

**COMSTOCK HOMES DEVELOPMENT AND  
ELLWOOD MESA OPEN SPACE PLAN FEIR**

**4.13 NOISE**

Section 4.13

Noise

This section describes the existing noise levels in the study area for the proposed Comstock Homes Development and Ellwood Mesa Open Space Plan areas, assesses potential noise-related impacts, and recommends mitigation measures to reduce impacts.

**4.13.1 Existing Conditions**

**4.13.1.1 Roadway Noise**

**4.13.1.1.1 Comstock Homes Development Site.** The major noise source in the vicinity of the proposed Comstock Homes Development is roadway traffic on Hollister Avenue to the north and, to a lesser extent, U.S. Highway 101, which is located an additional 900 feet to the north. The most common approach to describe varying noise levels is to define the Equivalent Noise Level (Leq) for a specific period of time. The Leq is a single value that represents the same total sound energy as a varying noise during the same time period. Leq values are usually computed for one-hour periods, but longer or shorter time periods may be specified. Roadway noise is evaluated as the Day-Night Average Noise Level (Ldn), expressed as decibels using the “A” weighted frequency distribution that duplicates the response of the human ear (abbreviated as dBA). The Ldn is a 24-hour average noise level based on hourly equivalent noise levels during the daytime and nighttime periods. The measure includes an adjustment or penalty of an extra 10 decibels during the nighttime hours to account for the added nuisance of noise during this period. The Ldn is very similar to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL), which includes an additional penalty for noise during the evening hours. Results computed with these two methods usually agree to within a decibel or two, and these two noise descriptors are often used interchangeably.

Noise measurements were made for a period of 30 minutes along Hollister Avenue on the project site on November 10, 2003, along with traffic counts and other observations (see Appendix C, Table C-1: Location 5). Two modeling procedures were also used to estimate the noise level from the traffic counts obtained. These were the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) noise estimating procedure (Barry and Regan, 1978), and the Caltrans SOUND32 model (Wood and Hendricks, 1983), which is based on the FHWA procedure. Details of the measurements, observations, model inputs, and model outputs are included in Appendix C. For the period of the noise measurements, the results of the procedures are summarized as follows:

- Measured Leq                                63.9 dBA
- FHWA computed Leq                        64.5 dBA
- SOUND32 computed Leq                  64.4 dBA

These results show that the modeling procedures agree very closely with one another, as expected since they use the same computational procedures, and that both slightly overestimate the noise level when compared with the actual measured value.

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Based on an existing average daily traffic (ADT) volume of 6,500 on Hollister Avenue adjacent to the project site, the CNEL at 50 feet from the center of the roadway is estimated to be approximately 66 dBA using the FHWA procedure. U.S. Highway 101 also contributes to noise levels in the area, but it is separated from the project site by a distance of 900 feet, which includes some buildings and topographic barriers. For these reasons, Hollister Avenue is the dominant noise source affecting the property. The 65 dBA CNEL contour from Hollister Avenue extends just into the northern area of the property – about 60 feet from the centerline of Hollister Avenue. In the general areas of the proposed homesites and yards within the project area closest to Hollister Avenue, the existing CNEL values range from a high of 64 dBA down to around 58 dBA.

**4.13.1.1.2 Coronado Butterfly Preserve.** The northernmost panhandle of the Coronado Butterfly Preserve is affected by noise from Hollister Avenue as described above for the Comstock Homes Development site. Noise levels (CNEL) 50 feet from the center of the roadway are about 66 dBA. The 65 dBA CNEL noise contour extends approximately 60 feet into the property. The central area of the preserve is well removed from major roadway noise sources, and is bordered by rows of houses on three sides that shield it from distant noise sources. Noise levels within this portion of the preserve are probably in the 50 dBA range that is typical of quiet suburban areas.

**4.13.1.1.3 Phelps Ditch Trail.** The Phelps Ditch Trail is well separated from major sources of roadway noise. As shown in Appendix C (Table C-2), the CNEL from current traffic along Phelps Road in this area (west of Pacific Oaks Road) is 59 dBA at a distance of 50 feet from the center of the roadway.

**4.13.1.1.4 Ellwood Mesa Open Space Plan Area.** The northernmost end of the proposed Ellwood Mesa Open Space Plan area is adjacent to the proposed Comstock Homes site discussed above. This land is affected by noise from Hollister Avenue, which causes a CNEL of 66 dBA at 50 feet from the center of the roadway. The 65 dBA CNEL noise contour extends about 60 feet from the centerline, or about 40 feet into the northern end of the proposed Ellwood Mesa Open Space Plan area. The remaining portions of the proposed Ellwood Mesa Open Space Plan area exhibit quieter noise levels.

### 4.13.1.2 Train Noise

**4.13.1.2.1 Comstock Homes Development Site.** The Union Pacific Railroad line is located approximately 800 feet north of the project. Past noise measurements performed near the railroad tracks (URS, 2003a) are summarized in Table 4.13-1.

The County of Santa Barbara Noise Element notes that maximum noise levels from passing trains reaches about 96 dBA at about 100 feet from the tracks (County of Santa Barbara, 1986:37). This generally agrees with the results listed in Table 4.13-1. The duration of a train passage lasts from around 40 seconds for a fast passenger train to 2-4 minutes for freight trains. The Leq during the time when the train is passing is less than the maximum value cited above,

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and typically ranges from 70 dBA to 80 dBA at a distance of 100 feet. The average CNEL values at 100 feet from the tracks are between 70 and 75 dBA. The distance to the 65 dBA CNEL contour would range from 316 to 1,000 feet. At a distance of 800 feet, the CNEL values from the train operations would range from 61 to 66 dBA. Besides distance alone, there are some intervening houses and other buildings so the actual train CNEL values at the Comstock Homes Development site are somewhat lower, and likely below 65 dBA.

**Table 4.13-1. Railroad Noise Measured from the  
Union Pacific Railroad Near the Property<sup>1</sup>**

Parameter	Amtrak Passenger Train	Freight Train
Distance	30 feet	30 feet
Peak Noise Level	104 dBA	109.5 dBA
Peak at 100 ft	93.5 dBA	99 dBA
Peak at 800 ft.	75.5 dBA	81 dBA
Approx. Duration	15 seconds (most in 4 sec.)	1 minute, 48 seconds

<sup>1</sup> Source: URS, 2003.

For a variety of reasons, the Noise Element explains that train noise levels are generally not expected to change much over time (County of Santa Barbara, 1986:37). Amtrak service is regularly scheduled, but freight trains are not. At the time the Noise Element was prepared, Amtrak ran two passenger trains per day and there were an average of 12 freight trains per day using the route. There are now four daily scheduled passenger trains on this route, but the overall number of rail operations has not changed dramatically. An informal survey in the summer of 2001 confirmed that the daily traffic along the Union Pacific Railroad typically included six to eight freight trains and four passenger trains. Changes in train equipment also affect noise levels, but not to a major degree. While new locomotives are somewhat quieter, most train noise originates from the wheel-rail interaction of the cars. Thus, the railroad noise discussion summarized from the Noise Element remains applicable to the current conditions on the property.

**4.13.1.2.2 Coronado Butterfly Preserve.** As with roadway noise, the northernmost panhandle of this area is affected by train noise from the Union Pacific Railroad tracks, about 800 feet north of Hollister Avenue. At this point near Hollister Avenue, the CNEL from the railroad operations would be reduced to 61 to 66 dBA by distance alone. Additional shielding provided by the intervening houses and Ellwood School buildings further reduces the train noise at this northerly panhandle location. Within the larger rectangular portion of the preserve, the shielding provided by the surrounding homes, and the distance from all noise sources, result in fairly quiet noise levels less than 55 dBA.

**4.13.1.2.3 Phelps Ditch Trail.** Distance from the train tracks, and shielding provided by intervening houses combine to greatly reduce train noise levels on this parcel. While roadway noise measurements were being performed along Phelps Road adjacent to this site, a train

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*Section 4.13* passed and was heard. Although the sound could be distinguished, it was not loud enough to  
*Noise* materially alter the measured noise levels and was very similar to the peaks in the traffic noise. This is illustrated in Appendix C, in Table C-1, Location 4.

**4.13.1.2.4 Ellwood Mesa Open Space Plan Area.** Similar to the proposed Comstock Homes Development site, the northern portion of this open space area experiences CNEL values from the Union Pacific Railroad that range from 61 to 66 dBA. Approximately 200 feet into the northern boundary, the CNEL values would drop to a range of 60 to 65 dBA.

### **4.13.1.3 Aircraft Noise**

**4.13.1.3.1 Comstock Homes Development Site.** The Santa Barbara Airport is located approximately 2.5 miles to the east of the proposed Comstock Homes Development site. Runway 7-25 is oriented east-west and is the primary runway used by commercial flights at the airport. Most departures use runway 25, and fly toward the west, passing over the property, or turn to the south before reaching this area. The most recently published CNEL noise contours for the Santa Barbara Airport are presented in the EIR for the Aviation Facilities Plan (City of Santa Barbara, 2001).

Figure 4.13-1 shows the aircraft CNEL contours – or lines of equal noise level – in the vicinity of the project site. It may be noted that these noise contours are less extensive than previously published results in the Airport Land Use Plan (Santa Barbara County Association of Governments, 1993) and the Goleta Community Plan (County of Santa Barbara, 1983). The primary reason for the reduction in noise levels is the advent of quieter stage 2 and stage 3 aircraft in use by the airlines now serving the Santa Barbara Airport. The airport management has also implemented a noise abatement program that provides information and direction to pilots of private and commercial aircraft on minimizing adverse ground level noise.

The proposed Comstock Homes Development site is located approximately 4,500 feet west of the western point of the 60 dBA CNEL contour for the airport. Although this location is well outside of the 60 dBA CNEL contour and nearly 2 miles from the western edge of the airport itself, it is still possible to hear aircraft departing toward the west. Typical aircraft overflight noise levels measured at this distance from the airport range from 60 to 65 dBA for short periods – on the order of several seconds. Peak noise levels from aircraft can be somewhat higher. Because of the relatively short duration of these events, they do not have a marked effect on the longer-term noise metrics such as the hourly equivalent noise level, or the Ldn or CNEL.

Overflights of the Comstock Homes Development could result in a noise issue for residents, and the proposed residential development is in the instrument approach path of Runway 7, beyond the one-mile marker.

**4.13.1.3.2 Coronado Butterfly Preserve.** The central portion of this open space area is located approximately 1,500 feet west of the western point of the 60 dBA CNEL contour from

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**Figure 4.13-1**



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the airport (refer to Figure 4.13-1). As discussed above, periodic noise from aircraft overflights can typically reach 60 to 65 dBA or higher for periods of several seconds in this general area.

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**4.13.1.3.3 Phelps Ditch Trail.** This parcel is located just outside of the 60 dBA CNEL contour of the airport (refer to Figure 4.13-1), and is approximately 1 mile from the departure end of runway 25. Typical aircraft overflight noise in this area may range from 70 to 75 dBA for durations of several seconds to just under 1 minute. Because of the relatively low volume of traffic on the adjacent Phelps Road, aircraft noise is a more important influence on this parcel.

**4.13.1.3.4 Ellwood Mesa Open Space Plan Area.** At its closest point, along its easterly boundary, this proposed Open Space area is about 3,000 feet outside of the 60 dBA CNEL contour of the Santa Barbara Airport (refer to Figure 4.13-1). As with the other parcels in the area, this area is also subject to noise from aircraft departing towards the west from the Santa Barbara Airport. For relatively short periods ranging from several seconds to less than 1 minute, aircraft noise levels may range generally from 60 to 65 dBA in this area.

### 4.13.2 Regulatory Framework

#### 4.13.2.1 Federal Authorities and Administering Agencies

The Environmental Protection Agency has set noise standards. In addition, the Federal Aviation Administration sets noise limits for commercial aircraft (14CFR Part 36) and does establish procedures for airport noise studies and land use compatibility evaluations (14CFR Part 150) in the Federal Aviation Regulations. The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has site acceptability standards for HUD financed or assisted projects. These standards consider a site with an Ldn of 65 dBA or less “acceptable,” while those with an Ldn greater than 75 dBA are “unacceptable.”

#### 4.13.2.2 State Authorities and Administering Agencies

**4.13.2.2.1 CEQA, Public Resources Code §21000 et seq.** The basic goal of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is to develop and maintain a high-quality environment now and in the future. The CEQA Guidelines provide a framework for the analysis of noise impacts, and are implemented at the local Level, as described in Section 4.13.2.3.

**4.13.2.2.2 California Coastal Act §30000 et seq.** As described in Section 1, the Coastal Act is the only set of policies that applies to development projects within the City of Goleta’s Coastal Zone, pending certification of the City of Goleta’s Local Coastal Plan.

**4.13.2.2.3 Other State Laws and Regulations.** State laws and regulations provide the authority to various state and local agencies to control the exposure of people to noise. The most important of these provisions are found in the Aviation Noise Standards set forth in Title 21 (Public Works) of the California Code of Regulations (21CCR5000), and the Noise Insulation Standards set forth in the State Building Code (24CCR Section T25-28). These and other regulatory provisions are summarized in Table 4.13-2.

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**Table 4.13-2. Summary of California Noise Laws and Regulations**

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<b>Code</b>	<b>Summary of Standards</b>
Title 21 (Public Works) CCR 5000 et seq.	Aviation Noise Standards. Basic requirement that CNEL not exceed 65 dBA in exterior areas of residences, schools, hospitals, churches and synagogues. Standards and procedures for defining noise impact areas, monitoring, resolving complaints.
Title 24 (Building) CCR T25-28	Noise insulation standards. Maximum interior CNEL of 45 dBA for all multi-family residences. Requirement for acoustic report for multi-family structures in areas with exterior CNEL over 60 dBA.
Public Utilities Code Section 21670 et seq.	Establishes and defines planning and review procedures for Airport Land Use Commissions.
Health and Safety Code Sections 17922.6, and 46000 et seq.	Establishes Office of Noise Control, guidelines for preparation of Noise Elements and adoption of local standards and ordinances.
Title 18 (Industrial Relations) CCR 5095	Establishes standards and procedures for occupational exposures to noise.
Motor Vehicle Code Section 27200 et seq.	Establishes maximum allowable noise levels for motorcycles (27202), heavy vehicles (27204), and other vehicles (27206). Maximum of 80 dBA at 50 feet for most vehicles.
Title 13 (Motor Vehicles) CCR 602 and 1036	Establishes standards and procedures for motor vehicle exhaust noise. Maximum of 95 dBA at 20" for most passenger vehicles and light trucks).

With respect to residential and other sensitive uses, the exterior standard of 65 dBA CNEL is generally consistent with the interior standard of 45 dBA CNEL. This is because normal wood frame residential construction usually provides from 12 to 18 dBA of reduction from exterior to interior areas, and 20 dBA is commonly achieved in new structures.

**4.13.2.3 Local Authorities and Administering Agencies**

**4.13.2.3.1 City of Goleta Coastal Zoning Ordinance.** As described in Section 1, the County of Santa Barbara’s Coastal Zoning Ordinance and other implementing ordinances (including subdivision and grading ordinances) are adopted by the City but have not been certified by the California Coastal Commission. The Coastal Zoning Ordinance provides guidance for those areas of the City of Goleta within the Coastal Zone. Land use permit applications required under the Coastal Zoning Ordinance must address impacts to ambient noise levels (Sec. 35-179.6).

The Santa Barbara County Airport Land Use Commission has review authority over lands within the defined area of influence of the Santa Barbara Airport. The area of influence includes the Phelps Ditch Trail site, but does not extend westward into the other areas within the City of

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Goleta involved in this project (Santa Barbara County Association of Governments, 1993, Map SB-1).

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### **4.13.3 Project Impacts and Mitigation**

#### **4.13.3.1 Thresholds of Significance**

The Santa Barbara County Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual (County of Santa Barbara, 2002a) (Thresholds Manual) has been adopted by the City of Goleta for conducting CEQA analysis. Section 12 of the Thresholds Manual provides guidance for assessment of noise impacts, as discussed below.

For the proposed residential development by SBDP/Comstock Homes, open space uses, and potential future trail development on the Phelps Ditch Trail site, the major noise sources are vehicle traffic and aircraft departures from the Santa Barbara Airport. The effect of these noise sources on the proposed residential development (principally roadway noise) is the major focus of the discussion in this report. For residential uses proposed now, or which may be anticipated in the future in areas with residential zoning, the basic threshold used to define potential impacts is an Ldn or CNEL of 65 dBA or greater.

Noise originating from grading and construction operations associated with the residential development, and from any other improvement projects, can also cause impacts to existing sensitive uses such as current residential areas and schools. The Thresholds and Guidelines Manual addresses construction noise and identifies typical restrictions to help reduce this potential impact. These guidelines generally consider construction noise impacts to be potentially significant to any residences or sensitive receivers located within 1,600 feet (County of Santa Barbara, 1995). This is based on the assumption that the peak noise levels from construction equipment range from 80-90 dBA at 50 feet, and a distance of 1,600 feet is necessary to reduce these peaks to 65 dBA or less.

There are no explicit recommendations for noise levels in recreation and open space areas within the Thresholds and Guidelines Manual. As a further point of reference, noise standards in the Santa Barbara County General Plan Noise Element, indicate that neighborhood parks are compatible with Ldn values up to 70 dBA, and golf courses and riding stables are compatible with Ldn values up to 75 dBA (County of Santa Barbara, 1986). While such levels may be acceptable in the transition areas as one leaves major streets and enters the Ellwood Mesa Open Space Plan area, they do not seem compatible with the sense of isolation and tranquility that is important in the ocean bluff, eucalyptus grove, and larger open space areas. For most of the open space, noise levels should be maintained at levels below an Ldn or CNEL of 65 dBA, similar to residential and other sensitive uses.

#### **4.13.3.2 Project Impacts**

**4.13.3.2.1 Comstock Homes Development.** The primary noise source affecting the proposed Comstock Homes Development site is traffic along Hollister Avenue. The SOUND32

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**Section 4.13** model was used to estimate traffic noise levels under the current and future conditions. In this  
**Noise** context, future conditions include traffic volumes from all sources under an ultimate buildout condition. For this noise analysis, several sources of information were consulted to obtain estimates of the cumulative future traffic volumes on area roadways (see Appendix B). A future Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volume on Hollister Avenue of 9,300 was used, even though the more recent traffic analysis for this project indicates the future ADT would be less than 8,000 in order to represent a worst case analysis.

The project design includes a perimeter wall that will serve as a retaining wall in some areas, and provide a noise reduction and privacy function for the outer lots within the subdivision. One of the model runs included the northern portion of the walls as proposed. Twenty receiver locations were chosen in the northern area of the property. Most receiver locations represent the lower level or upper story in each lot, at the point of the building footprint closest to Hollister Avenue. Several locations are representative of yards in the northern portion of the project. The receiver and wall locations are shown on Figure 4.13-2, and the results of the noise analysis for these receiver locations are presented in Table 4.13-3.

**Table 4.13-3. Noise Receiver Locations and Results<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Receiver</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Current CNEL (dBA)</b>	<b>Future CNEL (dBA)</b>	<b>Future CNEL (dBA) with 6' Wall</b>
R1L	Lot 3, lower level, at building site	58.7	60.4	57.4
R1U	Lot 3, upper level, at building site	58.7	60.4	59.4
R2L	Lot 2, lower level, at building site	61.7	63.3	59.5
R2U	Lot 2, upper level, at building site	61.7	63.3	63.2
R3L	Lot 1, lower level, at building site	64.0	65.6	60.7
R3U	Lot 1, upper level, at building site	64.0	65.6	65.6
R3Y	Lot 1, rear yard	63.6	65.3	60.3
R4L	Lot 78, lower level, at building site	62.8	64.5	59.5
R4U	Lot 78, upper level, at building site	62.8	64.4	64.4
R4Y	Lot 78, rear yard	64.4	66.6	61.0
R5L	Lot 77, lower level, at building site	62.7	64.4	60.7
R5U	Lot 77, upper level, at building site	62.7	64.3	64.1
R5Y	Lot 77, rear yard	64.3	65.9	61.4
R6L	Lot 76, lower level, at building site	64.2	65.8	60.8
R6U	Lot 76, upper level, at building site	64.2	65.8	65.8
R7L	Lot 75, lower level, at building site	62.7	64.3	60.1
R7U	Lot 75, upper level, at building site	62.7	64.3	64.1
R7Y	Lot 75, rear yard	64.1	65.8	60.1
R8L	Lot 72, lower level, at building site	58.0	59.6	56.7
R8U	Lot 72, upper level, at building site	58.0	59.6	57.2

<sup>1</sup> Note: see Appendix C, Table C-3 for more information.

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**Figure 4.13-2**



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Review of Table 4.13-3 results shows that under the current conditions, all of the building sites and yards would have CNEL values less than 65 dBA. With anticipated traffic increases along Hollister Avenue, however, the future noise levels for the northernmost homes and lots would be over 65 dBA (Lots 1, 75, 76, 77, and 78). Thus, future roadway noise levels are considered a significant impact.

**Impact N-1.** Future noise levels from traffic on Hollister Avenue would exceed 65 dBA CNEL at the northern lots within the project. This is considered a *potentially significant impact that can be mitigated (Class II)*.

Aircraft and train noise are audible at the Comstock Homes Development site, but both lead to CNEL values under 65 dBA, and do not represent a significant impact.

**Impact N-2.** Short-term noise levels from grading and construction activities within the Comstock Homes project could reach maximum values of over 80 dBA near the Ellwood School, and 72 dBA at the residences to the east in Santa Barbara Shores. Park users and golfers at the Sandpiper Golf Course to the west could experience short peak noise levels up to 90 dBA. This is considered a temporary, but *significant and unavoidable impact (Class I)* that cannot be feasibly mitigated. This impact could occur intermittently for up to 6 to 8 weeks during grading activities.

Grading and construction noise associated with the project would result in short-term noise levels of 80 to 90 dBA at a distance of 50 feet. The nearest sensitive uses are the Ellwood School, across Hollister Avenue several hundred feet from the proposed development, and homes in the Santa Barbara Shores neighborhood, approximately 800 feet to the east. The resulting short-term (6 to 8 weeks for grading activities) maximum noise levels at these locations would be approximately 80 to 82 dBA at the nearest school buildings and 72 dBA at the nearest homes in Santa Barbara Shores. Noise at these levels would disrupt normal outdoor activities, but would only occur when heavy equipment is operating at the point within the Comstock Homes Development project that is closest to the school or residences.

In addition to these areas, the park and open space uses remaining in the Santa Barbara Shores area, and the adjacent Sandpiper Golf Course to the west would also be subject to grading and construction noise that would disturb park users and golfers. Depending on their nearness to the construction site, park users and golfers could experience short peak noise levels up to 90 dBA.

Even though it would be periodic and short-term in nature, the proximity of the Comstock Homes construction site to the Ellwood School, the nearby residences, the adjacent park and open space area, and the Sandpiper Golf Course leads to the conclusion that construction noise impacts could be significant.

**4.13.3.2.2 Coronado Butterfly Preserve.** Noise levels in most of the Coronado Butterfly Preserve are quiet, the only exception being the northernmost panhandle of the preserve adjacent to Hollister Avenue. Neither train noise nor aircraft noise is expected to increase significantly in the future, and the Preserve is well-isolated from roadway traffic noise.

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*Section 4.13* For these reasons, no adverse noise impacts are anticipated within the Coronado Butterfly Preserve.  
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**4.13.3.2.3 Phelps Ditch Trail.** Roadway noise from Phelps Road adjacent to the northern boundary of this parcel is relatively low, and is expected to remain so. Appendix C includes estimates of the CNEL from Phelps Road west of Pacific Oaks Drive, which are as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>ADT</b>	<b>CNEL at 50 feet</b>	<b>Distance to 65 dBA</b>
Current	2,000	58.5 dBA	19 feet
Future	4,000	61.5 dBA	29 feet

The distances to the 65 dBA CNEL contour are computed from the centerline of the roadway. Assuming a 12-foot travel lane, and 10 feet for parking and a sidewalk, this indicates that the current 65 dBA noise contour does not extend beyond the roadway. In the future, the 65 dBA contour would extend only 29 feet from the centerline, or approximately 7 feet into the property. Although no specific development plans are available for this parcel yet, any future development could easily be located to avoid the potential noise impact from Phelps Road – only a 7-foot setback would be necessary.

As noted above, the Phelps Ditch Trail is situated just outside of the 60 dBA CNEL contour from the Santa Barbara Airport. Although aircraft are audible in the area, the property is well outside of the 65 dBA contour where the airport noise would be considered a significant impact.

As with the Comstock Homes Development, grading and construction noise from any future development at the Phelps Ditch Trail would be considered a significant impact to residences across Phelps Road to the north, and to the immediate east of the parcel. Depending on the timing of development, future residences in the University North Campus-North Parcel, which is west and south of the trail, could also be affected by grading and construction noise. Since no development is currently proposed at the Phelps Ditch Trail, no adverse noise impacts would occur associated with the proposed project.

**4.13.3.2.4 Ellwood Mesa Open Space Plan Area.** The Ellwood Mesa Open Space Plan is intended to promote passive recreational use consistent with existing use patterns. Passive recreation (e.g., walking, bicycling, equestrian riding) is inherently quiet; therefore, no new noise-generating activities are anticipated from continued long-term public use of the Ellwood Mesa Open Space area. The bulk of the dedicated open space area that would be created under the project as proposed is well removed from any noise sources that would be incompatible with the recreation and open space uses proposed. The entire Open Space area is outside of the 60 dBA CNEL contour of Santa Barbara Airport, and only the northernmost tip of the property approaches close enough to Hollister Avenue to be adversely affected by roadway noise. The future 65 dBA Ldn noise contour would extend approximately 70 feet into this area of the park, which translates into an area of less than 1.5 acres where noise levels would be excessive. This area would include the new access drive and parking area. The noise level would drop off rapidly for open space users as they walk, bicycle, or ride on horseback away from Hollister Avenue.

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For these reasons, the existing and projected future noise levels do not represent a significant impact to continued long-term passive recreational use of the Ellwood Mesa Open Space area.

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**Impact N-3.** Grading and construction noise during development of the new access drive, parking, restroom, and staging area for the park area would be significant, as it would affect the existing residences to the east as well as the Ellwood School, which is located approximately 300 feet to the northeast of the proposed restroom. Construction would take approximately three months, and the heavy grading and earth moving phase for the project would take one to two weeks. Portions of the Ellwood School and many of the residences are less than 500 feet away; these locations may hear short peak noise levels up to 80 dBA during the periods of heavy construction activity. Open Space visitors in the area during construction may also be exposed to construction noise up to 90 dBA in the immediate vicinity of construction equipment. This is considered a short-term *significant and unavoidable impact (Class I)*.

### 4.13.3.3 Cumulative Impacts

Because of the logarithmic nature of decibels, the contributions to roadway noise levels from individual projects tend to be relatively small – it takes a doubling of traffic volume to increase noise levels by 3 dBA. For this reason, the approach taken in the above analysis focused on using traffic projections that account for current traffic, any new project-generated traffic, and estimates of the ultimate traffic volumes on area roadways from all sources, rather than trying to list individual projects and assign noise increases to them. As time passes, cumulative traffic noise levels will gradually increase due to the influence of all development in the community. The analysis of traffic noise impacts presented above is based on the best information regarding the ultimate traffic volumes and, thus, considers these cumulative effects.

The different sources that contribute to the overall noise environment have been described separately. At large distances from their sources, airport noise and railroad noise events are so irregular and episodic that they have little effect on the perception of noise when compared to more steady sources such as roadways. Close to the railroad tracks or the airport, those sources will clearly dominate over local roadway noise, but that circumstance does not exist within the project areas under consideration. Near the roadways, vehicle traffic dominates the noise levels, and at areas within the larger open space system roadway noise is distant and quiet, but an occasional aircraft can be heard. Over the years, noise from train operations has not changed significantly, and noise from aircraft operations has decreased. The best estimates for both of these sources indicate that they will generally remain constant – slight increases due to volume of operations are offset by newer equipment.

Some of the potentially significant noise impacts identified in this EIR relate to construction activities. If construction were simultaneously underway at the Comstock Homes Development site and the new open space parking facilities, it is possible but unlikely that a net peak noise level would exceed the 90 dBA that could occur with one or the other. Even if this event did occur, the advantage of shortening the duration of all construction would outweigh the inconvenience of short-term peaks in noise levels. In a similar manner, if construction activities

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Section 4.13 Noise were simultaneously underway at other project sites in the Ellwood-Devereux area, the low potential for noise levels to adversely affect existing residences would be offset by the benefit of a reduction in the total duration of construction. The individual project noise mitigation measures discussed below would apply in any case. These factors combine to reduce the potential for cumulative noise impacts. Therefore, the project's contribution to cumulative noise impacts is considered cumulatively *significant, but feasibly mitigated (Class II)*.

### **4.13.3.4 Mitigation Measures**

The potential impact from increased roadway noise on Hollister Avenue can be reduced through the construction of a 6-foot high wall along the western, eastern, and northern boundary of the project as shown in the preliminary plans for the development. Table 4.13-3 includes an estimate of future CNEL values at each lot with such a wall in place, and shows that with this mitigation measure present all ground floor and yard locations would have CNEL values reduced to 65 dBA or less.

**Mitigation N-1: Perimeter Wall.** The project developer shall construct a 6-foot high solid wall along the northern portions of the project perimeter in substantial conformance with the location shown on the tentative subdivision map for the project.

**Plan Requirements and Timing.** The wall shall be designated on building and grading plans.

**Monitoring.** Building Inspectors shall check to see that the wall is complete prior to completing final inspection for buildings in the northernmost lots in the subdivision.

The identified construction noise impacts can be reduced through the imposition of standard conditions that restrict construction to normal working hours.

**Mitigation N-2: Construction Timing.** Construction activity for site preparation and for future development shall be limited to the hours between 7:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. No construction shall occur on State holidays (e.g., Thanksgiving, Labor Day). Construction equipment maintenance shall be limited to the same hours. Non-noise generating construction activities such as interior painting are not subject to these restrictions.

**Plan Requirements.** One sign stating these restrictions shall be provided by the applicant and posted on site. This requirement shall be printed on grading and building plans prior to the approval of Land Use Permits.

**Timing.** Signs shall be in place prior to beginning of and throughout grading and construction activities. Violations may result in suspension of permits.

**Monitoring.** Building Inspectors and Permit Compliance shall spot check and respond to complaints.

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**Mitigation N-3: Additional Limitation of Construction Timing for Open Space Parking Area.** To the extent feasible to meet project schedule, construction within the open space parking area shall be restricted to days when school is not in session at the Ellwood Elementary School (e.g., during summer vacation or winter or spring break).

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**Plan Requirements and Timing.** This requirement shall be printed on grading and building plans prior to approval of Land Use Permits.

**Monitoring.** Building Inspectors and Permit Compliance shall spot check and respond to complaints related to open space parking construction.

**Mitigation N-4: Construction Equipment.** Stationary construction equipment that generates noise in excess of 65 dBA at the project boundaries shall be shielded and located as far towards the interior of the construction site as practical to minimize the noise levels at the residences to the east, the Ellwood Elementary School to the northeast, and the golf course to the west.

**Plan Requirements.** The equipment area shall be designated on building and grading plans.

**Timing.** Equipment and shielding shall remain in the designated location throughout construction activities.

**Monitoring.** Permit Compliance shall perform site inspections to ensure compliance.

Mitigation measures N-2 and N-4 described above are applicable to both the residential development proposed in the Comstock Homes project and the construction of the new access, parking lot, restroom, and staging area for the Santa Barbara Shores Park area.

#### **4.13.3.5 Residual Impacts**

As shown in Table 4.13-3, with the 6-foot noise wall in place only two points would have CNEL values above 65 dBA. These are both upper floor results, and include lot 1 (65.6 dBA) and lot 76 (65.8 dBA). Since these lots, and all of the others, would be provided with yards and outdoor living space with CNEL values below 65 dBA, and since common construction techniques would provide interior CNEL values below 45 dBA throughout the project, this remaining effect at the limited upper floor locations is not considered significant.

With the incorporation of the construction-related mitigation measures, construction noise would remain a short-term unavoidable significant impact.