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Environmental Checklist Form & Initial Study
Prepared Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. **Project title:** Updates to residential and residential mixed-use design standards and guidelines for the unincorporated communities of West Alameda County.
2. **Project location:** Unincorporated Alameda County, lands within the Urban Growth Boundary established by Measure D that are subject to the *Castro Valley General Plan* and the *Eden Area General Plan*.
3. **Project sponsor's name and address:** Alameda County Planning Department, 224 West Winton Avenue, Room. 111, Hayward, CA 94544
4. **General plan designations:** Several General Plan land use designations exist within the five planning areas affected by this project: San Lorenzo, Ashland, Cherryland, Fairview, and Castro Valley. The two General Plans at issue are the 2010 *Eden Area General Plan* and the 2012 *Castro Valley General Plan*. The Residential Design Standards and Guidelines for the unincorporated communities of West Alameda County would implement the land use policies of developing updated design standards and guidelines found in the area general plans.
5. **Zoning:** There are several residential zoning districts within the five planning areas affected by this project: San Lorenzo, Ashland, Cherryland, Fairview, and Castro Valley. All residential zoning districts or zoning districts allowing residential mixed-use within these five unincorporated western areas of Alameda County would be affected, including all Planned Development zoning districts allowing residential or residential mixed-use developments, and all residential or residential mixed-use zoning districts in the Fairview, Ashland Cherryland Business District, San Lorenzo Village Center, Castro Valley Central Business District, and Madison Avenue Specific Plans.
6. **Description of project:** Alameda County proposes to amend and update its Residential Design Standards and Guidelines for the unincorporated communities of West Alameda County to better address residential development styles and varieties currently being proposed in the unincorporated areas of Alameda County. The existing zoning standards are not adequate for townhouses or small lot single family house building types. These current zoning standards were written for single family homes and multi-family residential "flats", and they do not make sense when applied to townhomes and small lot single family homes. Because of current development regulations, the same zoning standards have been applied to projects at completely different densities. For certain parcels where the existing zoning standards do not match the allowed density, staff and the applicants negotiate project standards on a case by case basis through the Planned Development process and project standards are not applied consistently from project to project. Existing standards were historically not applied consistently across different Planned Development projects. The zoning was historically not used to determine the maximum density; applicants used higher densities based on broad density categories and density ranges in the General Plan. There are no specified densities geared towards townhomes and small lot single family homes. The result has been poorly developed parcels that do not fit into their neighborhood context.

The new proposed standards as recommended by County Staff (please refer to Appendix A) seek to provide a remedy for the awkward method of applying design standards and guidelines described above. The new standards address several different kinds of common residential development proposed in the urban core area of Western Alameda County, including Hillside Residential, Small-Lot Single Family Residential Development; Townhomes; Multi-Family Residential Development; and Mixed Use (with Residential) on Commercial Corridors. For lower density residential development, specifically 7 or fewer units per acre such as in the Fairview Specific Plan area, much of existing development regulations would remain as they are now under existing specific regulations. Minor modifications to modification of building height measurement, to retaining wall height limitations, and to stepping of the structure down the hillside instead of one vertical block, would result for single-family detached residential development.

Within these categories of development styles and densities, the following characteristics of the development would be addressed by the new standards and guidelines, each characteristic addressed according to its applicability to the given development style:

- Matching development standards to existing densities;
- Height and setback values including side, rear, and front yards
- Lot Coverage, Landscaping and Open Space
- Building bulk and form
- Building wall, fenestration, and roof articulation
- Building-street orientation, façade design, and frontage requirements
- Onsite parking (amount and location) and vehicle access
- Building Floor Area Ratio limits
- Building separation onsite and between lots
- Building locations on the street and design for mixed-use areas
- Relationship of residential units to commercial space, landscaping, and parking in mixed-use development.

Upon approval of these new design standards and guidelines, several County Planning documents would be revised to reflect the new standards, many of which would carry the force of law. Several of the residential zoning designations in the Zoning Ordinance would be revised to reflect the basic zoning requirements (setbacks, height limitations, density definitions, etc), and several Specific Plans (which are documents intended to help implement the County General Plan) for areas within the overall unincorporated County would be revised to accommodate the new suggested design and development standards and guidelines.

These would include:

- The Castro Valley Central Business District Specific Plan

- The Ashland Cherryland Business District Specific Plan
- The San Lorenzo Village Specific Plan
- The Madison Avenue Specific Plan
- The Fairview Area Specific Plan

No specific plans in the East County would be modified, as this approval would not affect areas covered under the East County Area Plan. The County General Plan itself would not be revised.

8. Other public agencies whose approval may be required:

None

B. ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture and Forest Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geology /Soils | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology and Water Quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use and Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Population and Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation and Traffic | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities / Service Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance |

C. LEAD AGENCY DETERMINATION:

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made to the project, including mitigation measures. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Signature
Rodrigo Orduña, AICP, Senior Planner

October 23, 2013
Date

D. EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS:

The Environmental Checklist and discussion that follows is based on sample questions provided in the CEQA Guidelines (Appendix G) which focus on various individual concerns within 17 different broad environmental categories, such as air quality, climate change, cultural resources, land use, public services, noise and traffic (and arranged in alphabetical order). The Guidelines also provide specific direction and guidance for preparing responses to the Environmental Checklist. The sample questions are meant to be used to meet the requirements for an initial study when the criteria set forth in CEQA Guidelines have been met. Substantial evidence of potential environmental impacts that are not listed in the checklist must also be considered. The sample questions are intended to encourage thoughtful assessment of impacts, and do not necessarily represent thresholds of significance. Each environmental checklist question (ECQ) will be cross-referenced in the text of the study (e.g., ECQ 3.a refers to the first question in Section 3, Air Quality; ECQ 6.a.i refers to the first subsection of the first question in Section 6, Geology and Soils).

Each question in the Checklist essentially requires a "yes" or "no" reply as to whether or not the project will have a potentially significant environmental impact of a certain type, and, following a Checklist table with all of the questions in each major environmental heading, citations, information and/or discussion

that supports that determination. The Checklist table provides, in addition to a clear “yes” reply and a clear “no” reply, two other “in-between” replies, including one that is equivalent to “yes, but with changes and mitigation measures that the proponent and the Lead Agency have agreed to, and another “no” reply that requires a greater degree of discussion, supported by citations and analysis of existing conditions, threshold(s) of significance used and project effects, than are required for a simple “no” reply. Each possible answer to the questions in the Checklist, and the different type of discussion required, is discussed below:

- a) Potentially Significant Impact. Checked if a discussion of the existing setting (including relevant regulations or policies pertaining to the subject) and project characteristics with regard to the environmental topic demonstrates, based on substantial evidence, supporting information, previously prepared and adopted environmental documents, and specific criteria or thresholds used to assess significance, that the project will have a potentially significant impact of the type described in the question.¹
- b) Less Than Significant With Mitigation. Checked if the discussion of existing conditions and specific project characteristics, also adequately supported with citations of relevant research or documents, determine that the project clearly will or is likely to have particular physical impacts that will exceed the given threshold or criteria by which significance is determined, but that with the incorporation of clearly defined mitigation measures into the project, that the project applicant or proponent has agreed to, such impacts will be avoided or reduced to less-than-significant levels.
- c) Less Than Significant Impact. Checked if a more detailed discussion of existing conditions and specific project features, also citing relevant information, reports or studies, demonstrates that, while some effects may be discernible with regard to the individual environmental topic of the question, the effect would not exceed a threshold of significance which has been established by the Lead or a Responsible Agency. The discussion may note that due to the evidence that a given impact would not occur or would be less than significant, no mitigation measures are required.
- d) No Impact. Checked if brief statements (one or two sentences) or cited reference materials (maps, reports or studies) clearly show that the type of impact could not be reasonably expected to occur due to the specific characteristics of the project or its location (e.g. the project falls outside the nearest fault rupture zone, or is several hundred feet from a 100-year flood zone, and relevant citations are provided). The referenced sources or information may also show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved. A response to the question may also be "No Impact" with a brief explanation that the basis of adequately supported project-specific factors or general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a basic screening of the specific project).

¹ *Note:* for this subject application, this reply is not given for any of the questions, because all of the impacts are expected to be mitigated to less-than-significant levels with changes agreed to by the project proponent. CEQA requires that if the Checklist makes a determination that the project will have one or more potentially significant environmental impacts (and the project proponent does not agree to changes that would change the reply to the conditional “no” described in the following type of reply), an environmental impact report (EIR) is required. In such instances, the discussion may be abbreviated greatly if the Lead Agency chooses to defer the analysis to preparation of the EIR.

The discussions of the replies to the Checklist questions must take account of the whole action involved in the project, including off-site as well as on-site effects, both cumulative and project-level impacts, indirect and direct effects, and construction as well as operational impacts. Except when a “No Impact” reply is indicated, the discussion of each issue must identify:

- a) the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
- b) the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance, with sufficient description to briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level.

Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration (Section 15063(c)(3)(D) of the Guidelines). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:

- a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
- b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
- c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.

1. AESTHETICS Would the project:	YES: Potentially Significant Impact	NO: Less Than Significant with Mitigation	NO: Less Than Significant Impact	NO: No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?				x
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a designated state scenic highway corridor?				x
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?			x	
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?				x

Setting: The urban and suburban residential and mixed-use residential areas of the Eden Area (Ashland, Cherryland, San Lorenzo, and Fairview) and Castro Valley encompass a fairly broad range of housing types including single family residential on a variety of lot sizes, multiple family residential units, townhomes, condominiums, and some mixed use (associated with adjacent commercial structures). The residential stock is also variable in age, ranging from early 20th century to modern construction. A few historic units predate the year 1900. In part related to age, the structures themselves vary widely in style, appearance, and condition. These qualities contribute to the general visual character of various neighborhoods, which can range in appearance from aging and not well-maintained and/or blighted, through older but well-maintained, to new in appearance.

Likewise, the physical parameters of the neighborhoods and individual residential units (setbacks, height limits, building design, building configuration, landscaping, parking configuration, etc) also vary widely; but for newer housing stock constructed since the 1940s, these characteristics fall mostly within the limits established by the zoning ordinance and more recent requirements incorporated into the various specific plans established for the West County. In relatively few cases, there exist individual parcels or blocks of parcels on which Variances have been approved to allow different setbacks and heights to suit the individual peculiarities of the parcel or parcels.

Regulatory Setting: The existing zoning standards established for single family and multifamily residential building types have been used widely for many decades in the unincorporated area, and have also been applied to townhomes and small lot single family homes, for which the ability to provide adequate guidance in siting and design has been limited. For some projects, existing zoning standards are not applied consistently, often through the use of Planned Development (PD) rezoning with specific and variable provisions of reclassification, or through the application of the Variance process. Existing standards were historically not applied consistently to different projects. The zoning was historically not used to determine the maximum density. There are no specified development standards to differentiate densities between multi-family “flats”, townhomes, and small lot single family homes. To fit higher density projects within the higher density zoning districts, applicants apply for rezoning to a Planned Development zoning district to circumvent the development standards. This results in inconsistent

development standards between the various Planned Development zoning districts and as compared to the standard zoning residential zoning districts. In summary, the regulatory setting may be described as inadequate for the residential types that have been proposed and approved in recent times, and these have contributed in some cases to building and neighborhood appearance and character that may be less than desirable.

Light and Glare. The communities in the Plan areas contribute greatly to nighttime light pollution (i.e., upward light scatter that makes fainter stars less visible) and glare. This effect is commonly found in many residential areas.

Impacts: The precise aesthetic impacts of these design standards and guidelines at any given location cannot be ascertained, but in general, the following broad statements can be made:

1. The effects of the implementation of these standards and guidelines would be found exclusively in residential and residential mixed-use areas of the region covered by the Eden Area General Plan and the Castro Valley General Plan. The effects of these standards would not be found in areas outside the Urban Growth Boundary or in the East County.
2. The intent of these standards and guidelines is to minimize the undesirable aesthetic and operational effects of the development styles that have been proposed and constructed in recent years. The standards are designed, in part, to minimize the creation of bland, monolithic and otherwise unappealing appearances, where they may occur, and instead enable the creation of attractive and welcoming outdoor spaces for residents, visitors and passersby.

For this analysis, a “substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista” would result if any of the proposed standards would result in the substantial blocking of an “outstanding distant view”, visual dominance over such a view, or placement of a strongly negative visual element within such a view. As they are now proposed, the standards would not allow greater latitude in the placement or design of new structures wherever they may be located, but would tend to be more restrictive in the design characteristics allowed for new development. Therefore, the design standards in and of themselves would not result in any effect, adverse or otherwise, on a scenic vista. **No impact would occur.**

The proposed design standards would generally be inapplicable to development in any location where it could substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a designated state scenic highway corridor; moreover, they do not by themselves result in any development in such areas. **No impact to scenic resources would result from program approval.**

The design standards proposed could result in substantial alterations to the design of a development proposal in terms of building appearance, massing, articulation, façade and layout when compared with the current standards to which the proposal would be subject. However, in and of themselves the design standards would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of a given building site and/or its surroundings. Under the reasonable assumption that a proposed structure would be built regardless of the standards used, it is fair to say that these design standards, fashioned to improve both the appearance and ambience of the development, would only serve to mitigate the adverse effects of the new development itself. **Any adverse impact is likely to be less than significant.**

The design standards do not address outdoor lighting, nor make requirements one way or another on lighting design; therefore, **no impact would result.**

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

<p>2. AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES</p> <p>In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state’s inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Resource Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the Project:</p>	<p>YES: Potentially Significant Impact</p>	<p>NO: Less Than Significant with Mitigation</p>	<p>NO: Less Than Significant Impact</p>	<p>NO: No Impact</p>
<p>a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?</p>				<p>x</p>
<p>b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?</p>				<p>x</p>
<p>c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?</p>				<p>x</p>
<p>d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?</p>				<p>x</p>
<p>e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use?</p>				<p>x</p>

Setting: While some parcels zoned or designated for residential development may abut agricultural lands, the proposed Design Standards and Guidelines would not apply on any rural or agricultural lands, but would apply only on lands so-designated or zoned for residential or residential mixed-use development.

Impacts: In all cases related to agricultural preservation or appropriate lands, these proposed design standards and guidelines would be inapplicable. **No impacts to agricultural resources would occur.**

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

3. AIR QUALITY Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:	YES: Potentially Significant Impact	NO: Less Than Significant with Mitigation	NO: Less Than Significant Impact	NO: No Impact
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?				x
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?				x
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?				x
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?				x
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?				x

Setting: Alameda County and eight other counties are subject to the Bay Area Clean Air Plan, first adopted in 1991 by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), and updated periodically since then. Two air quality plans are currently in effect, the 2005 Ozone Strategy, and the *2010 Bay Area Clean Air Plan* (CAP). These plans provide measures to reduce air pollutant emissions from industrial facilities, commercial processes, motor vehicles and other sources, and in general seek to meet state and federal air quality standards. The California Clean Air Act of 1988 requires such plans to work towards achieving and maintaining the state ambient air quality standards. The *2010 CAP* provides new pollution control strategies to reduce ozone, particulate matter (PM), air toxics, and greenhouse gases in a single, integrated plan, and assesses the region's progress towards improved air quality. Other programs established by the District include the Community Air Risk Evaluation program to evaluate and reduce health risk from air toxics, measures aimed at climate protection through reduction of greenhouse gases, and review of local general plans and major development projects that may significantly harm air quality.²

The BAAQMD also measures air quality conditions and provides an annual statement of the Bay Area's status with respect to air quality standards and numbers of violations in the prior year. As of 2011, the Bay Area is designated as a "non-attainment" area for both the federal and state 8-hour ozone standards and the state 1-hour ozone standard, which is based on measures of ozone precursors known as reactive organic gases (ROG), organic hydrocarbon compounds, not including methane, that react rapidly in the atmosphere to form photochemical smog or ozone. However, the Bay Area has "attainment" status for the state and federal standards for carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), and sulfur dioxide (SO₂).³

For particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}, referring respectively to 10-micron and 2.5-micron diameter particles), the Bay Area also has "non-attainment" status under the state standards. For the federal PM₁₀

² Bay Area Air Quality Management District, *Bay Area 2010 Clean Air Plan (CAP)*, December 2010.

³ *Ibid.*, and *Air Quality Standards and Attainment Status* – http://hank.baaqmd.gov/pln/air_quality/ambient_air_quality.htm.

standard for a 24-hour period, the Bay Area is considered “unclassified”; however, based on the current 24-hour PM_{2.5} standard (lowered in 2006), the Bay Area was designated as nonattainment, effective on December 14, 2009. As a result, the Air District must adopt a State Implementation Plan (SIP) within three years (by the end of 2012) that demonstrates the Bay Area can achieve the current standard within another two years (by December 14, 2014).⁴

The 2005 Ozone Attainment Plan was prepared in cooperation with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), to provide means by which the Bay Area can attain the national ozone standard. The Plan provides a control strategy that includes District regulations on stationary sources, and incentive programs and other control measures to control mobile sources. Other strategies involve transportation programs with local governments, transit agencies and other entities.

The 2010 CAP control strategy is comprised of 55 control measures in five categories, including: a) stationary source measures (SSMs, to regulate manufacturing facilities, refineries, dry cleaners, auto body shops, etc.); b) mobile source measures (MSMs, for vehicles); c) transportation control measures (TCMs); d) land use and local impacts; and e) energy and climate. Examples of mobile source control measures include reducing emissions by faster replacement of older and dirtier vehicles and equipment (such as the District’s Vehicle Buy-Back and Smoking Vehicle Programs), and promoting advanced technology vehicles that reduce emissions of criteria pollutants. TCMs aim to reduce vehicle trips, vehicle use, vehicle miles traveled (VMT), vehicle idling, or traffic congestion for the purpose of reducing motor vehicle emissions, through measures to: improve transit service; encourage walking, bicycling, and transit use; improve efficiency of the regional transit and roadway systems; support focused growth; and develop and implement pricing strategies. The TCMs were developed in concert with the 2005 Ozone Strategy, and also reflect the policies and priorities set out in MTC’s regional transportation plan, *Transportation 2035: Change in Motion*.⁵

Impacts: The Design Standards as proposed neither augment nor enhance the development approval process for residential construction proposals, nor do they alter aspects of any development proposal that would contribute to emissions of criteria pollutants, exacerbate nonattainment of any pollutant, or result in noncompliance with the CAP of the BAAQMD. They would not increase or decrease traffic volumes, traffic congestion, or stationary source emissions. They would result in neither odor generation nor cumulatively considerable contributions to areawide nonattainment. In summary, **the proposed Design Standards would have no impact on air quality in the Bay Area region.**

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is required.

⁴ Ibid., Air Quality Standards and Attainment Status, footnote 10.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 4-2 to 4-4; and Metropolitan Transportation Commission, *Transportation 2035: Change in Motion*, April 2009.

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES Would the project:	YES: Potentially Significant Impact	NO: Less Than Significant With Mitigation	NO: Less Than Significant Impact	NO: No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?				x
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian, aquatic or wetland habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?				x
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?				x
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?				x
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?				x
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?				x
g) Result in conversion of oak woodlands that will have a significant effect on the environment?				x

Setting: While all of the General Plan areas being considered for the proposed changes contain some landscapes with biological resources and habitats, none of the locations to which the rules would apply would be biologically significant. All would be in areas previously zoned for residential and mixed residential-commercial uses, and in the large majority of cases already developed to the point where biological habitat of any kind is not present.

Impacts: The Residential Design Standards and Guidelines in themselves would not result in any new development in any location that would not already have occurred if previously approved. The Residential Standards and Guidelines would only alter onsite building and parking configurations compared to what may have been proposed under existing zoning parameters. Application of the Standards would have no effect of any kind on biology on a project site. The adoption and implantation of the new and modified Residential Design Standards and Guidelines would have **no impact on biology or biological resources**.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is required.

5. CLIMATE CHANGE AND GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS Would the project:	YES: Potentially Significant Impact	NO: Less Than Significant With Mitigation	NO: Less Than Significant Impact	NO: No Impact
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?				x
b) Conflict with any applicable plan, policy or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?				x

Setting: Climate change refers to changes in the Earth's weather patterns including the rise in the Earth's temperature due to an increase in heat-trapping or "greenhouse" gases in the atmosphere. Naturally occurring greenhouse gases (GHGs) include water vapor, carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O) and ozone (O₃), and as such, they serve essential functions of regulating and stabilizing the temperature of the Earth's oceans and atmosphere by both retaining radiant heat from the sun within the atmosphere and reflecting sunlight at a relatively consistent level. However, since the Industrial Revolution (i.e., about 1750), human activities have vastly expanded the generation or release of these GHGs by the burning of oil, gas and coal. In the 20th century, new industrial processes have produced substantial quantities of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆) – chemicals used mostly for refrigerants, propellants and cleaning solvents – which have vastly greater ability to trap heat within the atmosphere.⁶

Although the Earth's natural climate constantly changes, research in the past decade by the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that is now widely accepted and recognized, has concluded that the global climate is changing at a rate unmatched in the past one thousand years, and that this change is due to human activity. Climate change has already caused the average surface temperature of the Earth to increase by about one degree Fahrenheit over the last century, ocean water temperatures and mean sea levels have risen, and snow and ice cover has decreased at the poles and on mountain glaciers. The results have included changes to the seasons, such as a longer growing season, that has also affected some animal and plant habitats and their ranges. Without changes to the trends in climate change, surface temperatures are expected to increase anywhere from 1.4 to 5.8 degrees Fahrenheit by the end of the century.⁷

Most importantly, increases in global warming would be expected to result in more extreme precipitation and faster evaporation of water, disrupting water supplies, energy supply and demand, agriculture, forestry, natural habitat, outdoor recreation, air quality, and public health. Climate change also affects public health because the higher temperatures result in more air pollutant emissions, increased smog, and associated respiratory disease and heart-related illnesses. Increasing temperatures threaten to erode the dramatic improvements in Bay Area air quality achieved over the past 50 years.⁸

⁶ Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), <http://www.baaqmd.gov/Divisions/Planning-and-Research/Climate-Protection-Program/Science-of-Climate-Change.aspx> and BAAQMD, *Source Inventory Of Bay Area Greenhouse Gas Emissions – Base Year 2007*, February 2010, p. 3.

⁷ Ibid. ("Science of Climate Change" webpage)

⁸ Ibid. (same as above)

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District's *CEQA Air Quality Guidelines* provides thresholds of significance for assessing the impacts of land use proposals and plans on greenhouse gases. Under these thresholds, a general plan's operational-related annual GHG emissions are deemed to be *less than cumulatively significant* if the project meets any of three thresholds: 1) it is in a community with an adopted "Qualified Climate Action Plan" and the project conforms with that Plan (and its qualified "GHG Reduction Strategy"); 2) its quantified emissions are 1,100 metric tons per year (MT/yr) or less of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e); or 3) it is a mixed-use project with quantified emissions of 4.6 MT/yr of CO₂e or less per service population (i.e., including residents and employees). If a Climate Action Plan has not been adopted, *and* the project would exceed one of the two quantified thresholds, the project would be considered as having a *cumulatively significant impact* on global climate change.⁹

Impacts: The Design Standards as proposed do not modify the development approval process for residential construction proposals, nor do they alter aspects of any development proposal that would contribute to emissions of greenhouse gases. They would not increase or decrease traffic volumes, traffic congestion, or stationary source emissions of greenhouse gases. **The proposed Design Standards would have no impact on air quality in the Bay Area region.**

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is required.

⁹ Bay Area Air Quality Management District, California Environmental Quality Act – Air Quality Guidelines, June 2010, pp. 2-1 to 2-3, including Table 2-1.

<p>6. CULTURAL RESOURCES Would the project:</p>	<p>YES: Potentially Significant Impact</p>	<p>NO: Less Than Significant With Mitigation</p>	<p>NO: Less Than Significant Impact</p>	<p>NO: No Impact</p>
<p>a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines?</p>				<p>✗</p>
<p>b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines?</p>				<p>✗</p>
<p>c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?</p>				<p>✗</p>
<p>d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?</p>				<p>✗</p>

Setting: The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, 1970, as amended, Section 21084.1) identifies historic resources as those listed in or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historic Resources, based on a range of criteria, such as association with events or patterns of events that have made significant contributions to broad patterns of historical development in the United States or California, including local, regional, or specific cultural patterns (California Register Criterion 1). Alternatively, structures which are directly associated with important persons in the history of the state or the country (Criterion 2), which embody the distinctive characteristics of type, period or other aesthetic importance (Criterion 3), or which have the potential to reveal important information about the prehistory or history of the state or the nation (such as archaeological sites) may qualify as a historic resource (Criterion 4). In addition to meeting at least one of the above criteria, structures must typically be over 50 years old (a state guideline rather than a statutory requirement) and have retained sufficient historic integrity to be clearly evident as a historic resource through a combination of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association with historic patterns. The definition of “integrity” in this context is based on criteria established by the National Register of Historic Places, which include, in basic terms, historical patterns and events (Criterion A), association with important persons in the past (Criterion B) and distinctive characteristics unique to a type, period, style, method of construction, the work of a recognizable master builder, or possessing high artistic value (Criterion C).

The County of Alameda has a number of historic structures and sites that are found in the program area. These are currently identified on a case-by case basis based on age, historical and cultural significance, prior ownership or occupancy, architectural significance and integrity, and resource quality. These resources may include homes, businesses, industrial buildings, utility buildings, accessory structures, farm structures, historic sites, archaeological sites and any location where evidence or historic or prehistoric occupancy can be determined by evidence.

The County of Alameda is also preparing a Historic Preservation Ordinance, which will establish an Alameda County Register of Historic Resources, as a comprehensive, county-wide listing of historic properties, for which demolition or substantial alteration that alters its historic significance would be a significant adverse environmental impact.

The West County and Castro Valley Canyonland areas of the County contain many areas in which archaeological resources have been documented, which has been summarized in the County's publication *Archaeology in Alameda County: A Handbook for Planners* (1976). The Handbook includes a map that identifies extreme, high, moderate, and low levels of archaeological sensitivity throughout the County based on known sites and professional interpretation of natural features. The map in the *Handbook* identifies several areas in the Castro Valley Canyonlands and throughout the East County as having higher "extreme" and "high" levels of archaeological sensitivity.¹⁰ These areas of the County are known to have been inhabited by native peoples speaking the Chochenyo language, related to the Costanoan family of languages that extended from the Delta south to the Monterey area. Grazing under the control of Mission San Jose (in the Fremont area) was widespread in the East County by the late 1700s, which continued with a similar Spanish-Mexican influence under five large ranchos that continued until the mid-1800s with California statehood.¹¹

Impacts: The proposed Residential Design Standards and Guidelines would neither contribute to new growth or development that could displace historic or cultural resources, nor require the alteration of historic structures. The Standards would only be applied to construction approved as a result of other processes already in place, those processes being subject to normal review and approval by various decision-making bodies or the Planning Director. If a proposed development were to affect such resources, any required mitigation would be made a condition of approval / provision of reclassification before any plans were submitted to which these Standards would be applied, and remaining historic structures would be protected prior to approval from any significant alterations to their integrity. **No significant impacts to historic or cultural resources would occur if these Standards are implemented.**

Mitigation Measures. No mitigation is required.

¹⁰ Alameda County Planning Department, *Archaeology in Alameda County: A Handbook for Planners*, October, 1976. Map.

¹¹ Alameda County Planning Department, *Draft Environmental Impact Report, East County Area Plan*, June 1993, p. 5-9.1

7. GEOLOGY AND SOILS Would the project:	YES: Potentially Significant Impact	NO: Less Than Significant With Mitigation	NO: Less Than Significant Impact	NO: No Impact
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				x
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.				x
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?				x
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?				x
iv) Landslides?				x
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?				x
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?				x
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?				x
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?				x

Setting: Alameda County, like most places in California, is subject to seismicity and associated affects of seismic groundshaking. Many places in the County will experience surface rupture, liquefaction and landslide effects during seismic events. Moreover, other geotechnical hazards may be present on a proposed development site, and in many cases, these hazards must be determined by geotechnical studies.

The areas proposed for application of the standards, including all residentially designated or zoned areas of the West County along with mixed use areas, would be subject to the effects of seismicity, and some of them may involve erosive topsoil, lateral spreading and expansive soils.

Nearly all areas of the West County to which these Residential Design Standards would apply are served by sanitary sewer systems, although a few peripheral areas may not yet be served and would require septic or engineered wastewater systems for residential development.

Impacts: Seismic safety in building design and construction is managed by application of the Uniform Building Code (UBC) in California, which is used by Alameda County for building plan approval. UBC application allows structures to be built to a high standard that will help to ensure that structural damage is minimized in the event of an earthquake. The UBC would be applied to all potentially habitable structures in the County regardless of whether the Residential Design Standards are applied to new

development or not, and so **no impact would occur to seismic safety of structures or site design if the Standards are applied.**

The need for geotechnical studies to ensure safe construction would not change if the Residential Design Standards are adopted and implemented; **no impacts would occur simply as a result of application of these Standards on development located on expansive soils or unstable geological units.** The safety of these sites would need to be managed either way.

The application of these proposed Residential Design Standards to any residential structures would have no effect on density, population or soil compatibility, and thus would have **no effect on the need for septic systems or sanitary sewer systems.**

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is required.

<p>8. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS Would the project:</p>	YES: Potentially Significant Impact	NO: Less Than Significant With Mitigation	NO: Less Than Significant Impact	NO: No Impact
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?				x
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?				x
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?				x
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?				x
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 in the project area?				x
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?				x
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				x
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?				x

Setting: Hazardous materials are used in the building industry in construction of residential units and other buildings. Hazardous materials are used in carpeting, furnishings and construction materials. Once occupied, residential units usually contain small quantities of hazardous materials of one or more kinds, including paints, pesticides, lawn chemicals, cosmetics and various other materials.

The areas contain a significant number of school sites to which proposals for residential construction may be adjacent. Airports include Hayward Executive Airport and the Helipads at various medical centers and hospitals. Some known hazardous materials sites exist in the area.

Impacts: The application of the new Residential Design Standards would not alter the use or presence of hazardous materials in construction or occupancy, would not increase the risk of fire or aircraft hazards, would not modify the spatial relationship of the development to a school site, would not alter the risk of hazardous material release through either an accident or site construction, and would not interfere with any adopted emergency plans. **There would be no impacts of this proposal on issues related to hazards or hazardous materials.**

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is required.

<p>9. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY Would the project:</p>	<p>YES: Potentially Significant Impact</p>	<p>NO: Less Than Significant With Mitigation</p>	<p>NO: Less Than Significant Impact</p>	<p>NO: No Impact</p>
<p>a) Violate any water quality standards, conflict with water quality objectives, fail to meet waste discharge requirements, significantly degrade any surface water body or groundwater, or adversely affect the beneficial uses of such waters, including public uses and aquatic, wetland and riparian habitat?</p>				<p>x</p>
<p>b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?</p>				<p>x</p>
<p>c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site (i.e. within a watershed)?</p>				<p>x</p>
<p>d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff (e.g., due to increased impervious surfaces) in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site (i.e. within a watershed)?</p>				<p>x</p>
<p>e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems due to changes in runoff flow rates or volumes?</p>				<p>x</p>
<p>f) Result in a significant increase in pollutant discharges to receiving waters (marine, fresh, and/or wetlands) during or following construction (considering water quality parameters such as temperature, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, and typical stormwater pollutants such as heavy metals, pathogens, petroleum derivatives, synthetic organics, sediment, nutrients, oxygen-demanding substances, and trash)?</p>				<p>x</p>
<p>g) Result in an increase in any pollutant for which a water body is listed as impaired under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act?</p>				<p>x</p>
<p>h) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?</p>				<p>x</p>
<p>i) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?</p>				<p>x</p>

<p>9. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY Would the project:</p>	<p>YES: Potentially Significant Impact</p>	<p>NO: Less Than Significant With Mitigation</p>	<p>NO: Less Than Significant Impact</p>	<p>NO: No Impact</p>
<p>j) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?</p>				<p>x</p>
<p>k) Inundation by seiche, tsunامي, or mudflow?</p>				<p>x</p>

Setting: The developed urban and suburban areas of Alameda County contain a variety of creeks, and surface and underground stormwater drainage systems, which serve a wide range of purposes, from sustaining the ecological quality of soil, plant and animal life, to handling stormwater runoff, storing water for municipal and industrial purposes, restoring groundwater and natural aquifers, recreation, and aesthetic values. All of the creeks in the Castro Valley and Eden areas flow westerly towards San Francisco Bay from the East Bay Hills. The Castro Valley Canyonlands drain along its creeks – Cull, Crow, Palomares and Eden Canyon Creeks, primarily – and then into San Lorenzo Creek, that flows along the south side of Castro Valley towards the Bay.

To prevent flooding and ensure rapid draining of stormwater from the County’s urban areas, many of Alameda County’s creeks were altered and replaced with engineered channels, with concrete sides and bottoms, and many smaller creeks exist only as underground box culverts. The Alameda County Flood Control District (ACFCD) was created in 1949 to provide flood control services for the County, and it owns and manages the larger, engineered creek channels, as well as many smaller channels and almost all stormwater drainage pipes. A few isolated natural stretches of creeks remain in the urban, suburban and semi-rural areas of the County, but the largest stretches of natural or unaltered, un-engineered creeks are in the more remote or rural agricultural areas of the County.

In rural areas much of the rainfall is absorbed into groundwater, where it flows to natural springs or creek banks and aquifers, but there are also few obstacles or filters to prevent the inflow of larger pieces of trash, debris, loose earth or other contaminants if such material is located in close proximity to a creek. In the urban and suburban areas, streets, pavements and rooftops are closely spaced, and these hard surfaces may substantially affect the rate of runoff and the passage of pollution, trash and debris into creeks, and the resulting downstream water quality.

To protect and improve water quality, minimize flooding and in general provide better management of water resources in California and the United States, state and federal laws have respectively evolved over the past 40 years, since the passage of the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act of 1969 in California and the Clean Water Act (CWA) in 1972 by the U.S. Congress. Both of these laws have been amended over time to provide local agencies the authority to achieve those objectives. The principle objective of the federal CWA is to reduce or eliminate water pollution in the nation’s rivers, streams, lakes, and coastal waters, with laws regulating discharges of pollutants from industrial sources, municipal sources (including storm drain systems and outfalls from sewage treatment systems), agriculture (fertilizers, plant and animal waste, etc.), and setting minimum water quality standards for all “waters of the United States” (as defined very specifically in the CWA). One of the key functions of the CWA is the National Pollutant Discharge

Elimination System (NPDES) Permit system, which is the main framework for regulating storm water discharges.¹²

The Porter-Cologne Act, which represents the California Water Code, gives the Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs) the responsibility for adopting, implementing, and enforcing regional water quality control plans (Basin Plans), which set forth the water quality standards of the state and the objectives or criteria necessary to protect those beneficial uses within defined regions, such as the San Francisco Bay region. That region includes the project area of Alameda County. The California Water Code (Section 13220) formally gives authority to the RWQCBs to issue NPDES permits to counties and large cities for each of the three main categories of potential pollution sources: construction, industry, and municipal facilities including stormwater systems and treated sewage. Most private development in unincorporated Alameda County falls under construction and the General Permit for Discharges of Storm Water Associated with Construction Activity. Construction activity that disturbs one or more acres of soil – or less than an acre but which is part of a larger development – are required to obtain coverage under the General Permit. The permit is based on a project's overall risk and requires measures to prevent erosion and reduce sediment and other pollutants in their discharges.

The General Construction Permit requires the preparation and implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) for construction activities. The SWPPP must be prepared and approved by the Alameda County Public Works Agency (PWA) before construction begins. The Grading Department, within the PWA, has the authority under the County's NPDES program to require revisions to the SWPPP. The SWPPP must include specifications for Best Management Practices (BMPs) to be implemented during project construction. BMPs are measures undertaken to control degradation of surface water by preventing soil erosion or the discharge of pollutants from the construction area. This General Permit is implemented and enforced by the nine California Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs).

Impacts: Given the fair assumption that the new Residential Design Standards and Guidelines would be applied to projects that would generally otherwise be approved under the existing requirements of the Zoning Ordinance and Specific Plans for given areas, the proposed Residential Standards would at worst have no impact upon water quality in conjunction with these approvals. The Residential Standards would apply to areas in which impermeable surfaces would already be proposed, and in some cases, though building massing guidelines and minimum landscape requirements, could result in less impermeable surface construction, better water infiltration and subsequent reductions in storm water flows and offsite contamination compared to the No Program scenario. Specific requirements for building and roofline appearance and configurations and parking requirements would not increase permeable surfaces, nor would they result in conditions that would alter or increase the amount of contamination that could be discharged to stormwater.

The new Residential Standards would not violate water quality standards or have any effect on groundwater quality or recharge. The Standards would not alter drainage patterns or place structures in a flood zone. They would not place people or property at any risk related to flood, seiche or tsunami. **No impacts would occur as a result of adoption and implementation of the Residential Design Standards and Guidelines.**

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is necessary.

12 State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Water Quality, *Construction General Permit Fact Sheet for 2009-0009-DWQ as amended by 2010-0014-DWQ*, September 2, 2009 as modified on November 16, 2010, p. 3.

<p>10. LAND USE AND PLANNING Would the project:</p>	<p>YES: Potentially Significant Impact</p>	<p>NO: Less Than Significant With Mitigation</p>	<p>NO: Less Than Significant Impact</p>	<p>NO: No Impact</p>
<p>a) Physically divide an established community.</p>				<p>x</p>
<p>b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?</p>			<p>x</p>	
<p>c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?</p>				<p>x</p>

Setting: The area to which these Residential Standards would apply comprises a combination of residential land uses ranging from single-family through multiple-family, including hillside, medium and small parcel residential, townhome and condominium, and a small number of areas where mixed use would be permitted. Land use and Zoning designations in these areas recognize and allow single family and suburban residential uses. All residential development and land uses must meet prescribed performance and development standards for their respective designations as set forth in the various Specific Plans and the Zoning Ordinance, unless otherwise modified by variance.

Several General Plan land use designations exist within the five planning areas affected by this project: San Lorenzo, Ashland, Cherryland, Fairview, and Castro Valley. The two General Plans at issue are the *Eden Area General Plan* and the *Castro Valley General Plan*. The Residential Design Standards and Guidelines are designed in part to implement the land use policies of developing updated design standards and guidelines found in these general plans.

Upon approval of these new residential design standards and guidelines, several County Planning documents would be revised to reflect the new standards, many of which would carry the force of law. Several of the residential zoning designations in the Zoning Ordinance would be revised to reflect the basic zoning requirements (setbacks, height limitations, parking regulation, etc), and several Specific Plans (which are documents intended to help implement the County General Plan) for areas within the overall unincorporated County would be revised to accommodate the new suggested design and development guidelines.

These would include:

- The Castro Valley Central Business District Specific Plan
- The Ashland Cherryland Business District Specific Plan
- The San Lorenzo Village Center Specific Plan
- The Madison Avenue Specific Plan
- The Fairview Area Specific Plan

Impacts: The adoption of the Residential Design Standards would not alter any land use descriptions, designations or zoning designations, and as such, would have no substantive effect on land use at any location. They would augment specific plans and the zoning ordinance to address the sometimes unwieldy design aspects of the larger variety of residential development styles being proposed in recent times, and provide planners, architects, engineers and other site design staff with both consistency of approach when looking at site design, and tools with enough range and specificity to enable each proposal to be complementary to its proposed site. With these standards, thoughtful site design would become a normal part of the analysis for these modern development styles, and provide the input necessary to ensure that each design would be neighborhood-appropriate in terms of height, façade design, building style, material types and textures, and parking requirements.

The appearance and layout of a site analyzed under the new Standards would undoubtedly be different, in many cases, compared to the same project developed without the standards. However, even as the design of the project changes, it would still adhere to the basic land use requirements of the General Plan and the implementing specific plans and/or zoning applicable to the site. **No changes to land use would occur, and onsite design considerations would have no effect on community boundaries or division.**

Likewise, the onsite design considerations would not affect any applicable habitat conservation plans or natural community conservation plans. These plans do not exist for the urban and suburban areas of the County, and even if they did, the residential design standards would have little bearing on the need to mitigate a project's effects on biological resources via such a plan.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is required.

11. MINERAL RESOURCES Would the project:	YES: Potentially Significant Impact	NO: Less Than Significant With Mitigation	NO: Less Than Significant Impact	NO: No Impact
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?				x
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?				x

Setting: The urban and suburban residential areas of the unincorporated county contain no known mineral resources of statewide or regional significance, either as shown on any state maps or as delineated in any County planning document.

Impacts: Adoption and implementation of the Residential Design Standards would have no impact on any known mineral resources.

Mitigation Measures: None are required.

12. NOISE Would the project result in:	YES: Potentially Significant Impact	NO: Less Than Significant With Mitigation	NO: Less Than Significant Impact	NO: No Impact
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?				x
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?				x
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?				x
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?				x
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 expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				x
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				x

Setting: The urban and suburban areas of the unincorporated County may be characterized as having noise of levels ranging from low in some fringe neighborhoods, to medium noise levels near collector streets, to higher levels on average near the major roadways in the area. Generally, new development may result in new noise that could disturb existing residents, such as added traffic noise, new outdoor activities, or commercial activities. Development may also result in the introduction of persons into environments with existing high noise levels. Temporary noise resulting from construction activity may also be significant.

The Alameda County Noise Element (a part of the County General Plan) establishes Countywide goals, objectives and principles (or policies) to protect residents against excessive, unnecessary and unreasonable noises, and promotes compatibility among land uses through protection of sensitive land uses from unwanted noise. Separate policies for unincorporated areas authorize the County to adopt regulations on noise pollution, including high noise levels, frequencies, and duration of noise. In general, however, the focus of the Noise Element is on incompatible land uses, and exposure of land uses to unwanted noise such as freeways.

Alameda County's Noise Ordinance prohibits specific noise levels of between 45 and 70 dBA from being exceeded for greater than specific numbers of minutes per hour depending on the receiving land use, with more limitations during nighttime than during daytime, and lower thresholds for noise exposure within commercial areas. For example, the exterior noise level for either a single- or multiple-family residence, school, hospital, church, public library, or commercial property may not exceed 60 dBA for more than 5 minutes in any one hour time period between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m., or 55 dBA for more than 15 minutes during the same time period. The Ordinance, however, exempts construction activities from such limits,

provided they are limited to the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. on weekdays, and between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.

Impacts: A certain amount of noise is associated with both new construction and with occupancy of residential units, in whatever form they take. The amount or nature of noise owing to either construction or occupancy may be related to the type of residential development being proposed, such as a large multifamily construction versus a single family residence. However, design detail and building layout in urban or suburban areas for a given type of construction project are not likely to cause significant variation in either the level or character of construction noise being generated; nor are these details going to result in changes in noise levels once the residential structures are occupied, whether from traffic generation or outdoor human activities. In effect, whether during construction or occupancy, the character and levels of noise would be virtually identical whether or not the new Design Standards are implemented. **Therefore, no impact to noise levels would result from adoption and implementation of the proposed Design Standards.**

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is required.

13. POPULATION AND HOUSING Would the project:	YES: Potentially Significant Impact	NO: Less Than Significant With Mitigation	NO: Less Than Significant Impact	NO: No Impact
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?				x
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				x
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				x

Setting: The population of unincorporated Alameda County as of the 2010 U.S. Census was 141,607, which includes the urbanized areas of Castro Valley, Ashland, Cherryland, San Lorenzo, Fairview, and Sunol, as well as numerous rural-residential and agricultural lands. Alameda County itself, including the major cities of Oakland, Alameda, San Leandro, Hayward, Fremont, etc., had a reported population of over ten times that value – 1.51 million. The major cities and portions of the unincorporated areas are relatively dense overall, with density ranges from medium to very high density.

Impacts: The proposed Residential Design Standards, which would have jurisdiction over only those planning areas of Castro Valley, Ashland, Cherryland, San Lorenzo, and Fairview, would require additional consideration of site design for aesthetic and functional purposes, but would have essentially no effect on density or population, with no impact on the growth rate of either the urbanized or rural areas of Alameda County. No housing would be displaced, and there would be **no impact** on housing supply or demand, or displacement of any persons.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is required.

14. PUBLIC SERVICES Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the following public services:	YES: Potentially Significant Impact	NO: Less Than Significant With Mitigation	NO: Less Than Significant Impact	NO: No Impact
a) Fire protection?				x
b) Police protection?				x
c) Schools?				x
d) Parks?				x
e) Other public facilities?				x

Setting: Fire protection in the County is provided by the Alameda County Fire Department, which has a wide range of fire stations and equipment spread throughout the unincorporated areas of the County. Fire protection and risk management also includes provision of services related to hazardous materials, paramedic services, urban search and rescue, fire prevention, and public education. Prevention of fires, accidents and injuries before they occur is accomplished through fire prevention, building code enforcement, and public education. The Department operates 2 battalions, 16 fire stations, 16 engine companies, and 4 ladder truck companies. It also provides for review of Site Development Review proposals and Building Permits to ensure fire protection is adequate. The Department has agreements for mutual cooperation with cities in the area, as well as with the State Department of Forestry

Law enforcement in the area is provided by the Alameda County Sherriff’s Office, which also has a number of substations in the area. The Sheriff’s Office provides numerous other services, including operations of the County Office of Emergency Services, operating the two County jails, Coroner services, and other duties.

The County is served by a variety of school districts; in the program area, school providers include the Castro Valley Unified School District (CVUSD), the San Lorenzo Unified School District (SLUSD), and the Hayward Unified School District (HUSD).

Park facilities in the County are provided by a mixture of park districts, primarily including the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) and the Hayward Area Recreation and Park District (HARD) that serves Hayward and the unincorporated areas of Castro Valley, Ashland, Cherryland, Fairview, and San Lorenzo. There are no State or National Parks in the program area.

Other public services in the County may include government services such as roadway development and maintenance, which is provided by the County Public Works Agency, Social Services, Environmental Health Services including Vector Control, and Agricultural Inspection and Planning services.

All of these services would experience impacts to demand for services if a program were to result in increases in population, density, developed area, and traffic.

Impacts: The Residential Design Standards would modify the appearance and configuration of proposed residential development of certain types in specific areas already zoned or planned for residential use. It would neither vary the area dedicated to residential development, nor would it result in increases to

density of development or population. The proposed Residential Design Standards would not increase or accelerate residential development, would not increase population or density, and would not increase traffic or congestion. Therefore, public services would be unaffected by the adoption of the proposed Design Standards, and **no impact would occur.**

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is required.

<p>15. RECREATION Would the project:</p>	<p>YES: Potentially Significant Impact</p>	<p>NO: Less Than Significant With Mitigation</p>	<p>NO: Less Than Significant Impact</p>	<p>NO: No Impact</p>
<p>a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?</p>				<p>x</p>
<p>b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?</p>				<p>x</p>

Setting: For community parklands, the program areas are served by the Hayward Area Recreation District (HARD). Open space parklands that serve the area are under the jurisdiction of the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD). Each park district operates several parks within or near the program area that provide outdoor recreational opportunities for residents of the unincorporated area of the County.

Impacts: The proposed Design Standards would require additional consideration of site design for aesthetic and functional purposes, but would have essentially no effect on density or population, with no impact on the growth rate of either the urbanized or rural areas of Alameda County. Since demand for recreation depends primarily on local population, with increases in demand commensurate with population growth, no increase in demand for recreational sites is expected from the adoption of these Standards, and **no impact is expected.**

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is required.

<p>16. TRANSPORTATION Would the project:</p>	<p>YES: Potentially Significant Impact</p>	<p>NO: Less Than Significant With Mitigation</p>	<p>NO: Less Than Significant Impact</p>	<p>NO: No Impact</p>
<p>a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?</p>				<p>x</p>
<p>b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?</p>				<p>x</p>
<p>c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?</p>				<p>x</p>
<p>d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?</p>				<p>x</p>
<p>e) Result in inadequate emergency access?</p>				<p>x</p>
<p>f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?</p>				<p>x</p>

Setting: The urban and suburban residentially zoned areas of unincorporated Alameda County are served by an extensive network of roadways, highways, transit services and other circulation modes. The applicable plans include the Eden Area General Plan and the Castro Valley General Plan, as well as the Bay Area’s Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Congestion Management Program (CMP) managed by the Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC). The Alameda Countywide Transportation Plan (CWTP) provides a strategy for meeting transportation needs, and identifies projects and improvements for new and existing freeway components, local streets and roads, public transit (paratransit, buses, rails, ferries) and facilities and programs to support bicycling and walking. Projects are required to be in the Countywide Transportation Plan to qualify for funding on the regional, state and national level. The ACTC is also responsible for implementing the Countywide Bicycle Plan and Countywide Pedestrian Plan, both of which are currently being updated.¹³

Alameda County residents and workers have many ways of getting around. Most (83%) of all trips to, from, or within the County are made by automobile, but almost half of all daily driving trips are made in

¹³ http://www.alamedactc.org/app_pages/view/795 The ACTC was formerly the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency or ACCMA, before it merged with the Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority (ACTIA) in 2010.

carpools (defined as vehicles with more than one occupant). Another 17% are made by transit, bicycling, or walking. These percentages are similar to Bay Area regional averages.

Impacts: Trip Generation. A certain amount of traffic trip generation is associated with both new construction and with occupancy of residential units, in whatever form they take. The amount or nature of trip generation owing to either construction or occupancy may be related to the type of residential development being proposed, such as a large multifamily construction versus a single family residence. However, design detail and building layout in urban or suburban areas for a given type of construction project are not likely to cause significant variation in either the level or character of construction trip generation being generated; nor are these details going to result in changes in traffic trip levels once the residential structures are occupied. In effect, whether during construction or occupancy, the character and levels of trip generation would be virtually identical whether or not the new Residential Design Standards are implemented. No net trip generation (or reduction thereof) would result from adoption of the Residential Design Standards.

The proposed Residential Design Standards would not conflict with any applicable plans, ordinances, or policies establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system. It would not affect any segment of the transportation system at all, but would be focused solely on the issue of onsite design. Likewise, the Standards would have a neutral effect on any congestion management program currently in place, or that can be reasonably envisioned.

The Standards would result in no changes to air traffic patterns or volumes; would result in no hazards to any segment of the total transportation system; would not impede emergency access; and would not conflict with any plans or programs that support alternative transportation systems. In short, it would have either no or a neutral effect on all of these criteria, **and would thus result in no impact.**

Therefore, no impact to traffic or transportations would result from adoption and implementation of the proposed Residential Design Standards.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is required.

17. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS Would the project:	YES: Potentially Significant Impact	NO: Less Than Significant With Mitigation	NO: Less Than Significant Impact	NO: No Impact
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?				x
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?				x
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?				x
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?				x
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?				x
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?				x
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?				x

Setting: The San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board (SFRWQCB) is one of the various State Water Boards, and along with its other responsibilities, establishes standards for the generation of wastewater to and from wastewater treatment facilities, regulates the discharge of industrial pollutants into treatment facilities, and requires such facilities to meet specific standards for water discharged into San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Ocean. The Environmental Health Department of the Alameda County Health Services Agency oversees and inspects septic and leach field systems, which are utilized in a few areas of the Castro Valley Canyonlands; the Health Department is responsible for ensuring that each such system complies with the Water Board requirements, and that the way they are located, designed, constructed, and operated effectively to prevent surfacing or percolating of sewage effluent in a manner that could adversely affect public health or safety. Otherwise, sanitary sewer service is provided by either the Castro Valley Sanitary District, the Oro Loma Sanitary District, or the City of Hayward.

The Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (ACFCWCD) manages the construction and maintenance of storm water drainage facilities. The East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) manages water delivery to the urban and suburban areas of Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. The Castro Valley Canyonlands rely on on-site groundwater pumping for water supply and have no public water connection. Stormwater in the area flows generally into open creeks and water bodies, but may pass through or into improved downstream water channels such as Castro Valley Creek, San Lorenzo Creek, or Sulfur Creek.

The ACWMA's Solid Waste Management Plan (currently identified as the *Integrated Waste Management Plan* (IWMP) identifies solid waste facilities and "wastesheds" within the County, and how the county will reach a state-mandated goal of 50% recycling, and a county-mandated goal of 75% recycling. Waste reduction and disposal facilities in the County that require Solid Waste Facility Permits must conform to policies and siting criteria contained in the IWMP. The IWMP includes, by reference, source reduction and recycling elements, household hazardous waste elements and non-disposal facility elements for each city and the unincorporated county area, as well as a plan that describes countywide diversion programs and landfill disposal needs. The IWMP was first adopted in 1997 and most recently amended in January 2011.

Alameda County is served by three active permitted landfills: the Altamont Landfill and Resource Recovery Facility, the Vasco Road Landfill, and the Tri-Cities Recycling and Disposal Facility in Fremont. The total remaining permitted capacity for all three landfills is over 110 million cubic yards, which generally translates to several decades of remaining capacity as of the date of this report.

Impacts: Some amount of new demand for services and utilities is associated with both new construction and with occupancy of residential units, in whatever form they take. The amount or nature of demand for services and utilities owing to either construction or occupancy may be related to the type of residential development being proposed, such as a large multifamily construction versus a single family residence. However, design detail and building layout in urban or suburban areas for a given type of construction project are not likely to cause significant variation in either the level or character of demand for services and utilities being generated; nor are these details going to result in changes demand for services and utilities once the residential structures are occupied. In effect, whether during construction or occupancy, the character and levels of demand for services and utilities would be virtually identical whether or not the new Residential Design Standards are implemented. No net increase in demand for services and utilities (or reduction thereof) would result from adoption of the Residential Design Standards. **Therefore, no impact to demand for any services or utilities would result from adoption and implementation of the proposed Residential Design Standards.**

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is required.

18. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE	YES: Potentially Significant Impact	NO: Less Than Significant With Mitigation	NO: Less Than Significant Impact	NO: No Impact
a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?				x
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)				x
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?				x

Discussion: For none of the above findings does the proposed set of Residential Design Standards present the possibility of a significant impact. The Residential Design Standards and Guidelines proposed would prescribe elements of design, massing, configuration and appearance of residential structures on individual properties already zoned and planned for development. The Residential Standards and Guidelines would not increase building footprints or introduce elements or materials into the environment that are not already permitted. The Standards would not affect population, density, traffic, offsite stormwater flows or pollutant emissions that could migrate offsite into the environment. The Standards do not result in any permission to seek additional development opportunities in biologically or otherwise environmentally sensitive areas. The cumulative effects of these guidelines would be confined to the collective effect of improved site design and appearance for modern types of residential development, and the effect would not be adverse.

E. MITIGATION MEASURES TO BE INCLUDED IN THE PROJECT AND AGREED TO BY THE PROJECT SPONSOR AND ALL SUBSEQUENT PROPERTY OWNERS AND PERMITTEES

No mitigation is identified in the body of this study, and therefore the project sponsor (the County) certifies that no mitigation is required for the approval and implementation of the proposed Residential Design Standards and Guidelines.