

7.0 Other Environmental Considerations



7.0 OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. SIGNIFICANT UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS OF THE MODIFIED PROJECT

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(c) requires an EIR to describe any significant environmental impacts that cannot be avoided, including those effects that can be mitigated but not reduced to a less-than-significant level. Impacts associated with the Modified Project are evaluated in **Section 5.0**, Environmental Impact Analysis, of this SEIR. Based on that analysis, it was determined that the Modified Project would not result in new or substantially more severe significant impacts than previously identified for the 2017 Project in the State-certified EIR. (Refer to **Table 2.0-2**, Summary of Environmental Impacts, Mitigation Measures, and Resulting Levels of Significance, in **Section 2.0**, Executive Summary, of this SEIR for a list of the impacts previously identified in the State-certified EIR.)

2. REASONS WHY THE MODIFIED PROJECT IS BEING PROPOSED, NOTWITHSTANDING SIGNIFICANT UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(c) requires an explanation of why a project is being proposed, notwithstanding significant and unavoidable impacts. As stated, the Modified Project would not result in new significant and unavoidable impacts or substantially more severe significant impacts compared to the 2017 Project. Nevertheless, this section provides this explanation regarding the previously identified significant and unavoidable impacts for the 2017 Project.

The Modified Project would implement the development and resource management activities facilitated by the 2017 Project in the Entrada South and VCC Planning Areas while preserving and enhancing on-site natural resources. The Modified Project would result in a mixed-use community that provides housing, commercial and industrial/business park uses, recreational areas, public facilities, and economic opportunities, consistent with the State-certified EIR and the Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan: One Valley One Vision (Area Plan).

Consistent with the 2017 Project, the Modified Project would help accommodate regional growth projected by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) in the Santa Clarita Valley Planning Area within infill sites adjacent to existing, approved, or

planned infrastructure, urban services, transportation corridors, transit facilities, and major employment centers. It would avoid leapfrog development, unnecessary infrastructure extension, and “patchwork” development that uses undue open space and natural resources by locating and concentrating development within and adjacent to existing, approved, and planned urbanized areas and regional transportation and transit facilities. The Modified Project would provide a range of residential housing types, sizes, and styles near existing and proposed transit centers to serve the needs of a growing and increasingly diverse population within the County and the Santa Clarita Valley. Additionally, the Modified Project would provide for commercial development that serves the needs of the local population and generates employment opportunities.

The Modified Project would provide a new master planned development with a balance of jobs and housing interconnected with the surrounding existing and planned communities and offers enhanced public improvements to promote walkability, connectivity, and safety. It would also continue building out the previously approved, partially completed Valencia Commerce Center industrial/business park center, thereby focusing such uses in an infill area and improving connectivity between existing industrial/business park uses. Additionally, the Modified Project would include a public neighborhood park and potentially an elementary school to serve the local population; would expand the trail network in the Valley; provide commercial development that serves the needs of the local population and generates employment opportunities.

The Modified Project is designed to be a sustainable development that achieves net zero greenhouse gas emissions. The Modified Project includes applicable mitigation measures from the State-certified EIR, including 13 mitigation measures related to greenhouse gas impacts that reduce the Modified Project’s greenhouse gas emissions to net zero and are identical to those imposed on the 2017 Project in accordance with the State-certified EIR. These mitigation measures went through extensive review and refinement as a part of the State-certified EIR, including review by the California Air Resources Board (CARB), the state authority on climate policy.

For these reasons, the Modified Project is being proposed notwithstanding the significant and unavoidable impacts that were identified in the State-certified EIR for the 2017 Project.

3. SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

Section 15126.2(d) of the CEQA Guidelines states that the “[u]ses of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project may be irreversible since a large commitment of such resources makes removal or nonuse thereafter unlikely.” Section 15126.2(d) further states that “[i]rretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified.”

The Modified Project does not materially change any significant and irreversible uses of nonrenewable resources associated with the 2017 Project. The 2017 Project would permanently alter the Entrada South and VCC Planning Areas by converting the undeveloped property to urban uses and the changes associated with the Modified Project do not substantially increase such alterations. Construction and long-term operation of the Modified Project would be substantially similar to the 2017 Project, which would require the use of fossil fuels, lumber, sand/gravel, steel, copper, lead, and other metals. However, as with the 2017 Project, the Modified Project remains consistent with the current land use and zoning designation under the County's General Plan and the Area Plan, which show that growth is anticipated by the County. Furthermore, as explained in **Section 3.0**, Project Description, of this SEIR, the Modified Project is consistent with the 2017 Project in terms of overall development footprint, general land uses, and building scale and design and thus would not result in any new significant and irreversible changes to resources as compared to the 2017 Project.

4. GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

CEQA requires a discussion of ways in which the Modified Project could be growth inducing. The CEQA Guidelines identify a project as growth inducing if it fosters economic or population growth or if it encourages the construction of additional housing either directly or indirectly in the surrounding environment (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.2(e)). New population from residential development represent direct forms of growth. This direct form of growth has a secondary effect of expanding the size of local markets and inducing additional economic activity in the area.

In accordance with Section 15126.2(e) of the CEQA Guidelines, the growth-inducing analysis of the proposed project must address two key issues. The first is the potential for the project to foster economic or population growth or the construction of additional housing (either directly or indirectly) in the surrounding environment. The second issue is the potential for the project to encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively. Typically, this issue involves the project's potential to induce further growth by the expansion or extension of existing services, utilities, or infrastructure. By definition, the CEQA Guidelines state that "it must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment."

Growth inducing impacts associated with the Modified Project would be consistent with those identified in the State-certified EIR for the 2017 Project. The proposed development of the Modified Project would be consistent with the general scope and intensity of development that was studied in the State-certified EIR. Like the 2017 Project, the Modified Project would not induce substantial unplanned population growth in the Entrada South or VCC Planning Areas. As discussed, the Entrada South Planning Area is

designated in the Area Plan as H5—Residential 5 south of Magic Mountain Parkway and CM—Major Commercial north of Magic Mountain Parkway, with a small portion designated OS-PR—Parks and Recreation south of the Southern California Edison electric transmission lines. The VCC Planning Area is designated in the Area Plan as IO—Industrial Office, which allows for development of the proposed uses. As the Modified Project’s uses are consistent with these designations, such development as well as the associated population have been anticipated and planned for in the Area Plan. Furthermore, the Modified Project represents buildout of a portion of the previously approved and partially constructed Valencia Commerce Center, which was the subject of a 1991 EIR certified by the County.

As for infrastructure-induced population growth, the Modified Project would not extend or expand services, utilities, or infrastructure compared to the 2017 Project. Like the 2017 Project, the Modified Project’s roadway improvements are intended to improve access to the Modified Project Site, reduce vehicle idling and queuing, improve access to public transit, and minimize unnecessary travel throughout the Modified Project Site. Utility and other infrastructure upgrades are also consistent with those proposed in the 2017 Project and are intended to meet Modified Project-related demand.

As the Modified Project would be consistent with the general scope and intensity of development associated with the 2017 Project, the Modified Project would not result in new significant growth-inducing impacts.

5. POTENTIAL SECONDARY EFFECTS

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4(a)(1)(D) requires “[i]f a mitigation measure would cause one or more significant effects in addition to those that would be caused by the project as proposed, the effects of the mitigation measure shall be discussed but in less detail than the significant effects of the project as proposed.” With regard to the mitigation measures identified in the State-certified EIR and the VCC EIR that are applicable to the Modified Project, the secondary effects were previously addressed in the State-certified EIR. The new mitigation measures proposed as part of the Modified Project, as provided throughout **Section 5.0**, Environmental Impact Analysis, of this SEIR, are designed to reduce impacts associated with the Modified Project and would generally result in additional environmental benefits. The new mitigation measures proposed as part of the Modified Project do cause new significant impacts, as discussed below.

5.1 Air Quality

Mitigation Measure MM-5.1-1 requires that during the Modified Project’s grading phase, 2010 or newer diesel haul trucks shall be used to transport on-site soil to the extent

available. Implementation of this measure would be beneficial to air quality and would not result in adverse secondary impacts.

Mitigation Measure MM-5.1-2 requires that all off-road diesel-powered construction equipment greater than 50 horsepower shall meet Tier 4 emission standards, where available. At a minimum, all off-road diesel-powered construction equipment greater than 50 horsepower shall meet the Tier 3 emission standards for non-road diesel engines promulgated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. In addition, all off-road diesel-powered construction equipment shall be outfitted with Best Available Control Technology (BACT) devices certified by CARB, provided those devices are commercially available and: (1) achieve the standards of the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA); (2) are consistent with the construction equipment warranty requirements; (3) are compatible with equipment specifications of the construction equipment manufacturer; and (4) do not otherwise interfere with the proper functioning of the construction equipment. Any BACT devices used shall achieve emissions reductions that are equal to or greater than a Level 3 diesel emissions control strategy for a similarly-sized engine, as defined by CARB regulations, provided that the devices are commercially available and satisfy the four requirements enumerated above. Implementation of this measure would be beneficial to air quality and would not result in adverse secondary impacts.

Mitigation Measure MM-5.1-3 requires that during the Modified Project's construction contract bidding phase, each construction contractor shall be provided with informational materials regarding the SCAQMD's Surplus Off-Road Opt-In for NO_x (SOON) Program. Implementation of this measure would be beneficial to air quality and would not result in adverse secondary impacts.

Mitigation Measure MM-5.1-4 requires that during the Modified Project's construction phase, only street sweepers that are certified under SCAQMD's Rule 1186 and Rule 1186.1 shall be used. Implementation of this measure would be beneficial to air quality and would not result in adverse secondary impacts.

Mitigation Measure MM-5.1-5 requires that during the Modified Project's construction phase, electricity from on-site power poles shall be utilized where available (i.e., where accessible relative to the area of construction activity). In the event of an emergency or during a power outage, the use of generators shall be permissible. Implementation of this measure would be beneficial to air quality and would not result in adverse secondary impacts.

Mitigation Measure MM-5.1-6 requires that the Modified Project shall install high-efficiency public street and area lighting. Area lighting is defined to include any private

common space lighting (e.g., within or along parks, sidewalks, and landscaping) that is not otherwise regulated by Title 24. For purposes of this measure, the Modified Project also may use solar-powered lighting in lieu of high-efficiency lighting. Implementation of this measure would be beneficial to air quality and would not result in adverse secondary impacts.

Mitigation Measure MM-5.1-7 requires that when residential appliances are offered by homebuilders, the Modified Project shall install Energy Star appliances (specifically, clothes washers, clothes dryers, dish washers, fans, and refrigerators) in the single-family and multi-family residences. Implementation of this measure would be beneficial to air quality and would not result in adverse secondary impacts.

5.2 Biological Resources

Mitigation Measure ES/VCC-MM-BIO-1 requires that prior to construction, the Applicant shall develop a relocation plan for California glossy snake, to be incorporated into the relocation plan developed for other special-status reptile species, according to requirements in RMDP/SCP BIO-54. This measure would be beneficial to biological resources and would not result in adverse secondary impacts.

5.3 Noise

Mitigation Measure ES/VCC-5.8-1 requires that for all construction-related activities, the Applicant shall implement the following:

- The Applicant shall utilize construction equipment equipped with exhaust muffler systems consistent with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidance to achieve a noise reduction of 10 dBA or more.
- All equipment shall be properly maintained in accordance with manufacturers' specifications to assure that no additional noise due to worn or improperly maintained parts is generated consistent with FHWA guidance.
- The Applicant shall utilize construction equipment that incorporates features to dampen metal surfaces and minimize metal-to-metal contact, consistent with FHWA guidance.

Implementation of this mitigation measure would be beneficial in reducing noise impacts during construction. No adverse secondary impacts would occur as a result of implementation of this mitigation measure.

Mitigation Measure ES/VCC-5.8-2 requires that when construction operations occur adjacent to off-site occupied residential uses, the construction contractor(s) shall:

(1) locate stationary construction equipment as far away as feasible from nearby receptors; (2) prohibit the idling of construction equipment; (3) notify adjacent residences in advance of construction work; and (4) install temporary acoustic barriers or noise blankets around stationary construction noise sources. These barriers shall be made featuring weather-protected, sound-absorptive material on the construction-activity side of the noise barrier and must be installed in a location that completely blocks line-of-sight between the construction noise source and adjacent sensitive receptors. Implementation of this mitigation measure would be beneficial in reducing noise impacts during construction. No adverse secondary impacts would occur as a result of implementation of this mitigation measure.

Mitigation Measure ES/VCC-5.8-3 requires that during construction of the proposed berm on the north side of the VCC Planning Area, the Applicant shall install a temporary noise barrier that achieves a noise reduction level of at least 3.14 dBA at the residences located at the end of the Diablo Place, Rangewood Road, and Quincy Street cul-de-sacs. This temporary noise barrier shall be removed once construction of the berm is completed. The location of the temporary noise barrier is shown on Figure 5.8 2, Location of Temporary Noise Barrier Required Pursuant to Mitigation Measure ES/VCC-5.8-3, on page 5.8-46. Implementation of this mitigation measure would be beneficial in reducing noise impacts during construction. No adverse secondary impacts would occur as a result of implementation of this mitigation measure.

Mitigation Measure ES/VCC-5.8-4 requires that prior to the start of construction and maintained for the duration of construction, the Applicant shall clearly post construction hours, allowable workdays, and the phone number of the job superintendent at all construction entrances to allow for surrounding owners to contact the job superintendent. The superintendent shall ensure that all complaints received are logged noting the date, time, complainant's name, nature of the complaint, and any corrective action taken. Implementation of this mitigation measure would be beneficial in reducing noise impacts during construction. No adverse secondary impacts would occur as a result of implementation of this mitigation measure.

6. EFFECTS NOT FOUND TO BE SIGNIFICANT

CEQA Guidelines Section 15128 requires an EIR to contain a brief statement indicating reasons that various possible significant effects of a project were determined not to be significant and are thus not discussed in detail in the EIR. An Initial Study was prepared for the Modified Project and provides a detailed discussion of the potential environmental impact areas and the reasons each topical area is or is not analyzed further in the SEIR. The Initial Study is included in Appendix A of this SEIR. The County of Los Angeles determined through the Initial Study that the Modified Project would have "Less Than Significant Impact/No Changes or New Information Requiring Preparation of an EIR"

related to the following topic areas: aesthetics; agricultural and forestry resources; objectionable odors; conflicts with habitat conservation plans; historical resources; paleontological resources; human remains; energy; geology and soils; greenhouse gas emissions; hazardous materials sites; safety hazards within an airport land use plan or two miles of a public airport or private airstrip; emergency response and evacuation plans; groundwater hydrology; inundation in flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones; physical division of an established community; conflicts with any County land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect; mineral resources; vibration; excessive noise levels within an airport land use plan or two miles of a public airport or private airstrip; population and housing; sheriff protection; schools; parks; libraries; other public facilities; recreation; transportation hazards; emergency access; and utility infrastructure. See the Initial Study, included in Appendix A of this SEIR, for additional discussion of the reasons why these impacts were determined not to be significant.