced project and would like your views regarding the scope and content of the environmental information to be addressed in the EIR. The project description, location, and a brief summary of potential environmental effects are attached.

Per State law, the deadline for your response is 30 days after receipt of this notice; however, we would appreciate an earlier response, if possible. Written comments will be accepted until Monday, June 27, 2016 at 5:00 p.m.

Please identify a contact person, and send your response to:

City of Morgan Hill
Attn: John W. Baty
Senior Planner
17575 Peak Avenue
Morgan Hill, CA 95037
(408) 778-6480
John.Baty@MorganHill.ca.gov

Andrew Crabtree
Community Development Director

Date: May 23, 2016

Introduction

The purpose of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is to inform decision-makers and the general public of the environmental effects of a project that an agency may implement or approve. The EIR process is intended to provide information sufficient to evaluate a project and its potential for significant impacts on the environment, to examine methods of reducing adverse impacts, and to consider alternatives to the project.

The EIR for the proposed project will be prepared and processed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended. In accordance with the requirements of CEQA, the EIR will include the following:

- A summary of the project;
- A project description;
- A description of the existing environmental setting, environmental impacts, and mitigation measures for the project;
- Alternatives to the project as proposed; and
- Environmental consequences, including (a) any significant environmental effects which cannot be avoided if the project is implemented; (b) any significant irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources; (c) the growth inducing impacts of the proposed project; and (d) cumulative impacts.

Project Location

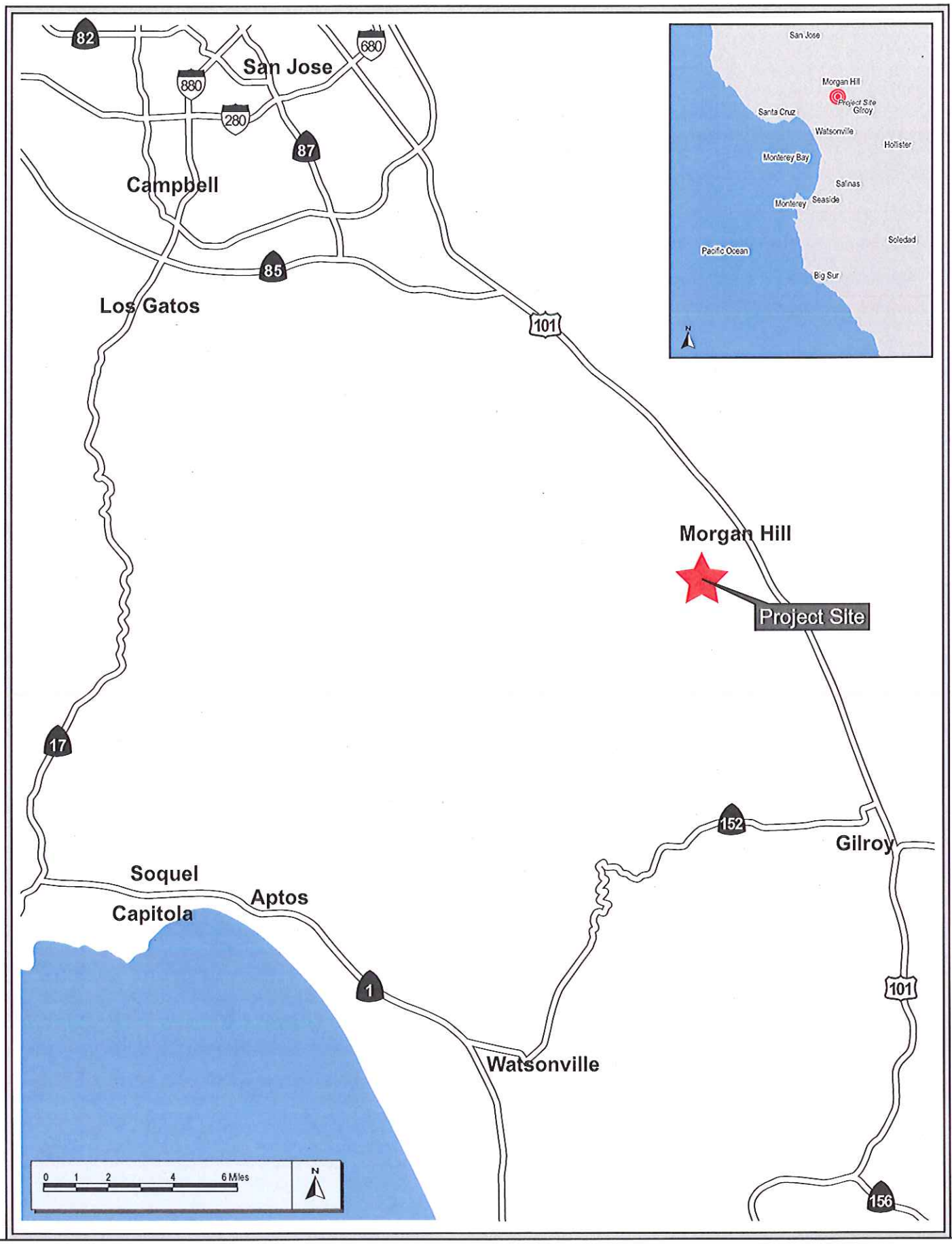
In its entirety, the proposed roadway project extends south along the Santa Teresa Corridor from the intersection of West Main Avenue and Hale Avenue in the north to the intersection of Watsonville Road and Sunnyside Avenue in the south. Except for the section between the DeWitt/Spring Avenue intersection and approximately Edmundson Road, which is located within the County of Santa Clara, the proposed roadway project is located in the City of Morgan Hill. (See Figures 1 and 2).

Project Description

The proposed roadway project would be constructed in two phases, Phase I and Phase II. Phase I is the extension of Hale Avenue from West Main Avenue to the Dewitt/Spring Avenue intersection. Phase I is anticipated to be constructed within the next two to three years, depending on funding availability. Phase II is the realignment and widening of the Santa Teresa Corridor from the Dewitt/Spring Avenue intersection to Watsonville Road. Phase II is anticipated to be constructed in the next 10 to 15 years. Phase I and Phase II of the project are described in further detail below.

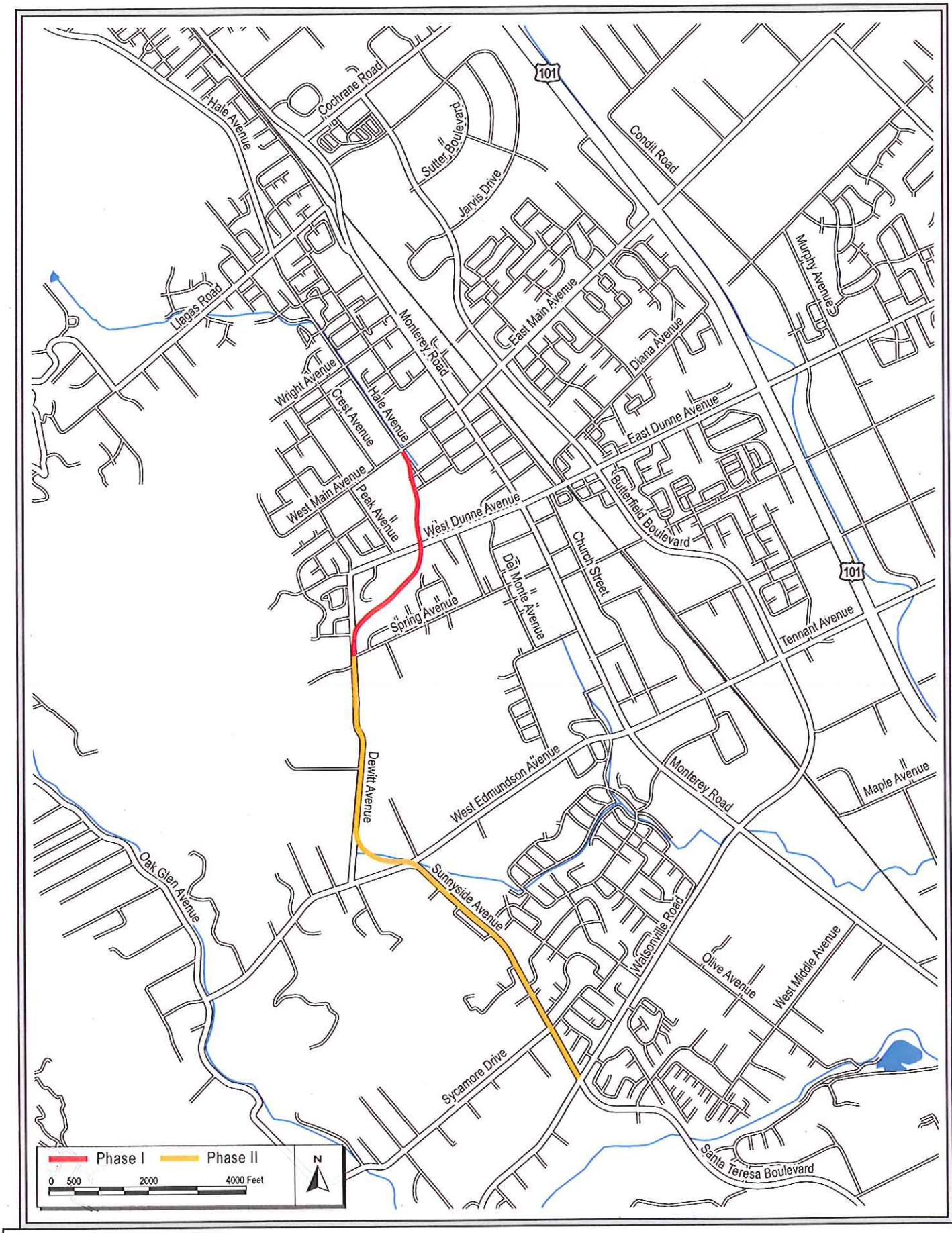
Phase I: Main Avenue to DeWitt/Spring Intersection

Hale Avenue currently terminates at West Main Avenue in the City of Morgan Hill. Phase I of the project proposes to extend Hale Avenue from West Main Avenue to the DeWitt/Spring Avenue intersection as shown on Figure 2. This new segment of roadway would be approximately 1,900 feet (0.35 miles) in length.



REGIONAL MAP

FIGURE 1



VICINITY MAP

FIGURE 2

The extension would consist of a multi-modal, two-lane road (one lane in each direction), which would include bike lanes with a landscaped center median and a pedestrian/bike path within a right-of-way ranging from 62 to 130 feet wide. Vegetative swales for stormwater collection and treatment and landscaping consisting of trees and shrubs would be located on both sides of the proposed extension. Streetlights would be located within the center median, and sound walls would be constructed along the sections near existing and planned residences.

New and Modified Intersections

The proposed extension of Hale Avenue would modify two existing intersections (DeWitt/Spring Avenue and West Main/Hale Avenue) and construct a new intersection at Dunne Avenue. The extension of Hale Avenue would add a south leg to the intersection of West Main/Hale Avenue. At the DeWitt/Spring Avenue intersection, the Hale Avenue extension would merge with Dewitt Avenue at the north leg of the intersection. At this time, the new intersection at Dunne Avenue is envisioned to operate as a roundabout.

Structures to be Removed or Relocated

Four structures are located within the right-of-way of the proposed Hale Avenue extension and, as a result, would be removed or relocated during construction. Starting from West Main Avenue, these structures include a small concrete block structure on the adjacent PG&E property, a garage located at 205 Warren Avenue, the residence located at 230 Warren Avenue, and a small shed located at 310 West Dunne Avenue.

Utility Relocation

Existing utilities in the project area (e.g., water, storm drain, sanitary sewer, and gas lines, electric overhead lines and poles, and telephone/communication lines) would be relocated and/or placed below grade within the proposed Hale Avenue right-of-way.

Stormwater Detention

Two stormwater detention basins would be constructed in conjunction with the extension of Hale Avenue, one detention basin would be located south of West Main Avenue and the other would be located south of West Dunne Avenue.

Phase II: Sunnyside Avenue to DeWitt Avenue

Phase II is the widening and realignment of the Santa Teresa Corridor from the Dewitt/Spring Avenue intersection to Watsonville Road, which is approximately two miles in length. Consistent with the planned roadway improvements under Phase I, the roadway within this approximately two-mile segment of the Santa Teresa Corridor would be widened, and a multi-modal, two-lane road with a landscaped center median and a pedestrian/bike path would be constructed within a 96-foot right-of-way. In addition, the section between the southern end of Dewitt Avenue and the northern end of Sunnyside Avenue would be realigned to create one continuous roadway (refer to Figure 2). Because

construction of Phase II is not anticipated to begin for another 10 to 15 years, many project specific details (e.g., utility, drainage, landscaping, and construction) are not yet available.

Potential Environmental Impacts of the Project

The EIR will identify the significant environmental effects anticipated to result from construction of the proposed roadway project, including both Phase I and Phase II. The EIR will provide the level of environmental review necessary to approve and construct Phase I of the proposed project. As stated above, construction of Phase II is not anticipated to begin for another 10 to 15 years, and many of the project specific details (e.g., utility, drainage, landscaping, and construction) are not yet available. For these reasons, the EIR will not provide the level of environmental review necessary to construct Phase II. The environmental effects of constructing Phase II will be evaluated in the EIR qualitatively. Additional environmental review will be necessary prior to constructing Phase II of the proposed project. The EIR will include the following specific environmental categories as related to the proposed project:

1. Land Use and Planning

The EIR will describe the existing land uses within and/or adjacent to the proposed extension of Hale Avenue and the planned future widening and realignment of the Santa Teresa Corridor. Land use impacts that that would occur as a result of the proposed and planned roadway improvements will be analyzed, including dividing and established community and displacing people and/or housing. Mitigation measures will be identified for significant land use impacts, as warranted.

2. Traffic and Circulation

The proposed extension of Hale Avenue and the planned future widening and realignment of the Santa Teresa Corridor would bring additional vehicles through the project area and modify existing traffic patterns. A Transportation Impact Analysis will be prepared to identify the impacts of the additional traffic to the existing local and regional transportation system and the planned long-range transportation network. Mitigation measures will be identified for significant transportation impacts, as warranted.

3. Biological Resources

The proposed extension of Hale Avenue and the planned future widening and realignment of the Santa Teresa Corridor would disturb biological habitat. A Biological Resources Assessment will be prepared to determine if the proposed extension of Hale Avenue would impact biological resources (i.e., sensitive habitats and special-status species). The types of habitats that could be affected and potential impacts to biological resources that could result from the planned future widening and realignment of the Santa Teresa Corridor will also be described. Mitigation measures will be identified for significant biological resource impacts, as warranted.

4. Hydrology and Water Quality

The proposed extension of Hale Avenue and the planned future widening and realignment of the Santa Teresa Corridor would increase impervious surfaces and associated runoff. Roadway runoff contains non-point source water quality pollutants (e.g., oil, brake dust, tire rubber, etc.). The hydrology and water quality impacts that could occur during construction and operation of the proposed Hale Avenue extension will be evaluated in the EIR. The hydrology and water quality impacts that could result from the planned future widening and realignment of the Santa Teresa Corridor will also be described. This section of the EIR will also include a discussion of the project's consistency with the Upper Llagas Creek Flood Protection Project. Mitigation measures will be identified for significant hydrology and water quality impacts, as warranted.

5. Air Quality

The proposed extension of Hale Avenue and the planned future widening and realignment of the Santa Teresa Corridor may result in increased air pollutant emissions. The EIR will describe the existing regional air quality conditions in the Bay Area. The potential for the proposed project to result in local and regional air quality impacts during both construction and operation will be evaluated as recommended in the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) CEQA guidelines, including a comparison of vehicle miles travelled (VMT) with and without the proposed project. Mitigation measures will be identified for significant air quality impacts, as warranted.

6. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The proposed extension of Hale Avenue and the planned future widening and realignment of the Santa Teresa Corridor may increase greenhouse gas emissions. The EIR will address the proposed project's contribution to regional and global greenhouse gas emissions during both construction and operaton as recommended in the BAAQMD CEQA guidelines, including a comparison of VMT with and without the proposed project. Additionally, the EIR will discuss conformance with the City's Climate Action Plan/GHG Reduction Strategy. Mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

7. Cultural Resources

Archaeological Resources

The project area is considered moderately sensitive for prehistoric resources associated with the former Native American occupants of the area. The potential for the proposed extension of Hale Avenue and the planned future widening and realignment of the Santa Teresa Corridor to impact cultural resources will be described in the EIR, including Tribal Cultural Resources as required under Assembly Bill (AB) 52. Mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

Historic Resources

Four structures are located within the right-of-way of the proposed Hale Avenue extension and, as a result, would be removed or relocated during construction. The EIR will evaluate the potential

historical significance of these structures. The potential for the planned future widening and realignment of the Santa Teresa Corridor to affect historic structures will also be described. Mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

8. Noise

The proposed extension of Hale Avenue would locate a new noise source adjacent to sensitive receptors. The EIR will describe the anticipated noise level increases with the proposed extension of Hale Avenue during both construction and operation. The potential for the planned future widening and realignment of the Santa Teresa Corridor to increase noise levels at sensitive receptors will also be described. Mitigation measures to reduce significant noise impacts upon sensitive receptors, as warranted.

9. Aesthetics

The proposed extension of Hale Avenue would be visible from existing businesses and residences in the project area. The extension of Hale Avenue across the westerly portion of Nob Hill would be the most visible. This crossing would be visible from much of the surrounding area, including downtown Morgan Hill. The EIR will describe the aesthetic impacts of the proposed extension of Hale Avenue and the planned future widening and realignment of the Santa Teresa Corridor. Mitigation measures to reduce significant aesthetic impacts will be identified, as warranted.

10. Hazardous Materials

The proposed extension of Hale Avenue and the planned future widening and realignment of the Santa Teresa Corridor would traverse numerous properties. Depending on the historic and/or present use of these properties, hazardous materials may be present within the alignment. The EIR will describe the potential for the proposed extension of Hale Avenue and the planned future widening and realignment of the Santa Teresa Corridor to result in hazardous material impacts. Mitigation measures to reduce significant hazardous material impacts will be identified, as warranted.

11. Geology (Soils and Topography)

The EIR will describe the existing geologic conditions of the project area and the potential for the proposed extension of Hale Avenue and the planned future widening and realignment of the Santa Teresa Corridor to result in significant geology and soil impacts. Mitigation measures to reduce significant geology and soil impacts will be identified, if necessary.

12. Alternatives

The EIR will evaluate possible alternatives to the proposed project, including the No Project Alternative. The alternative discussion will focus on those alternatives that could feasibly accomplish most of the basic purposes of the project while also avoiding or substantially lessening one or more of the significant effects.

13. Significant Unavoidable Impacts

The EIR will identify those significant impacts that cannot be avoided, if the project is implemented as proposed.

14. Cumulative Impacts

The potential for the proposed project, when considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the project area, to result in a significant cumulative impact will be evaluated in the EIR.

In conformance with the CEQA Guidelines, the EIR will also include the following sections: 1) consistency with local and regional plans and policies, 2) growth inducing impacts, 3) significant irreversible environmental changes, 4) references and organizations/persons consulted, and 5) EIR authors.