

**DRAFT**

# **| Program Environmental Impact Report**

## **East Valley Specific Plan**

**March 2023**

Prepared for:



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## ***Acronyms and Abbreviations***

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|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| °F               | degree Fahrenheit   |
| AB               | Assembly Bill   |
| ac               | acres   |
| ADA              | Americans with Disabilities Act                           |
| ADT              | average daily traffic                                     |
| ADU              | accessory dwelling unit                                   |
| AHI              | Area of Historic Interest                                 |
| ALUCP            | Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan                       |
| ASM              | ASM Affiliates  |
| Basin Plan       | Water Quality Control Plan for the San Diego Basin        |
| BMP              | best management practice                                  |
| CAA              | Clean Air Act   |
| CAAQS            | California Ambient Air Quality Standards                  |
| CalEEMod         | California Emissions Estimator Model                      |
| CALGreen         | California Green Building Standards Code                  |
| CalRecycle       | California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery |
| Caltrans         | California Department of Transportation                   |
| CAP              | Climate Action Plan                                       |
| CARB             | California Air Resources Board                            |
| CBC              | California Building Code                                  |
| CDFW             | California Department of Fish and Wildlife                |
| CEC              | California Energy Commission                              |
| CEQA             | California Environmental Quality Act                      |
| CESA             | California Endangered Species Act                         |
| CFG              | California Fish and Game Code                             |
| CH <sub>4</sub>  | methane   |
| City             | City of Escondido   |
| CNDDDB           | California Natural Diversity Database                     |
| CNEL             | community noise equivalent level                          |
| CO               | carbon monoxide   |
| CO <sub>2</sub>  | carbon dioxide  |
| CO <sub>2e</sub> | carbon dioxide equivalent                                 |
| County           | County of San Diego                                       |
| CPUC             | California Public Utility Commission                      |
| CRHR             | California Register of Historical Resources               |
| CRPR             | California Rare Plant Rank                                |
| CWA              | Clean Water Act   |
| dB               | decibel   |
| dba              | A-weighted decibel  |
| DBH              | diameter at breast height                                 |
| DPM              | diesel particulate matter                                 |
| du               | dwelling unit   |
| du/ac            | dwelling units per acre                                   |
| EFD              | Escondido Fire Department                                 |

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| EMC              | Escondido Municipal Code                                   |
| EMFAC            | Emission Factor  |
| EO               | Executive Order  |
| EQR              | Environmental Quality Regulation                           |
| EVSP or Project  | East Valley Specific Plan                                  |
| FAR              | floor area ratio   |
| FESA             | federal Endangered Species Act                             |
| FRA              | Federal Railroad Administration                            |
| FTA              | Federal Transit Administration                             |
| GHG              | greenhouse gas   |
| GIS              | geographic information system                              |
| GWP              | global warming potential                                   |
| HCD              | California Department of Housing and Community Development |
| HEU              | 6th Cycle (2021–2029) Housing Element Update               |
| HFC              | hydrofluorocarbons   |
| Housing Study    | Housing and Community Investment Study                     |
| HRO              | Hillside and Ridgeline Protection Overlay                  |
| HVAC             | heating, ventilation, and air conditioning                 |
| I-               | Interstate   |
| in/sec           | inches per second  |
| IS               | Initial Study  |
| KSF              | kilo square feet   |
| LCFS             | low carbon fuel standards                                  |
| Ldn              | day-night noise level                                      |
| LED              | light-emitting diode                                       |
| Leq              | equivalent energy level                                    |
| LEV              | low-emission vehicle                                       |
| LLG              | Linscott, Law & Greenspan, Engineers                       |
| LOS              | level of service   |
| MBTA             | Migratory Bird Treaty Act                                  |
| MHCP             | Multiple Habitat Conservation Program                      |
| MMT              | million metric tons  |
| MND              | Mitigated Negative Declaration                             |
| mph              | miles per hour   |
| MS4              | Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System                      |
| MSCP             | Multiple Species Conservation Program                      |
| MSSC             | minor stop controlled intersection                         |
| MT               | metric ton   |
| MTS              | Metropolitan Transit System                                |
| N <sub>2</sub> O | nitrous oxide  |
| NA               | not applicable   |
| NAAQS            | National Ambient Air Quality Standards                     |
| NAGPRA           | Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act     |
| NAHC             | Native American Heritage Commission                        |
| NCCP             | Natural Community Conservation Program                     |
| NCTD             | North County Transit District                              |



|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| NO                | nitric oxide                                      |
| NO <sub>2</sub>   | nitrogen dioxide                                  |
| NOP               | Notice of Preparation                             |
| NO <sub>x</sub>   | nitrogen oxides                                   |
| NP                | no parking  |
| NPDES             | National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System   |
| NPPA              | Native Plant Protection Act                       |
| NRHP              | National Register of Historic Places              |
| NSLU              | noise-sensitive land use                          |
| NWI               | National Wetlands Inventory                       |
| O <sub>3</sub>    | ozone   |
| PEIR              | Program Environmental Impact Report               |
| Perc              | perchloroethylene                                 |
| PFC               | Perfluorocarbons                                  |
| PM                | particulate matter                                |
| PM <sub>10</sub>  | respirable particulate matter                     |
| PM <sub>2.5</sub> | fine particulate matter                           |
| ppb               | parts per billion                                 |
| ppm               | parts per million                                 |
| PPV               | peak particle velocity                            |
| RAQS              | Regional Air Quality Strategy                     |
| RHNA              | Regional Housing Needs Allocation                 |
| rms               | root mean square                                  |
| ROG               | reactive organic gas                              |
| ROW               | right-of-way                                      |
| RPS               | Renewables Portfolio Standard                     |
| RTIP              | Regional Transportation Improvement Program       |
| RWQCB             | Regional Water Quality Control Board              |
| SAF Plan          | State Alternative Fuels Plan                      |
| SAFE              | Safer Affordable Fuel-Efficient                   |
| SANDAG            | San Diego Association of Governments              |
| SB                | Senate Bill                                       |
| SBD               | Site And Building Design                          |
| SCAQMD            | South Coast Air Quality Management District       |
| SDAB              | San Diego Air Basin                               |
| SDAPCD            | San Diego County Air Pollution Control District   |
| sf                | square feet                                       |
| sf/ac             | square feet per acre                              |
| SF <sub>6</sub>   | sulfur hexafluoride                               |
| SIP               | State Implementation Plan                         |
| SJVAPCD           | San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District |
| SO <sub>2</sub>   | sulfur dioxide                                    |
| SOI               | sphere of influence                               |
| SO <sub>x</sub>   | sulfur oxides                                     |
| SPA               | Specific Plan Amendment                           |
| SR-               | State Route                                       |

|       |                                      |
|-------|--------------------------------------|
| TAC   | toxic air contaminant                |
| TCR   | Tribal Cultural Resource             |
| TDM   | Transportation Demand Management     |
| TIA   | Transportation Impact Analysis       |
| TPP   | target production point              |
| TUA   | Traditional Use Area                 |
| TWLTL | two-way left-turn lane               |
| USACE | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers         |
| USEPA | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency |
| USFWS | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service       |
| v/c   | volume to capacity ratio             |
| VdB   | vibration decibel                    |
| VMT   | vehicle miles traveled               |
| VOC   | volatile organic compound            |
| WP    | with parking                         |

## Executive Summary

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This chapter is an executive summary of the Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the City of Escondido's (City's) East Valley Specific Plan (EVSP or Project) prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This chapter highlights the major areas of importance in the environmental analysis for the Project as required by CEQA Guidelines section 15123 and also provides a brief description of the Project, project objectives, project impacts and mitigation measures, alternatives to the Project, and areas of controversy/issues raised by the public that are known to the City.

### Overview

As required by CEQA, this PEIR (1) assesses the potentially significant direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental effects of the Project; (2) identifies potential feasible means to avoid or substantially lessen significant, adverse impacts; and (3) evaluates a range of reasonable alternatives to the Project, including the required No Project Alternative. The City is the lead agency for the Project evaluated in this PEIR and, as such, has the principal responsibility for approving the Project.

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, this PEIR evaluates the effects of the entire Project at a program level. This PEIR will be used by the City to evaluate the environmental implications of adopting the Project. Once certified, this PEIR will also be used to tier subsequent environmental analyses for future City development projects. Once adopted, the Project would guide the redevelopment of the EVSP Area (i.e., the 191-acre area in the City covered by the EVSP).

### Project Description

#### Project Location

The EVSP Area is approximately 191 acres in central Escondido, immediately adjacent to and east of downtown, and is generally bounded by Escondido Creek to the north, Harding Street to the east, East Grand Avenue and East 2nd Avenue to the south, and North Hickory, South Hickory, and North Fig Streets to the west. The EVSP Area is adjacent to a variety of neighborhoods: Downtown Escondido to the west, residential neighborhoods to the north and south, and large commercial shopping centers to the east. The Escondido Transit Center is an approximately 20-minute walk southwest of the EVSP Area, and multiple transit stops exist throughout the EVSP Area.

#### Project Background and Purpose

In 2020, the City was awarded grant funding to develop a 6th Cycle (2021–2029) Housing Element Update (HEU), a Sector Feasibility Study, and the EVSP as a comprehensive planning and zoning document for the western portion of the Escondido General Plan covering the East Valley Parkway

Target Area. The HEU is addressed as a separate and independent project. The environmental review for the HEU was processed under a Third Addendum to the certified 2012 General Plan Update, Downtown Specific Plan Update, and CAP PEIR, which was adopted by the City Council on August 11, 2021, and amended by City Council on March 22, 2023.

The Housing Element serves as an integrated part of the Escondido General Plan and is subject to detailed statutory requirements, including a requirement to be updated every eight years and be subject to mandatory review by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). State law requires that each jurisdiction demonstrate in its Housing Element that the land inventory is adequate to accommodate that jurisdiction's fair share of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA). The City's share of regional future housing needs is 9,607 new units for the period of April 15, 2021, to April 15, 2029.

In 2004, the City Council approved the East Valley Parkway Area Plan with the purpose of implementing a comprehensive strategy for the revitalization of the physical character and economic health of the East Valley Parkway businesses and communities. In 2012, the City prepared the Escondido General Plan, which identifies 11 target areas to achieve the Escondido General Plan vision, including the East Valley Parkway Target Area. These 11 target areas provide unique opportunities for achieving the Escondido General Plan vision and involves a re-evaluation of land use patterns and policies. The EVSP is intended to be a comprehensive planning and zoning document for the western portion of the East Valley Parkway Target Area. The 191-acre EVSP Area is composed of private and public ownerships and is included within the limits of the East Valley Parkway Target Area.

The overall purpose of the EVSP is to guide redevelopment of the underutilized residential and commercial land of low-intensity general retail, office, restaurant, and small-scale service businesses into a new neighborhood with a mix of residential, commercial, public, and open space uses. It would accommodate increased housing density and other transit-supportive uses and improvements. The additional units needed to meet the City's RHNA, as established in the Housing Element, would be accommodated through land use designation changes and rezoning in the EVSP Area.

The EVSP would propose goals, policies, design standards, and implementation strategies to guide private development and public investment through 2035. The EVSP would incorporate a dynamic mix of land uses, ensuring a variety of residential options linked together through safe streets and a business corridor.

## **Project Objectives**

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15124(b), the City has identified the following objectives for the Project:

1. Create a self-contained land use pattern that offers a mix of compatible lands uses and quality landscaped community spaces.
2. Enhance the quality of the City's housing stock that is environmentally mindful and equitable while preserving the physical character and pride of the EVSP Area.
3. Provide a range of housing opportunities for all income groups and households that seamlessly supports all right-of-way users.
4. Plan both public and private development to provide safe vehicular circulation connected to safe multimodal transportation with reliable and timely transit options.
5. Provide for robust economic activity within the EVSP Area.

## **Project Components**

The EVSP includes the following project components: EVSP Density Transfer Program, land use, parks and public realm, mobility, transportation fair share contribution program, public services and infrastructure, development standards and design guidelines, and development potential.

### ***EVSP Density Transfer Program***

The purpose of the EVSP Density Transfer Program is to enable the City to transfer densities from undeveloped or underutilized properties in the EVSP Area (sending areas) to other properties in the EVSP Area (receiving areas) to enable a developing property to increase its density beyond what current zoning would permit. The transferred density would be held in a density credit pool. Allocation of the density from the pool would only occur when developing properties request additional density beyond that permitted by current zoning. The request for an increase in units would require Escondido City Council approval of a Planned Development Permit.

### ***Land Use***

The Project would involve the redesignation and rezoning of most of the 191-acre EVSP Area (127 acres excluding rights-of-way (ROWs)) from existing commercial and office uses, to mixed-use and high-density residential uses. The goal is to encourage new housing opportunities, improve economic vibrancy, and allow for flexibility in use and implementation as the EVSP Area changes over time. The proposed land use plan would focus on maintaining many of the existing uses while clustering them in different areas to create a more cohesive pattern and design. The proposed land use plan also would incorporate a dynamic mix of land uses, ensuring a variety of residential options linked together through safe streets and a business corridor.

***Parks and Public Realm***

The EVSP would include a comprehensive and interconnected parkland network to provide a variety of active and passive recreational opportunities for community members and visitors of all ages that would enhance the overall quality of life and community health and wellness. Implementation of the EVSP would provide approximately 10 acres of parkland and open space in the EVSP Area, which would help the City reach its parks and open space projections. The EVSP would establish a Park Overlay Zone intended to integrate public parkland and outdoor spaces within proximity to schools, transit, trails, and activity nodes. The EVSP would include policies regarding the creation of new park facilities and proposed recreational amenities.

***Mobility***

The EVSP would promote strong mobility connections throughout the EVSP Area, especially from the Escondido Creek Trail and adjacent neighborhoods to the commercial corridor along East Valley Parkway. The EVSP roadway network would consist of current roadways in the EVSP Area. No new roadways are proposed; however, Centre City Parkway between El Norte Parkway and State Route (SR-) 78 is proposed to be reclassified to a six-lane super-major roadway to accommodate increased traffic volumes and pedestrian and bicycle improvements.

In addition, Chapter 5.0, Mobility, of the EVSP describes future bicycle networks and pedestrian facilities. Public transit would also be an important component of the EVSP mobility network, providing access to both local and regional destinations. The City is served by the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) and North County Transit District (NCTD).

***Transportation Fair Share Contribution Program***

New development facilitated by the Project would increase traffic volumes in the EVSP Area. A Level of Service Analysis was prepared in the Transportation Analysis (Appendix G) to determine the future mobility needs of the EVSP Area. Based on this analysis, the Project has incorporated a Transportation Fair Share Contribution Program that the City has committed to in order to address the potential roadway deficiencies that may result from the Project. For each location identified, the percentage of the EVSP buildout that could be built before the improvement is triggered has been calculated. When specific developments are proposed in the EVSP Area, the average daily trips (ADT) would be determined and the development's "fair-share" contribution to the overall improvements would be calculated.

***Public Services and Infrastructure***

Chapter 6.0, Public Services and Infrastructure, of the EVSP outlines the community facilities needed to ensure that high-quality services and infrastructure are provided to accommodate projected growth in the EVSP Area. In addition, this chapter identifies thresholds and targets to maintain adequate levels of public services and safety as growth occurs.

### ***Development Standards and Design Guidelines***

Chapter 7.0, Development Standards and Design Guidelines, of the EVSP is intended to help achieve the vision for the EVSP through setting standards and guidelines for future development. This chapter complements other Citywide guidance, such as the Escondido Municipal Code (EMC), which provides regulations for a variety of design topics, including setbacks, landscaping, and parking. The design guidelines and standards would apply to future public improvements and private development in the EVSP Area, addressing the design of both new buildings and renovations to existing structures.

### ***Development Potential***

The development potential of the EVSP Area provided in Table ES-1, East Valley Specific Plan Development Potential by Land Use Type, estimates the potential growth by land use type through 2035. Table ES-1 also shows the difference between what is planned to be the EVSP buildout and the existing (2020) conditions. These assumptions are broad, planning-level estimates for potential future development based on the heights, intensities, and land uses that would be in the EVSP. The ultimate development potential is influenced by the EVSP Density Transfer Program.

**Table ES-1. East Valley Specific Plan Development Potential by Land Use Type**

| <b>Land Use Type</b>     | <b>2035 EVSP Buildout</b> | <b>Existing Conditions (2020)</b> | <b>Difference</b>      |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Residential              | 6,164 du                  | 581 du                            | 5,583 du               |
| Multi-Family Residential | 5,516 du                  | 324 du                            | 5,192 du               |
| Office                   | 657,786 sf                | 637,053 sf                        | +20,733 sf             |
| Retail                   | 1,025,801 sf              | 624,501 sf                        | +401,300 sf            |
| Parks                    | 25 acres                  | 0 acre                            | +25 acres <sup>1</sup> |
| Community Services       | 123,084 sf                | 4,900 sf                          | +118,184 sf            |

**Source:** City of Escondido 2023.

**Notes:** du = dwelling units; EVSP = East Valley Specific Plan; sf = square feet

<sup>1</sup> The EVSP Land Use Plan allows for up to 25 acres of parkland and open space; however, it is estimated that only approximately 10 acres of parkland and open space would occur.

### **Potential Areas of Controversy and Issues to Be Resolved**

CEQA Guidelines section 15123 requires the summary of an EIR to include areas of controversy known to the lead agency, including issues raised by agencies and the public, and to address issues to be resolved, including the choice among alternatives and whether or how to mitigate the significant effects. On February 11, 2021, the City posted a Notice of Preparation (NOP) with the San Diego County Clerk's Office in accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15082. The 30-day public review period for the NOP began on February 11, 2021, and ended on March 12, 2021. The NOP and notices of NOP availability were mailed to public agencies, organizations, and other interested individuals to solicit their comments on the scope and content of the environmental analysis. The City also held a public scoping meeting on March 2, 2021. The comment letters

received are summarized in Table ES-2, Notice of Preparation Comment Letter Summary. The NOP and comment letters can be found in Appendix A, Notice of Preparation and Comment Letters.

**Table ES-2. Notice of Preparation Comment Letter Summary**

| Comment Letter No. | Commenter                                      | Subject of Comment  | Location in PEIR Where Comment Is Addressed  |
|--------------------|--|---|--|
| 1                  | California Native American Heritage Commission | Recommends consultation with California Native American Tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic region of the City and describes AB 52 and SB 18 Tribal consultation requirements.  | Section 3.4, Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources  |
| 2                  | Ingrid Stichter – Vallecitos Water District    | Recommends that any changes in density in the Vallecitos Water District would need to be reviewed by the District and may need collaboration with the Master Plan.  | Chapter 4, Effects Found Not to Be Significant   |
| 3                  | Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians                 | States that the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians is not in agreement with the City-proposed mitigation measure that excludes projects with less than 4-foot-deep ground disturbance to be exempt from cultural mitigation measures and includes reiteration of comments on proposed mitigated measures.       | Section 3.4, Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources  |
| 4                  | SANDAG   | Recommends that the City consider greater density near the Mobility Hub and considers lowering parking requirements to allow for increased housing capacity. SANDAG recommends that the City eliminate/lower parking requirements to reduce the cost of housing for residents who prefer not to have a car. | Section 3.7, Transportation  |
| 5                  | Caltrans                                       | Recommends a VMT-based Traffic Impact Study be provided for the Project. Also recommends that Caltrans be a responsible agency and continue coordination efforts to support “smart growth,” Complete Streets projects, and its ROW.   | Section 3.7, Transportation  |
| 6                  | Southwest Regional Council of Carpenters       | Recommends that the City should require more local skilled hires with certifications to build the Project to support the community’s economy.   | To be considered by the City Council. Not a CEQA issue; does not result in a physical impact on the environment. |

**Notes:** AB = Assembly Bill; Caltrans = California Department of Transportation; CEQA = California Environmental Quality Act; City = City of Escondido; ROW = right-of-way; SANDAG = San Diego Association of Governments; SB = Senate Bill; VMT = vehicle miles traveled

## Summary of Project Impacts

This PEIR examines the potential environmental effects of the Project, including information related to existing site conditions, analyses of the types and magnitude of individual and cumulative environmental impacts, and feasible mitigation measures that could reduce or avoid environmental impacts. In accordance with Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the potential environmental effects of the Project were analyzed for the following environmental issue areas:



- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Noise
- Transportation

Table ES-5, Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures, at the end of this chapter provides a summary of the project-level and cumulative environmental impacts that could result from implementation of the Project and feasible mitigation measures that could reduce or avoid environmental impacts. For each impact, Table ES-5 identifies the significance of the impact before mitigation, applicable mitigation measures, and the level of significance of the impact after implementation of the mitigation measures.

## Summary of Alternatives

CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(d) requires an EIR to provide sufficient information about each alternative to allow for meaningful evaluation, analysis, and comparison with the Project. The City selected the alternatives for analysis based on the “rule of reason” and ability for each alternative to meet most of the basic project objectives.

### No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15126(e)(1), a No Project Alternative shall be addressed in an EIR; for the Project this alternative is called the No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative. The discussion of the No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative must examine the existing conditions and reasonably foreseeable future conditions that would exist if the Project is not approved (CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(e)). The No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative is defined as a continuation of existing conditions and conditions that are reasonably expected to occur if the Project is not implemented. The No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative would leave the existing Escondido General Plan land use map in place for the East Valley Parkway Target Area and would not accommodate the planned growth as anticipated in the Escondido General Plan for the EVSP Area.

Land uses would include Office and General Commercial with a Mixed-Use Overlay. Under the existing Escondido General Plan, the development capacity of the total East Valley Parkway Target Area includes 2,100 dwelling units and 8,328,596 square feet of non-residential development. The EVSP Area represents 58% of the East Valley Parkway Target Area as defined in the Escondido General Plan. Therefore, the development capacity of the No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative includes 1,218 dwelling units and 4,830,585 square feet of non-

residential development compared to 6,164 dwelling units and 1,683,587 square feet of non-residential development for the Project.

### Reduced Development Capacity Alternative

Compared to the Project, the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative would concentrate Mixed-Use and General Commercial land uses to the east of the EVSP Area and away from East Valley Parkway. Urban IV and Urban III land uses would be concentrated along East Valley Parkway compared to the Mixed-Use designation in the Project. In addition, this alternative would incorporate the Urban III land use designation into the land use map, which is not included in the Project, and would not include the Urban V land use designation, which is included in the Project. The Urban III land use designation accommodates a wide range of housing types but only allows for 18 dwelling units per acre. In comparison, the Urban IV and V land use designations allow for a higher density of up to 45 units per acre. The reduced acreages of Mixed-Use and Commercial land uses and the incorporation of the Urban III land use designation would reduce the overall development capacity of the EVSP Area.

Table ES-3, Comparison of Development Capacity of Reduced Development Capacity Alternative and East Valley Specific Plan, provides a summary of the development capacity under the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative compared to the development capacity under the Project. Compared to the Project, this alternative would result in 1,914 fewer overall dwelling units and would reduce the amount of overall non-residential space by 381,781 square feet.

**Table ES-3. Comparison of Development Capacity of Reduced Development Capacity Alternative and East Valley Specific Plan**

| Land Use Type                  | Reduced Development Capacity Alternative | 2035 EVSP Buildout    |
|--------------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Single Family Residential      | 511 du                                   | 648 du                |
| Multi-Family Residential       | 3,739 du                                 | 5,516 du              |
| <b>Total Residential Units</b> | <b>4,250 du</b>                          | <b>6,164 du</b>       |
| Office Services                | 559,018 square feet                      | 657,786 square feet   |
| Retail                         | 833,886 square feet                      | 1,025,801 square feet |
| Parks                          | 0 acre                                   | 25 acres              |
| Community Services             | 31,985 square feet                       | 123,084 square feet   |

**Source:** Rick Engineering 2021.

**Notes:** du = dwelling units; EVSP = East Valley Specific Plan

Furthermore, similar to the Project, the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative would include a Park Overlay Zone intended to integrate public parkland and outdoor spaces. However, the Park Overlay Zone would be reduced and concentrated in different areas of the planning area compared to the Project as shown on Figure 6-2, Reduced Development Capacity Alternative, in Chapter 6 to facilitate more commercial and residential development. Similar to the Project, the Reduced

Development Capacity Alternative would include the same proposed mobility network and development and design standards. However, building heights under this alternative would be reduced due to the inclusion of the Urban III land use designation, which would allow for a lesser capacity of residential development.

### Reduced Retail/Office Alternative

The Reduced Retail/Office Alternative would concentrate the General Commercial land uses in the eastern portion of EVSP Area. The Mixed-Use designation would remain along East Valley Parkway and in the eastern portion of the EVSP Area. This alternative would incorporate the Urban III land use designation, which is not included in the Project, in the central part of the EVSP Area. Table ES-4, Comparison of Development Capacity of Reduced Retail/Office Alternative and East Valley Specific Plan, provides a summary of the development capacity under the Reduced Retail/Office Alternative compared to the development capacity of the Project. Compared to the Project, this alternative would result in 290 fewer dwelling units and would reduce the amount of non-residential space by 204,830 square feet.

**Table ES-4. Comparison of Development Capacity of Reduced Retail/Office Alternative and East Valley Specific Plan**

| Land Use Type                  | Reduce Retail/Office Alternative | 2035 EVSP Buildout    |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Single Family Residential      | 0 du                             | 648 du                |
| Multi-Family Residential       | 5,874 du                         | 5,516 du              |
| <b>Total Residential Units</b> | <b>5,874 du</b>                  | <b>6,164 du</b>       |
| Office Services                | 631,968 square feet              | 657,786 square feet   |
| Retail                         | 937,888 square feet              | 1,025,801 square feet |
| Parks                          | 0 acre                           | 25 acres              |
| Community Services             | 31,985 square feet               | 123,084 square feet   |

**Source:** Rick Engineering 2021.

**Notes:** du = dwelling units; EVSP = East Valley Specific Plan

The Reduced Retail/Office Alternative would not include a Park Overlay Zone and would not include recommended or priority areas for parks and public spaces to focus on various housing opportunities while leveraging the existing Escondido Creek Trail as the main source for parks/open space. The Reduced Retail/Office Alternative would include the same proposed mobility network and development and design standards as identified for the Project. However, building heights would be reduced due to the inclusion of the Urban III land use designation, which provides reduced capacity of residential development.

Table ES-5. Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

| Impact  | Level of Significance Before Mitigation | Mitigation Measure  | Level of Significance After Mitigation |
|---|---|---|--|
| <b>Section 3.1, Aesthetics</b>                                      |   |   |  |
| Threshold 1: Scenic Vistas  | LS                                      | NA  | LS                                     |
| Threshold 2: Scenic Resources                                       | NI                                      | NA  | NI                                     |
| Threshold 3: Conflict with Zoning or Regulations for Scenic Quality | LS                                      | NA  | LS                                     |
| Threshold 4: Light and Glare  | LS                                      | NA  | LS                                     |
| <b>Section 3.2, Air Quality</b>                                     |   |   |  |
| Threshold 1: Consistency with Applicable Air Quality Plan           | LS                                      | NA  | LS                                     |
| Threshold 2: Cumulative Increase in Criteria Pollutant              | LS                                      | NA  | LS                                     |
| Threshold 3: Sensitive Receptors                                    | PS                                      | <p><b>AIR-1: Siting Sensitive Receptors near Dry-Cleaning, Gas Stations, and Automotive Repair Facilities.</b><br/> New sensitive receptors shall be screened for potential toxic air contaminants sources within 500 feet of the proposed sensitive receptor location. If a source of toxic air contaminants such as dry-cleaning facilities, gas stations, commercial/drive-through facilities, or automotive repair shops is identified within the applicable screening distance outline in the California Air Resources Board's Air Quality and Land Use Handbook, a Health Risk Assessment, or equivalent health risk evaluation shall be prepared by a qualified air quality professional. Sensitive receptors include daycare centers, schools, retirement homes, hospitals, medical patients in residential homes, or other facilities that may house individuals with health conditions who would be adversely impacted by changes in air quality. A Health Risk Assessment, or equivalent health risk evaluation, shall also be required for such facilities proposed within 500 feet of a sensitive receptor.</p> <p>The Project shall not be considered for approval until a Health Risk Assessment, or equivalent health risk evaluation, has been completed and approved by the City of Escondido, Community Development Department. Health risks shall be significant if the identified risk shall exceed an incremental cancer risk greater than 10 in 1 million, or a health hazard index (chronic or acute) greater than one. If a potentially significant health risk is identified, the Health Risk Assessment shall identify appropriate measures (i.e., sealed heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system with adequate filtration) to reduce the potential health risk to below the significant risk thresholds, or the sensitive receptor or proposed facility shall be sited in another location.</p> | LS                                     |
| Threshold 4: Odors  | LS                                      | NA  | LS                                     |

**Table ES-5. Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

| Impact  | Level of Significance Before Mitigation | Mitigation Measure  | Level of Significance After Mitigation |
|---|---|---|--|
| <b>Section 3.3, Biological Resources</b>                                    |   |   |  |
| <p>Threshold 1: Candidate, Sensitive, or Special-Status Species</p>         | <p>PS</p>                               | <p><b>BIO-1: Pre-Construction Nesting Bird Surveys.</b> To the extent feasible, grubbing, trimming, or clearing of vegetation from the EVSP Area shall not occur during the general bird nesting season (January 15 through September 15). If grubbing, trimming, or clearing of vegetation cannot feasibly occur outside the general bird nesting season, a qualified biologist shall perform a pre-construction nesting bird survey in the areas in the EVSP Area with vegetation supporting nesting birds. Nesting bird surveys shall occur within 72 hours before the start of vegetation clearing or grubbing to determine if active bird nests are present. If no active bird nests are identified in the EVSP Area or within a 300-foot buffer of the EVSP Area, no further mitigation is necessary. If active nests of bird species covered by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act are detected in the EVSP Area during the pre-construction survey, construction activities shall stay outside a 300-foot buffer around the active nest. For raptor species, this buffer shall be expanded to 500 feet. It is recommended that a biological monitor be present to delineate the boundaries of the buffer area and to monitor the active nest to ensure that nesting behavior is not adversely affected by construction activity. Once the young birds have fledged and a qualified biologist has determined the nest is inactive, normal construction activities can occur.</p>  | <p>LS</p>                              |
| <p>Threshold 2: Riparian Habitat or Other Sensitive Natural Communities</p> | <p>PS</p>                               | <p><b>BIO-2: Aquatic Resources Delineation.</b> Future projects within or adjacent to Escondido Creek that have the potential to impact sensitive aquatic resources shall be required to conduct an aquatic resources delineation following the methods outlined in the 1987 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual and the Regional Supplement to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Arid West Region to map the extent of wetlands and non-wetland waters, determine jurisdiction, and assess potential impacts. The aquatic resources shall be conducted by a qualified biologist. The results of the delineation shall be presented in an Aquatic Resources Delineation Report and be incorporated into the California Environmental Quality Act documents required for approval and permitting of the Project.</p> <p><b>BIO-3: Aquatic Resources Permitting.</b> Future projects within or adjacent to Escondido Creek that have been determined through Mitigation Measure BIO-2 to have a significant impact to sensitive aquatic resources shall obtain required permits and authorizations from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board. The regulatory agency authorizations shall include impact avoidance and minimization measures and mitigation measures for unavoidable impacts. Specific avoidance and minimization measures and mitigation measures for impacts to jurisdictional resources shall be determined through discussions with the regulatory agencies during the project permitting process and may include monetary contributions to a mitigation bank or habitat creation, restoration, or enhancement.</p> | <p>LS</p>                              |

Table ES-5. Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

| Impact   | Level of Significance Before Mitigation | Mitigation Measure  | Level of Significance After Mitigation |
|--|---|---|--|
| Threshold 3: Wetlands  | PS                                      | <b>BIO-2: Aquatic Resources Delineation</b> (see above).<br><b>BIO-3: Aquatic Resources Permitting</b> (see above).   | LS                                     |
| Threshold 4: Native Resident or Migratory Fish or Wildlife Species   | PS                                      | <b>BIO-1: Pre-Constructing Nesting Bird Surveys</b> (see above).  | LS                                     |
| Threshold 5: Protecting Biological Resources                         | LS                                      | NA  | LS                                     |
| Threshold 6: Habitat Conservation Plan                               | LS                                      | NA  | LS                                     |
| <b>Section 3.4, Cultural Resources and Tribal Cultural Resources</b> |   |   |  |
| Threshold 1: Historic Built Environment Resources                    | PS                                      | <p><b>CUL-1: Historical Evaluation.</b> In areas identified as having a Level 1 (red) sensitivity on the Sensitivity Map for Built Environment Cultural Resources in the EVSP Area (Figure 3) in the Cultural Resources Technical Report, projects with the potential to impact historical resources should be avoided or designed to ensure that the Project would not result in a significant impact. A Historical Resources Assessment Report shall be completed for properties to assess impacts to individual resources and the district. This Historical Resources Assessment Report shall be completed by an architectural historian who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for Architectural History and shall consider mitigation measures that take all prudent and feasible measures to minimize harm. Significance evaluations shall not be required if the historical resource has been evaluated for California Environmental Quality Act significance or for California Register of Historical Resources eligibility within the last five years and if there has been no change in the conditions that contributed to the determination of significance or eligibility. A historical resource shall be re-evaluated if its condition or setting has either improved or deteriorated, if new information is available, or if the resource is becoming increasingly rare due to the loss of other similar resources. The Historical Resources Assessment Report shall include an evaluation of whether the Project meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. New construction in a historic district shall also be reviewed to ensure that it meets the standards so that it shall not have an adverse impact (including visual impacts or impacts to setting).</p> <p>Projects in Level 2 (orange) areas where potential historical resources have been identified shall also be avoided or redesigned when possible. Areas in Level 2 (orange) indicate the presence of a potential historic district, but specific contributors have not been identified. A Historical Resources Assessment Report that includes an evaluation of the resource both individually and as a contributor to the proposed historic district shall be completed. If the resource is determined to be a non-contributor</p> | LS                                     |

**Table ES-5. Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

| Impact                                       | Level of Significance Before Mitigation | Mitigation Measure  | Level of Significance After Mitigation |
|--|---|---|--|
|  |   | <p>or not individually eligible, the Historical Resources Assessment Report shall also assess the potential for adverse impacts (including visual impacts or impacts to setting) to the proposed district in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines.</p> <p>Projects in the Level 3 (yellow) area of sensitivity have the potential to impact a historical resource because the level includes all buildings more than 45 years old. A Historical Resources Assessment Report evaluating the building and any potential historic district to which the historical resource may contribute shall be prepared. If no historical resources are identified, then no further action shall be required beyond documentation of the resources on the appropriate California Department of Parks and Recreation site forms. If a historical resource is identified, the Historical Resources Assessment Report shall assess the potential impacts from the Project following the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines.</p>  |  |
| <p>Threshold 2: Archaeological Resources</p> | <p>PS</p>                               | <p><b>CUL-2: Archaeological Evaluation Program.</b> Before the issuance of a grading permit, future discretionary projects in the EVSP Area shall be reviewed by the City of Escondido Planning Department to determine if a Cultural Resources Study is required. Site-specific archaeological surveys shall be conducted for the following types of projects: (1) projects in areas that have not been previously developed, or (2) projects that may impact built environment resources that meet the age threshold for eligibility.</p> <p>For projects requiring a Cultural Resources Study, the work shall be conducted by a City of Escondido-approved qualified archaeologist to determine the likelihood of the project site to contain archaeological resources by reviewing site photographs and existing historical information and conducting a site visit. A Native American monitor shall be on site during site-specific archaeological surveys. Before field reconnaissance, background research, including a records search at the South Coastal Information Center, shall be required. A record search from a nearby property may be used if the previous search was conducted within the last two years. In addition, a review of the Sacred Lands File maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission shall also be conducted.</p> <p>If potential archaeological resources are identified through background research and field surveys, those resources shall be avoided, or significance evaluations shall be required for the potential archaeological resources identified. Potential resources include new resources identified as a result of a survey, previously recorded resources that have not been evaluated and are relocated during a survey, and previously recorded sites not relocated during the survey if there is a likelihood that the resources still exist. Significance evaluations shall not be required if the resources have been</p> | <p>LS</p>                              |

**Table ES-5. Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

| Impact | Level of Significance Before Mitigation | Mitigation Measure  | Level of Significance After Mitigation |
|--------|---|---|--|
|        |   | <p>evaluated for California Environmental Quality Act significance within the last five years and if there has been no change in the conditions that contributed to the determination of significance or eligibility. An archaeological testing program shall be required for archaeological sites in need of resource significance evaluation. Archaeological testing programs include evaluating the horizontal and vertical dimensions of a site, chronological placement, site function, artifact/ecofact density and variability, presence and absence of subsurface features, and research potential. Tribal representatives and/or Native American monitors shall be involved in making recommendations regarding the significance of prehistoric archaeological sites during this phase of the process. The testing program may require re-evaluation of the Project, which could result in a combination of project redesign to preserve significant resources and mitigation in the form of data recovery and monitoring (as recommended by the qualified archaeologist and Tribal representatives and/or Native American monitors).</p> <p>If significant archaeological resources are identified within the project footprint, the site may be eligible for designation on one or more registers. If no significant resources are found, and site conditions are such that there is no potential for further discoveries, then no further action shall be required. Resources found to be non-significant as a result of a survey and/or assessment shall require no further work beyond documentation of the resources on the appropriate California Department of Parks and Recreation site forms and inclusion of results in the survey and/or assessment report. If no significant resources are found, but results of the initial evaluation and testing phase indicate that there is still a potential for resources to be present in portions of the property that could not be tested, then mitigation monitoring shall be required.</p> <p>Avoiding and preserving the resources through project redesign is the preferred mitigation for archaeological resources. If avoidance is not possible, the City of Escondido shall consult with all applicable parties, including Native American Tribes if prehistoric, in an effort to determine measures to mitigate any potential impacts to the resource in accordance with California Public Resources Code section 21083.2 and the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines section 15126.4. A project archaeologist who meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualifications Standards for Archaeology shall employ measures that include documentation of the resource.</p> <p>For archaeological resources for which preservation is not an option, a research design for a data recovery program shall be prepared. The data recovery program shall be based on a written research design and would be subject to the provisions as outlined in California Public Resources Code section 21083.2.</p> <p><b>CUL-3: Qualified Archaeologist and Native American Monitoring.</b> Prior to issuance of a grading permit, the Applicant shall provide written verification to the City of Escondido that a qualified</p> |  |



**Table ES-5. Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

| Impact | Level of Significance Before Mitigation | Mitigation Measure  | Level of Significance After Mitigation |
|--------|---|---|--|
|        |   | <p>archaeologist and a Native American monitor associated with a Tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project location have been retained to implement a monitoring program for all subsurface investigations, including geotechnical testing and other ground-disturbing activities, whenever an archaeological site or a Native American Traditional Cultural Property within the project footprint would be impacted. The archaeologist shall be responsible for coordinating with the Native American monitor. This verification shall be presented to the City of Escondido in a letter from the project archaeologist that confirms the selected Native American monitor is associated with a traditionally and culturally affiliated Tribe. The City of Escondido, prior to any pre-construction meeting, shall approve all people involved in the monitoring program.</p> <p><b>CUL-4: Attend Pre-Grading Meeting.</b> The qualified archaeologist and a Native American monitor shall attend a pre-grading meeting with the grading contractors to explain and coordinate the requirements of the monitoring program. During the initial grubbing, site grading, excavation, or disturbance of the ground surface, the qualified archaeologist and the Native American monitor shall be on site full time. The frequency of inspections shall depend on the rate of excavation, the materials excavated, and any discoveries of Tribal Cultural Resources as defined in California Public Resources Code section 21074. Archaeological and Native American monitoring shall be discontinued when the depth of grading and soil conditions no longer retain the potential to contain cultural deposits. The qualified archaeologist, in consultation with the Native American monitor, shall be responsible for determining the duration and frequency of monitoring.</p> <p><b>CUL-5: Temporarily Halt Ground Disturbance Operation.</b> In the event that previously unidentified archaeological and/or Tribal Cultural Resources are discovered, the qualified archaeologist and the Native American monitor shall have the authority to temporarily divert or temporarily halt ground disturbance operation in the area of discovery to allow for the evaluation of potentially significant cultural resources. Isolates and clearly non-significant deposits shall be minimally documented in the field and collected so the monitored grading can proceed.</p> <p><b>CUL-6: Notify the City of Escondido of Archaeological and/or Tribal Cultural Resource Discovery.</b> If a potentially significant archaeological and/or Tribal Cultural Resource is discovered, the qualified archaeologist shall notify the City of Escondido of said discovery. The qualified archaeologist, in consultation with the City of Escondido, the traditionally and culturally affiliated Tribe, and the Native American monitor, shall determine the significance of the discovered resource. A recommendation for the Tribal Cultural Resource's treatment and disposition shall be made by the qualified archaeologist, in consultation with the traditionally and culturally affiliated Tribe and the Native American monitor, and be submitted to the City of Escondido for review and approval.</p> |  |

**Table ES-5. Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

| Impact | Level of Significance Before Mitigation | Mitigation Measure   | Level of Significance After Mitigation |
|--------|---|--|--|
|        |   | <p><b>CUL-7: Avoidance and/or Preservation of Discovery.</b> The avoidance and/or preservation of the significant Tribal Cultural Resource and/or unique archaeological resource must first be considered and evaluated as required by the California Environmental Quality Act. Where any significant Tribal Cultural Resources and/or unique archaeological resources have been discovered and avoidance and/or preservation measures are deemed to be infeasible by the City of Escondido, a research design and data recovery program to mitigate impacts shall be prepared by the qualified archaeologist (using professional archaeological methods), in consultation with the traditionally and culturally affiliated Tribe and the Native American monitor, and shall be subject to approval by the City of Escondido. The archaeological monitor, in consultation with the Native American monitor, shall determine the amount of material to be recovered for an adequate artifact sample for analysis. Before construction activities are allowed to resume in the affected area, the research design and data recovery program activities must be concluded to the satisfaction of the City of Escondido.</p> <p><b>CUL-8: Collection and Treatment of Resources.</b> If the qualified archaeologist elects to collect any Tribal Cultural Resources, the Native American monitor must be present during any testing or cataloging of those resources. Moreover, if the qualified archaeologist does not collect the cultural resources that are unearthed during the ground-disturbing activities, the Native American monitor may, at their discretion, collect said resources and provide them to the traditionally and culturally affiliated Tribe for respectful and dignified treatment in accordance with the Tribe’s cultural and spiritual traditions. Any Tribal Cultural Resources collected by the qualified archaeologist shall be repatriated to the traditionally and culturally affiliated Tribe. Should the traditionally and culturally affiliated Tribe or other traditionally and culturally affiliated Tribe decline the collection, the collection shall be curated at the San Diego Archaeological Center. All other resources determined not to be Tribal Cultural Resources by the qualified archaeologist, in consultation with the Native American monitor, shall be curated at the San Diego Archaeological Center.</p> <p><b>CUL-9: Monitoring and/or Evaluation Report.</b> Prior to the release of the grading bond, a monitoring report and/or evaluation report, if appropriate, which describes the results, analysis, and conclusion of the archaeological monitoring program and any data recovery program on the project site, shall be submitted by the qualified archaeologist to the City of Escondido. The Native American monitor shall be responsible for providing any notes or comments to the qualified archaeologist in a timely manner to be submitted with the report. The report shall include California Department of Parks and Recreation Primary and Archaeological Site Forms for any newly discovered resources.</p> |  |

**Table ES-5. Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

| Impact                     | Level of Significance Before Mitigation | Mitigation Measure  | Level of Significance After Mitigation |
|----------------------------|---|---|--|
| Threshold 3: Human Remains | PS                                      | <p>See <b>Mitigation Measures CUL-2, CUL-3, CUL-4, CUL-5, CUL-6, CUL-7, CUL-8, and CUL-9.</b></p> <p><b>CUL-10: Identification and Treatment of Human Remains.</b> If Native American human remains are discovered within a project footprint, the City of Escondido shall work with the most likely descendants identified by the Native American Heritage Commission as provided in California Public Resources Code section 5097.98. The applicant may develop an agreement for treating or disposing of, with appropriate dignity, the human remains and any items of cultural patrimony associated with Native American burials with the appropriate Native Americans as identified by the Native American Heritage Commission. Action implementing such an agreement is exempt from the general prohibition on disinterring, disturbing, or removing human remains from any location other than a dedicated cemetery (California Health and Safety Code section 7050.5):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the event of the accidental discovery or recognition of any human remains in any location other than a dedicated cemetery, the following steps shall be taken: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All construction activity shall cease within 100 feet of the discovery until the county coroner is contacted and has completed their study.</li> <li>• The county coroner shall be contacted to determine whether an investigation of the cause of death is required.</li> <li>• If the county coroner determines that the remains are Native American, they shall contact the Native American Heritage Commission within 24 hours.</li> <li>• The Native American Heritage Commission shall identify the person or people it believes to be the most likely descendant from the deceased Native American.</li> <li>• The landowner shall discuss and confer with the most likely descendant regarding all reasonable options for treatment of human remains and any associated grave goods as provided in California Public Resources Code section 5097.98.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• As part of the objectives, criteria, and procedures required by California Public Resources Code section 21082, the City of Escondido shall make provisions for historical or unique archaeological resources accidentally discovered during construction. These provisions shall include an immediate evaluation of the find by a qualified archaeologist. If the archaeologist determines the find to be a significant historical or archaeological resource, contingency funding and a time allotment sufficient to allow for implementation of avoidance measures or appropriate mitigation shall be necessary. Work may continue on other parts of the project site while resource mitigation takes place.</li> </ul> | LS                                     |

Table ES-5. Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

| Impact  | Level of Significance Before Mitigation | Mitigation Measure  | Level of Significance After Mitigation |
|---|---|---|--|
| Threshold 4: Tribal Cultural Resources              | PS                                      | <p>See <b>Mitigation Measures CUL-2, CUL-3, CUL-4, CUL-5, CUL-6, CUL-7, CUL-8, CUL-9, and CUL-10.</b></p> <p><b>CUL-11: Tribal Cultural Resources Evaluation.</b> For any project with the potential to result in adverse impacts to Tribal Cultural Resources, the City of Escondido shall avoid and/or minimize impacts. Coordination and collaboration regarding the resources shall be completed with Tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project location institutions, such as the South Coastal Information Center and the Native American Heritage Commission, including consultation as outlined in Senate Bill 18 and Assembly Bill 52. The resources shall be treated with culturally appropriate dignity, taking into account the Tribal cultural values and meaning of the resources, including but not limited to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protecting the cultural character and integrity of the resources</li> <li>• Protecting the traditional use of the resources</li> <li>• Protecting the confidentiality of the resources</li> </ul> <p>If possible, the City of Escondido shall avoid and preserve the resources in place, including but not limited to planning and construction to avoid the resources and to protect the resources' cultural and natural context.</p> <p>Greenspace, parks, or other open space shall use appropriate planning to incorporate the resources with culturally appropriate protection and management criteria. Permanent conservation easements or other interests in real property shall be created with culturally appropriate management criteria for the purposes of preserving or using the resources or places.</p> | LS                                     |
| <b>Section 3.5, Greenhouse Gas Emissions</b>        |   |   |  |
| Threshold 1: Generation of Greenhouse Gas Emissions | LS                                      | NA  | LS                                     |
| Threshold 2: Applicable Plan                        | LS                                      | NA  | LS                                     |
| <b>Section 3.6, Noise</b>                           |   |   |  |
| Threshold 1: Exceedance of Noise Standards          | PS                                      | Implementation of the EVSP would result in a direct noise impact on one segment of Valley Parkway and one segment of Date Street. The 2012 General Plan Update, Downtown Specific Plan Update, and CAP PEIR considered mitigation measures that would fully reduce impacts to below a level of significance, including construction of noise barriers and implementation of a Citywide moratorium on building permits for projects that would result in a potentially significant increase in regional roadway noise for which no feasible mitigation is available. However, the City determined that these measures  | SU                                     |

**Table ES-5. Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

| Impact   | Level of Significance Before Mitigation | Mitigation Measure  | Level of Significance After Mitigation |
|--|---|---|--|
|  |   | <p>are infeasible. Noise barriers would potentially require installation of noise walls in private property, in a designated right-of-way, or otherwise outside of the City’s jurisdiction, which may not be allowed by a property owner or the jurisdiction in which the sound barrier would be located. The feasibility of noise walls is also restricted by access requirements for driveways, presences of local cross streets, underground utilities, other noise sources in the area, and safety considerations. Finally, construction of a noise barrier would potentially wall off existing neighborhoods or individual residences from the surrounding community, which could result in adverse impacts on aesthetics, land use, and public safety. For example, the impacted segments of Valley Parkway and Date Street include existing driveways and cross streets on both sides of the roadways that would reduce wall effectiveness. Additionally, walls on these segments would block existing residential and commercial entrances from street view, which would be a potential aesthetic and public safety impact by reducing visibility and accessibility. A building permit moratorium would impede the City’s ability to implement the EVSP because it would prohibit future development in areas identified for increased growth under the Escondido General Plan in the planning area. This mitigation measure would conflict with the Escondido General Plan and the City’s ability to meet the housing needs of existing and future residents.</p> <p>For the reasons listed above, mitigation measures are infeasible for the Project.</p> |  |
| <p>Threshold 2: Excessive Groundborne Vibration or Noise</p> | <p>PS</p>                               | <p><b>NOI-1: Construction Vibration Best Management Practices.</b> All general construction activities that take place within 100 feet of a building with the potential to be damaged by excessive vibration, or general construction within 200 feet, or pile-driving, blasting, or other high-impact construction equipment within 900 feet of a daytime noise-sensitive land use (public and private educational facilities, churches, libraries, museums, cultural facilities, golf courses, and passive recreational parks) shall do one of the following: (1) retain a qualified acoustician to demonstrate that vibration will not exceed the applicable Federal Transit Administration threshold (65 vibration decibel for vibration-sensitive land uses of 80 vibration decibel for other daytime land uses), or (2) implement the following construction best management practices recommended by the Federal Railroad Administration in the High Speed Ground Transportation Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment. The best management practices shall be included in project construction documents, including the grading plan and construction contract. Practices shall include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sequence of operations:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Phase demolition, earthmoving, and ground-impacting operations to occur in different time periods.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Alternative construction methods:</li> </ol>  | <p>SU</p>                              |

**Table ES-5. Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

| Impact   | Level of Significance Before Mitigation | Mitigation Measure   | Level of Significance After Mitigation |
|--|---|--|--|
|  |   | i. Avoid impact pile-driving where possible in vibration-sensitive areas. Drilled piles or the use of a sonic or vibratory pile driver causes lower vibration levels where the geological conditions permit their use.<br>ii. Select demolition methods not involving impact, where possible. For example, using pressure bursting for concrete demolition results in lower vibration levels than impact demolition by pavement breakers, and milling generates lower vibration levels than excavation using clam shell or chisel drops.<br>iii. Avoid vibratory rollers and packers near sensitive receptors. |  |
| Threshold 3: Aircraft Noise                                  | NI                                      | NA   | NI                                     |
| <b>Section 3.7, Transportation</b>                           |   |  |  |
| Threshold 1: Circulation System Performance                  | LS                                      | NA   | LS                                     |
| Threshold 2: Induction of Substantial Vehicle Miles Traveled | LS                                      | NA   | LS                                     |
| Threshold 3: Hazardous Design Features                       | LS                                      | NA   | LS                                     |
| Threshold 4: Inadequate Emergency Access                     | LS                                      | NA   | LS                                     |

**Notes:** LS = Less than Significant Impact; NI = No Impact; PS = Potentially Significant Impact; SU = Significant and Unavoidable

## Chapter 1 Introduction

---

The City of Escondido (City) has prepared this Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) to inform the public, local community, organizations, responsible agencies, trustee agencies, and other interested public agencies about potential significant environmental effects resulting from implementation of the East Valley Specific Plan (EVSP or Project) and possible measures to mitigate those significant effects and alternatives to the Project.

### 1.1 Project Overview

The Project proposes a new EVSP. The EVSP would provide a forward-looking vision for the EVSP Area (i.e., the 191-acre area in the City covered by the EVSP) in central Escondido. The EVSP would identify goals, policies, design standards, and implementation strategies for categories such as land use, mobility, and parks and open space opportunities. The EVSP is intended to guide private development and public investment in the EVSP Area, consistent with the adopted 2012 Escondido General Plan. Development of the EVSP Area would allow up to 6,164 dwelling units, 657,786 square feet of office uses, 1,025,801 square feet of retail uses, 25 acres of parks, and 123,084 square feet of community services.

### 1.2 Purpose and Use of the Program Environmental Impact Report

Pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) section 15121, an EIR is an informational document to inform members of the public and agency decision makers regarding the significant environmental impacts that would result from implementation of a project, identify feasible ways to reduce the significant effects of a project, and describe a reasonable range of feasible alternatives to a project that would reduce one or more significant effects and still meet the project's objectives. In instances where significant impacts cannot be avoided or mitigated, a project may be carried out or approved if the approving agency finds that economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits outweigh the unavoidable significant environmental impacts.

A PEIR is an EIR that may be prepared for a series of actions that constitute one large project and are related (1) geographically; (2) as logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions; (3) in connection with issuance of rules, regulations, plans, or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program; or (4) as individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar environmental impacts that can be mitigated in similar ways. The intent of this PEIR is to provide sufficient information on the potential environmental impacts of the Project to allow the City to make an informed decision regarding approval of the Project. Specific required discretionary actions are described in Section 2.5, Discretionary Actions, in Chapter 2, Project Description. This PEIR was prepared in accordance with Guidelines for implementation of CEQA, published by the Resources Agency of the

state of CA (Title 14, California Code Regulation 1500 et seq), and the City of Escondido procedures for implementing CEQA.

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, California Public Resources Code section 21000 et seq. (CEQA), and the CEQA Guidelines, Title 14, Chapter 3, of the California Code of Regulations section 15000 et seq. (CEQA Guidelines), the City is the lead agency for the Project. As such, the City is required to consider the information in this PEIR and any other relevant information in the administrative record in making its decision on the Project. This PEIR does not determine the ultimate decision that will be made regarding the Project. Nevertheless, CEQA requires the City to consider the information in this PEIR before approving the Project and to make Findings of Fact regarding each significant impact identified in this PEIR.

The City has prepared this PEIR for the following purposes:

- To satisfy the requirements of CEQA, including California Public Resources Code section 21080
- To inform the public, local community, organizations, and responsible, trustee, and other interested public agencies of the nature of the Project; the Project's potentially significant environmental effects; the Project's potentially feasible measures to mitigate those impacts; and the reasonable potentially feasible alternatives to the Project
- For consideration by responsible agencies in issuing permits and approvals for the development that would occur from the implementation of the Project

CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines require the decision-making agency to evaluate, as applicable, the economic, social, technological, legal, or other benefits of a project against the project's unavoidable environmental impacts when considering project approval.

This PEIR will be circulated to agencies with jurisdiction over resources affected by the Project, including local, state, and federal agencies, and interested parties and individuals. In reviewing this PEIR, reviewers should focus on the sufficiency of the document in identifying and analyzing potentially significant effects on the environment and avoiding or mitigating the significant effects of the Project.

In practice, this PEIR will be used as a first tier of environmental review for development projects proposed in accordance with the EVSP. This PEIR has been developed specifically to comply with California Public Resources Code section 21083.3 and CEQA Guidelines section 15183 to minimize future environmental review of projects within the EVSP Area. California Public Resources Code section 21083.3 and CEQA Guidelines section 15183 provide an exemption from environmental review for projects that are consistent with the development density established by the zoning, community plan, or General Plan policies for which an EIR was certified, except as might be necessary to examine whether there are project-specific effects that are peculiar to the



project or its location, or to analyze potentially significant off-site or cumulative impacts that were not adequately discussed in the EIR.

### **1.3 Lead, Responsible, and Trustee Agencies**

#### **1.3.1 Lead Agency**

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines sections 15050 through 15053 and section 15367, the City is the designated lead agency, which is defined as the “public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project.” As the lead agency, the City is responsible for determining the scope of the environmental analysis, preparing the PEIR, and responding to comments received on the Draft PEIR. Before making a decision to approve the Project, the City, as the lead agency, is required to certify that the PEIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA, the decision-making body has reviewed and considered the information in the PEIR, and the PEIR reflects the independent judgment of the City.

#### **1.3.2 Trustee, Responsible, and Cooperating Agencies**

Other federal, state, and local agencies are involved in the review and approval of a project, including those agencies designated as trustee and responsible agencies. A trustee agency is a State of California agency that has jurisdiction by law over natural resources affected by a project that are held in trust for the people of the state. A responsible agency is an agency, other than the lead agency, that has responsibility for carrying out or approving a project and has discretionary approval power over the project. Responsible and trustee agencies are consulted by the lead agency to ensure the opportunity for input and also review and comment on the Draft PEIR. Responsible agencies also use and rely on the CEQA document in their decision-making. Agencies other than the City may require permits, approvals, and/or consultation to implement development consistent with the EVSP.

### **1.4 Program Environmental Impact Report Review Process**

#### **1.4.1 Notice of Preparation**

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15082, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) was circulated for public and public agency review from February 11, 2021, through March 12, 2021 (included as Appendix A). The NOP was available on the City’s website and was circulated to all interested parties, stakeholders, agencies, and groups in the EVSP Area. The purpose of the NOP is to provide notification that a PEIR for the Project is being prepared and to solicit guidance on the scope and content of the PEIR. At that time, the Project was part of the Housing and Community Investment Study (Housing Study), which included three components: the Housing Element Update, the Sector Feasibility Study, and the EVSP. The Housing Element Update and Sector Feasibility Study have since been removed from the analysis in the PEIR and addressed as a separate project with an independent CEQA process compliant with state law.

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15082, the City held a public scoping meeting for the PEIR on March 2, 2021. Public agencies and members of the public were invited to attend and provide input on the scope of this PEIR.

#### 1.4.2 Comments Received in Response to the Notice of Preparation

Comments from the public and public agencies in response to the NOP are provided in Appendix A. Several specific environmental issues were raised in the comments on the NOP. A summary of these comments and the PEIR chapters/sections in which they are addressed are provided in Table 1-1, Notice of Preparation Comment Letter Index. Only comments that pertain to the environmental scope of this PEIR are summarized.

**Table 1-1. Notice of Preparation Comment Letter Index**

| Comment Letter | Commenter   | Subject of Comments  | Location in PEIR Where Comments are Addressed            |
|----------------|---|--|--|
| 1              | Native American Heritage Commission   | AB 52 and SB 18 consultation   | Section 3.4, Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources      |
| 2              | Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians  | Consultation with the affiliated Native American Tribes  | Section 3.4, Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources      |
| 3              | Vallecitos Water District   | Adequate supply of water and wastewater capacity   | Chapter 4, Effects Found Not to Be Significant           |
| 4              | California Department of Transportation                                     | Transportation impact study, complete streets and mobility network, land use and smart growth, project design, and responsible agency role | Section 3.7, Transportation                              |
| 5              | SANDAG  | Parking and transportation demand management policies  | Section 3.7, Transportation                              |
| 6              | Southwest Regional Council of Carpenters via Mitchell Tsai, attorney at law | Construction activities  | Chapter 2, Project Description; Section 3.2, Air Quality |

**Notes:** AB = Assembly Bill; PEIR = Program Environmental Impact Report; SANDAG = San Diego Association of Governments; SB = Senate Bill

Based on a review of the Project and comments received during the NOP public review period (Appendix A), the City determined that a PEIR addressing the following environmental issue areas should be prepared:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Noise
- Transportation

The specific topics are detailed in Chapter 3, Environmental Analysis, of this PEIR.

This PEIR evaluates direct impacts, reasonably foreseeable indirect impacts, and cumulative impacts resulting from planning, construction, and implementation of the Project using the most current information available and in accordance with the provisions set forth in CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines. In addition, this PEIR recommends potentially feasible mitigation measures, where possible, and project alternatives that would reduce or eliminate significant, adverse environmental effects.

### **1.4.3 Draft Program Environmental Impact Report and Public Review**

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15105, this PEIR is being circulated for public review and comment for a period of 45 days. During this period, the public and public agencies can submit comments on this PEIR's accuracy and completeness to the City. The 45-day public review period for this PEIR will be from March 30, 2023, through May 15, 2023. The public can review this PEIR at the following address during normal business hours (Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.) or on the City's website at <https://www.escondido.org/hcis>.

City of Escondido, Planning Division  
201 North Broadway  
Escondido, California 92025

The City encourages all comments on this PEIR to be submitted in writing. Comments or questions regarding this PEIR should be addressed to the following:

Adam Finestone  
City of Escondido, Planning Division  
201 North Broadway  
Escondido, California 92025  
Email: [afinestone@escondido.org](mailto:afinestone@escondido.org)  
Phone: (760) 839-6203

### **1.4.4 Final Program Environmental Impact Report and Certification**

Upon completion of the Draft PEIR public review period, a Final PEIR will be prepared. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15132, the Final PEIR will consist of (1) the Draft PEIR; (2) the comments and recommendations received on the Draft PEIR; (3) a list of people, organizations, and public agencies that commented on the Draft PEIR; (4) the City's responses to significant environmental points raised by the public and agency comments submitted during the review and consultation process; and (5) any other information the City has added to the Draft PEIR. The Final PEIR will also include a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program prepared in accordance with CEQA (California Public Resources Code section 21081.6). The Final PEIR will address any revisions to the Draft PEIR made in response to public or public agency comments. All of these components will compose the Final PEIR for the Project. Before the City can review the Project for approval, the City must first certify that the Final PEIR has been completed in compliance with

CEQA, that it has reviewed and considered the information in the Final PEIR, and that the Final PEIR reflects the independent judgment of the City. The City will also be required to adopt Findings of Fact and a Statement of Overriding Considerations if significant and unavoidable impacts are determined.

## **1.5 Documents Incorporated by Reference**

CEQA Guidelines section 15150 allows for incorporation by reference of “all or portions of another document which is a matter of public record or is generally available to the public.” Incorporation by reference is used principally as a means of reducing the size of PEIRs. This PEIR relies in part on data, environmental evaluations, mitigation measures, and other components of PEIRs and plans prepared by the City for areas in the Project vicinity. The following documents are incorporated by reference in this PEIR and are available for review online at <https://www.escondido.org/planning>:

- Escondido General Plan and certified 2012 General Plan Update (City of Escondido 2012a)
- Downtown Specific Plan, as amended (City of Escondido 2020a)
- Escondido General Plan Update, Downtown Specific Plan Update, and CAP PEIR (City of Escondido 2012b)
- City of Escondido Final CAP (City of Escondido 2021) and Final CAP Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) (City of Escondido 2020b)

## **1.6 Organization of the Program Environmental Impact Report**

This PEIR is organized into three volumes. Volume I includes the Draft PEIR. Volume II includes the technical appendices prepared in support of the Draft PEIR. When the PEIR is finalized, Volume III will contain the Final PEIR, including comments received on the Draft PEIR, the City’s responses to those comments, a summary of PEIR revisions or enhancements, the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Project, and other information required or authorized by CEQA Guidelines section 15132.

## Chapter 2 Project Description

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The purpose of this chapter is to describe the EVSP for the public, reviewing agencies, and decision makers. According to CEQA Guidelines section 15124, a complete project description must contain the following information: (1) the precise location and boundaries of the project, as shown on a detailed project site map and a regional map; (2) a statement of the objectives sought by the project; (3) a description of the project’s technical, economic, and environmental characteristics; and (4) a statement describing the intended uses of the applicable EIR, including, if known to the lead agency, a list of the agencies expected to use the applicable EIR in their decision-making; a list of permits and other approvals required to implement the project; and a list of related environmental review and consultation requirements required by federal, state, or local laws, regulations, or policies. The project description included in this PEIR includes these referenced criteria.

### 2.1 Project Location and Setting

#### 2.1.1 Location

The City is in northern County of San Diego (County), approximately 30 miles north of Downtown San Diego and 18 miles east of the Pacific Ocean (Figure 2-1, Regional Location). The City is situated in a natural valley at approximately 615 feet above mean sea level and surrounded by rolling hills and rugged terrain ranging up to 4,200 above mean sea level. The City is bounded to the north by the unincorporated County communities of Valley Center and Hidden Meadows, to the west by the City of San Marcos, to the south by Lake Hodges Reservoir and the City of San Diego, and to the east by unincorporated County. Interstate (I-) 15 bisects the City in a north–south direction, and State Route (SR-) 78 transitions from freeway to surface streets in an east–west direction through the City (Figure 2-2, Project Location).

The EVSP Area is approximately 191 acres, in central Escondido, immediately adjacent to and east of downtown. As shown on Figure 2-3, East Valley Specific Plan Vicinity, the EVSP Area is generally bounded by Escondido Creek to the north; Harding Street to the east; East Grand Avenue and East 2nd Avenue to the south; and North Hickory, South Hickory, and North Fig Streets to the west. The EVSP Area is adjacent to a variety of neighborhoods: Downtown Escondido to the west, residential neighborhoods to the north and south, and large commercial shopping centers to the east. The Escondido Transit Center is an approximately 20-minute walk southwest of the EVSP Area, and multiple transit stops exist throughout the EVSP Area.

#### 2.1.2 Environmental Setting

##### 2.1.2.1 Physical Setting

The EVSP Area ranges in elevation from approximately 650 to 715 feet above mean sea level. The EVSP Area offers eastern-facing views of Bottle Peak of the Peninsular Ranges. Escondido Creek,

which primarily comprises a concrete-lined flood control channel, flows through the center of the City and along the northern edge of the EVSP Area in a primarily east–west direction. Escondido Creek forms the “spine” of the City’s Class 1 bicycle facility and also serves as an alternative non-motorized access route linking residents to employment, shopping, and services. Existing uses consist primarily of strip commercial, big box retailers, and small medical and professional office uses.

### **2.1.2.2 Historical Setting**

The EVSP Area was originally zoned as an agricultural district in the 1930s that was later developed with mobile home parks and commercial development in the 1950s and 1960s. The commercial development is automobile-oriented, characterized by big- and mid-box retail, strip commercial, and food service establishments with ample parking generally along the street frontage. Construction of the Escondido Creek flood control channel, known as the Escondido Creek Watershed Project, began in 1965.

The former Palomar Health Downtown Campus building along East Valley Parkway and west of the EVSP Area was constructed in phases between 1957 and 2002. During this time, the campus influenced the expansion of medical-oriented office and commercial uses developed on the western side of the EVSP Area. In 2012, Palomar Health opened the Palomar Medical Center Escondido in western Escondido, to which many of the Palomar Health Downtown Campus facilities were relocated. The Palomar Health Downtown Campus has been demolished, and construction of a mixed-use residential and commercial project is underway at this time.

### **2.1.3 Project Background and Purpose**

In 2020, the City was awarded grant funding to develop a 6th Cycle (2021–2029) Housing Element Update, a Sector Feasibility Study, and the EVSP as a comprehensive planning and zoning document for the western portion of the Escondido General Plan covering the East Valley Parkway Target Area. The Housing Element Update is addressed as a separate and independent project. The environmental review for the Housing Element Update was processed under a Third Addendum to the certified 2012 General Plan Update, Downtown Specific Plan Update, and CAP PEIR, which was adopted by the City Council on August 11, 2021, and amended by the City Council on March 22, 2023.

The Housing Element serves as an integrated part of the Escondido General Plan and is subject to detailed statutory requirements, including a requirement to be updated every eight years and be subject to mandatory review by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). State law requires that each jurisdiction demonstrate in its Housing Element that the land inventory is adequate to accommodate that jurisdiction’s fair share of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA). The City’s share of regional future housing needs is 9,607 new units for the period of April 15, 2021, to April 15, 2029.

In 2004, the City Council approved the East Valley Parkway Area Plan with the purpose of implementing a comprehensive strategy for the revitalization of the physical character and economic health of the East Valley Parkway businesses and communities. The East Valley Parkway Area Plan has been the City's implementing document for this area of the City. In 2012, the City prepared the Escondido General Plan, which identifies 11 target areas to achieve the Escondido General Plan vision, including the East Valley Parkway Target Area. These 11 target areas provide unique opportunities for achieving the Escondido General Plan vision and involves a re-evaluation of land use patterns and policies (Figure 2-4, 2012 General Plan Update Study Areas). The EVSP is intended to be a comprehensive planning and zoning document for the western portion of the East Valley Parkway Target Area. The 191-acre EVSP Area is composed of private and public ownerships and is included within the limits of the East Valley Parkway Target Area and establishes a link between implementing the goals and ideas of the Escondido General Plan, Housing Element, and Sector Feasibility Study.

## **2.2 Project Objectives**

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15124(b), the City identified the following objectives for the Project:

1. Create a self-contained land use pattern that offers a mix of compatible lands uses and quality landscaped community spaces.
2. Enhance the quality of the City's housing stock that is environmentally mindful and equitable while preserving the physical character and pride of the EVSP Area.
3. Provide a range of housing opportunities for all income groups and households that seamlessly supports all right-of-way users.
4. Plan both public and private development to provide safe vehicular circulation connected to safe multimodal transportation with reliable and timely transit options.
5. Provide for robust economic activity within the EVSP Area.

## **2.3 Project Components**

The overall purpose of the EVSP is to guide redevelopment of the underutilized residential and commercial land of low-intensity general retail, office, restaurants, and small-scale service businesses into a new neighborhood with a mix of residential, commercial, public, and open space uses. It would accommodate increased housing density and other transit-supportive uses and improvements. The additional units needed to meet the City's RHNA, as established in the Housing Element, would be accomplished through land use designation changes and rezoning in the EVSP Area.

The EVSP would propose goals, policies, design standards, and implementation strategies to guide private development and public investment through 2035. The EVSP would incorporate a dynamic mix of land uses, ensuring a variety of residential options, linked together through safe streets and

a business corridor. The EVSP would address the following topics: EVSP Density Transfer Program, land use, parks and public realm, mobility, public services and infrastructure, and development standards and design guidelines.

### **2.3.1 East Valley Specific Plan Density Transfer Program**

The purpose of the EVSP Density Transfer Program is to enable the City to transfer densities from undeveloped or underutilized properties in the EVSP Area (sending areas) to other properties in the EVSP Area (receiving areas) to enable a developing property to increase its density beyond what current zoning would permit. The transferred density would be held in a density credit pool. Allocation of the density from the pool would only occur when developing properties request additional density beyond that permitted by current zoning. The request for an increase in units would require Escondido City Council approval of a Planned Development Permit.

### **2.3.2 Land Use**

The Project would involve the redesignation and rezoning of most of the 191-acre EVSP Area (127 acres excluding rights-of-way) from existing commercial and office uses to mixed-use and high-density residential uses to encourage new housing opportunities, improve economic vibrancy, and allow for flexibility in use and implementation as the EVSP Area changes over time. The proposed land use plan would focus on maintaining many of the existing uses while clustering them in different areas to create a more cohesive pattern and design. The proposed land use plan also would incorporate a dynamic mix of land uses, ensuring a variety of residential options, linked together through safe streets and a business corridor. As shown on Figure 2-5, East Valley Specific Plan Proposed Land Use Plan, targeted areas for General Commercial and Mixed-Use would be along both sides of East Valley Parkway, and urban residential areas would be north and south of the mixed-use corridor and a Park Overlay Zone would be placed in areas best suited for a park as well as along residential alleyways to create alley linear parks. Table 2-1, East Valley Specific Plan Land Use Designations, provides a summary of the proposed land use designations, permitted densities in those designations, and a description of the uses in the EVSP Area.



**Table 2-1. East Valley Specific Plan Land Use Designations**

| Land Use Designation | Applicable Zoning | Description  | Density                    | TPP      | Approximate Yield  |
|----------------------|-------------------|--|----------------------------|----------|--|
| Urban IV/V           | E-U-5             | Multi-family residential units, townhomes, apartments, flats, and condominiums. 15,000 sf/ac retail and office uses are permitted.   | 21–30 du/ac                | 25 du/ac | 1,495 du; 453,789 sf of commercial (retail/office/medical office)  |
| General Commercial   | EVSP-CG           | Local-serving commercial, automobile service, eating/drinking establishments, and entertainment facilities.  | 1.0 FAR                    | 0.5 FAR  | 0 du, 59,014 sf of commercial  |
| Mixed-Use            | EVSP-MU           | Vertical or horizontal mixed-use, multi-family residential units, appropriate along major thoroughfares, proximate to shopping centers, entertainment, community facilities, and employment opportunities.             | 1.5–3.0 FAR<br>30–80 du/ac | 45 du/ac | 4,669 du; 703,338 sf of commercial (retail/office/medical office)  |
| Park Overlay Zone    | EVSP-POZ          | Active and passive parks and land to protect, maintain, and enhance the community's natural resources, includes detention basins and creek corridors. Development impact fees contribute to park space in these areas. | NA                         | NA       | The EVSP Land Use Plan allows for up to 25 acres of parkland and open space; however, it is estimated that only approximately 10 acres of parkland and open space would occur. |

**Source:** City of Escondido 2023.

**Notes:** du = dwelling units; du/ac = dwelling units per acre; FAR = floor area ratio; ac = acres; NA = not applicable; sf = square feet; sf/ac = square feet per acre; TPP = target production point

Target production point is the midpoint of the density range that estimates realistic site development capacities that are likely to yield smaller housing units at a higher density that is more affordable by design. To ensure that the EVSP achieves a buildout that accommodates the RHNA, especially for households with lower and moderate incomes, no residential permit shall be issued on any property with a unit yield that is lower than the target production point density yield unless an in-lieu fee is received for on-site production.

### 2.3.3 Parks and Public Realm

The EVSP would include a comprehensive and interconnected parkland network to provide a variety of active and passive recreational opportunities for community members and visitors of all ages that would enhance the overall quality of life and community health and wellness. Implementation of the EVSP would allow up to 25 acres of park; however only approximately 10 acres of parkland and open space is anticipated in the EVSP Area, which would help the City reach its parks and open space projections. The EVSP would establish a Park Overlay Zone intended to integrate public parkland and outdoor spaces within proximity to schools, transit, trails, and activity nodes. The Park Overlay Zone would act as a recommended, or priority, area for parks and public spaces in the EVSP Area. The placement of the Park Overlay Zone would also broaden the geographic area within 0.25 mile (or a 5-minute walk) of a park, as demonstrated on Figure 2-6, 0.25-Mile Buffer from Parks. The function and amenities of a park area would depend on the needs of the surrounding community and the size of the proposed park or public space. Chapter 4.0, Parks and Public Realm, of the EVSP would include the incorporation of pocket

parks, neighborhood parks, linear parks, public outdoor spaces, and public rights-of-way in the Park Overlay Zone. The EVSP would include policies regarding the creation of new park facilities and proposed recreational amenities. To achieve this plan, the EVSP would propose the following five key elements:

- **Pocket Parks.** Pocket parks are small outdoor spaces, no more than one acre, that are best suited in urban areas surrounded by a mix of uses that lack places for people to recreate. Pocket parks are intended to provide a safe and inviting environment for surrounding community members. Pocket parks in the EVSP Area would serve nearby families, employees, shoppers, and visitors. With the surrounding community in mind, pocket parks would provide amenities best suited for its future users.
- **Neighborhood Parks.** Neighborhood parks serve as the foundation for the urban parkland network in Escondido. Neighborhood parks are characterized as parks over three acres and may offer both active and passive recreational options. Active recreational uses include but are not limited to soccer fields, baseball and softball diamonds, tracks, skate parks, dog parks, pump tracks, and hardcourt areas. Passive recreational uses include but are not limited to walking, hiking, cycling, and picnicking.
- **Linear Parks.** Linear parks are longer than they are wide and typically follow a linear object, such as rail lines, utility easements, waterfronts, creeks, and alleys. Linear parks can be as short as one block or as long as several miles and typically serve as outdoor areas for physical activities and boost alternative transportation.
- **Public Outdoor Spaces.** Public outdoor spaces provide varying sizes of human-made open space that can be used for a variety of uses, such as sitting, dining, socializing, and recreating and as venues for arts and entertainment. The public outdoor spaces are best suited in areas surrounded by or adjacent to commercial and/or office uses to allow for outdoor dining and other commercial opportunities to use and attract users to the space. Public outdoor spaces may include plazas, parklets, recreational facilities, and dog parks.
- **Public Rights-of-Way:** Public rights-of-way include streets, sidewalks, bikeways, and trails. These spaces act as the physical linkages to and from parkland, residences, and other destinations. Public rights-of-way should provide shade trees, generous sidewalks, street furniture, public art, and spaces for people to sit. Public rights-of-way also encourage active transportation and would support the compact, walkable design envisioned in the EVSP.

### 2.3.4 Mobility

The EVSP would promote strong mobility connections throughout the EVSP Area, especially from the Escondido Creek Trail and adjacent neighborhoods to the commercial corridor along East Valley Parkway. The EVSP roadway network would consist of current roadways in the EVSP Area. No new roadways are proposed; however, one roadway is proposed to be reclassified to accommodate

increased traffic volumes and pedestrian and bicycle improvements. Specifically Centre City Parkway between El Norte Parkway and SR-78 would be reclassified to a six-lane super major.

As depicted on Figure 2-7, East Valley Specific Plan Proposed Roadway Network, the EVSP would include four roadway classifications: Four-Lane Major Road, Four-Lane Collector Street, 2-Lane Local Collector Street, and Local Street (remaining streets in the EVSP Area not outlined). Alleys would also be included to establish a service corridor and to incorporate green infrastructure that would improve stormwater drainage.

Chapter 5.0, Mobility, of the EVSP describes future bicycle networks and pedestrian facilities. Public transit would also be an important component of the EVSP mobility network, providing access to both local and regional destinations. The City is served by the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) and North County Transit District (NCTD). In addition, the EVSP would include Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures and parking standards for both vehicles and bicycles.

#### **2.3.4.1 Transportation Fair Share Contribution Program**

New development facilitated by the Project would increase traffic volumes in the EVSP Area. A Level of Service Analysis was prepared in the Transportation Analysis (Appendix G) to determine the future mobility needs of the EVSP Area. Based on this analysis, the Project has incorporated a Transportation Fair Share Contribution Program that the City has committed to in order to address the potential roadway deficiencies that may result from the Project. For each location identified, the percentage of the EVSP buildout that could be built before the improvement is triggered has been calculated. When specific developments are proposed in the EVSP Area, the average daily trips (ADT) would be determined and the development's "fair-share" contribution to the overall improvements would be calculated. The Transportation Fair Share Contribution Program includes the following improvements:

1. **Mission Avenue between Broadway and Hickory Street.** At 80,553 ADT, a dedicated eastbound right-turn lane shall be provided at the Mission Avenue and Broadway intersection, and the Mission Avenue and Hickory Street intersection shall be signalized. In addition, Transportation System Management measures shall be implemented along Mission Avenue between Broadway and Hickory Street, including adjustments to the signal timings, offsets, detection, and other parameters, to improve intersection performance along the study corridor.
2. **Broadway between Lincoln Avenue and Mission Avenue.** At 25,290 ADT, a dedicated southbound right-turn lane shall be provided at the Mission Avenue and Broadway intersection. In addition, Transportation System Management measures shall be implemented along Broadway between Lincoln and Mission Avenue, including adjustments to the signal timings, offsets, detection, and other parameters, to improve intersection performance along the study corridor.

3. **Ash Street/San Pasqual Valley Road between Grand Avenue and 2nd Avenue.** At 75,869 ADT, a two-lane roundabout shall be constructed at the San Pasqual Valley Road and 2nd Avenue intersection. In addition, Transportation System Management measures shall be implemented along Ash Street/San Pasqual Valley Road between Grand Avenue and 2nd Avenue, including adjustments to the signal timings, offsets, detection, and other parameters, to improve intersection performance along the study corridor.
4. **Centre City Parkway between El Norte Parkway and State Route 78.** At 46,833 ADT, an eastbound right-turn overlap phase and prohibition of the northbound U-turn movement shall be provided at the El Norte Parkway and Centre City Parkway intersection. This intersection already operates at level of service (LOS) F. Incremental increases in ADT would exacerbate this condition. A development's fair share contribution would be considered as a mechanism to help fund this improvement.
5. **El Norte Parkway/Broadway.** At 84,299 ADT, a dedicated southbound right-turn lane and a dedicated northbound right-turn lane shall be provided at the El Norte Parkway and Broadway intersection.
6. **Lincoln Parkway/Broadway.** At 84,299 ADT, a southbound right-turn overlap phase shall be provided at the Lincoln Parkway and Broadway intersection, which would preclude the eastbound U-turn movements.
7. **Mission Avenue and Broadway Intersection.** At 9,367 ADT, a dedicated eastbound right-turn lane shall be provided at the Mission Avenue and Broadway Intersection.
8. **Mission Avenue and Hickory Street Intersection.** At 9,367 ADT, the Mission Avenue and Hickory Street intersection shall be signalized.
9. **Mission Avenue and Harding Street Intersection.** At 100 ADT, the Mission Avenue and Harding Street intersection shall be signalized.
10. **Washington Avenue and Juniper Street Intersection.** At 100 ADT, the Washington Avenue and Juniper Street intersection shall be signalized.
11. **Washington Avenue/Ash Street.** At 74,933 ADT, the signal timing shall be modified, the pedestrian phase on the eastbound through movement shall be removed, and the green time from the eastbound through phase to the westbound left-turn phase shall be transferred at the Washington Avenue and Ash Street intersection.
12. **Valley Parkway and Rose Street Intersection.** At 18,733 ADT, a dedicated westbound right-turn lane shall be provided at the Valley Parkway and Rose Street intersection.

### 2.3.5 Public Services and Infrastructure

Chapter 6.0, Public Services and Infrastructure, of the EVSP outlines the community facilities needed to ensure that high-quality services and infrastructure are provided to accommodate projected growth in the EVSP Area. In addition, this chapter identifies thresholds and targets to maintain adequate levels of public services and safety as growth occurs.

### 2.3.6 Development Standards and Design Guidelines

Chapter 7.0, Development Standards and Design Guidelines, of the EVSP is intended to help achieve the vision for the EVSP through setting standards and guidelines for future development. This chapter complements other Citywide guidance, such as the Escondido Municipal Code (EMC), which provides regulations for a variety of design topics, including setbacks, landscaping, and parking. Table 2-2, Development Standards, provides development standards and guidelines that are intended to supplement the EMC's provisions with more specific guidance on how to achieve the unique vision for the EVSP Area. The design guidelines and standards would apply to future public improvements and private development in the EVSP Area, addressing the design of both new buildings and renovations to existing structures.

**Table 2-2. Development Standards**

| Development Standard   | Land Use/Area   |   |  |   |
|--|---|---|--|---|
|  | Urban IV/V  | Mixed-Use   | General Commercial   | Escondido Creek Trail   |
| <b>Setback:</b> The minimum horizontal distance between a lot line and the nearest part of any building or structure on the lot.   | Front: 10 feet<br>Rear: 10 feet<br>Alley: 5 feet<br>Side Internal: 0 feet<br>Side Street: 10 feet | Front: 15 feet<br>Rear: 10 feet<br>Alley: 5 feet<br>Side Internal: 0 feet<br>Side Street: 15 feet | Front: 15 feet<br>Rear: 10 feet<br>Side Internal: 0 feet<br>Side Street: 15 feet | Creekside building or structure: 20 feet<br>Creekside wall or fence: 10 feet  |
| <b>Landscaped Area:</b> The percentage of the total lot area covered by landscaping.   | 35% minimum   | 20% minimum   | 30% minimum  | —   |
| <b>Building Placement:</b> The massing and location of structures on individual parcels.   | —   | —   | —  | Buildings shall be designed with dual orientation to provide access and a public face to both the Escondido Creek frontage and side frontages |
| <b>Building Height:</b> The vertical distance measured from the average level of the highest and lowest point of that portion of the lot covered by the building or structure to the top of the building or structure. | 55-foot maximum   | 75-foot maximum   | 75-foot maximum  | 75-foot maximum   |

### 2.3.7 Development Potential

The development potential of the EVSP Area in Table 2-3, East Valley Specific Plan Development Potential by Land Use Type, estimates the potential growth by land use type through 2035. Table 2-3 also shows the difference between what is planned to be the EVSP buildout and the existing (2020) conditions. These assumptions are broad, planning-level estimates for potential future

development based on the heights, intensities, and land uses that would be in the EVSP. The ultimate development potential is influenced by the Density Transfer Program.

**Table 2-3. East Valley Specific Plan Development Potential by Land Use Type**

| Land Use Type            | 2035 EVSP Buildout | Existing Conditions (2020) | Difference             |
|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Residential              | 6,164 du           | 581 du                     | 5,583 du               |
| Multi-Family Residential | 5,516 du           | 324 du                     | 5,192 du               |
| Office                   | 657,786 sf         | 637,053 sf                 | +20,733 sf             |
| Retail                   | 1,025,801 sf       | 624,501 sf                 | +401,300 sf            |
| Parks                    | 25 acres           | 0 acre                     | +25 acres <sup>1</sup> |
| Community Services       | 123,084 sf         | 4,900 sf                   | +118,184 sf            |

**Source:** City of Escondido 2023.

**Notes:** du = dwelling units; EVSP = East Valley Specific Plan; sf = square feet

<sup>1</sup> The EVSP Land Use Plan allows for up to 25 acres of parkland and open space; however, it is estimated that only approximately 10 acres of parkland and open space would occur.

## 2.4 CEQA Assumptions

The Project proposes a new Specific Plan. This PEIR analyzes the effect of potential land use changes that could occur in the EVSP Area through 2035 as a result of the implementation of the Project. To analyze potential impacts associated with implementation of the Project, specific details regarding schedule, construction activities, and implementation of the Project are not known at this time. Future residential, commercial, parks, and community services projects consistent with the EVSP would be developed over time and would provide precise engineering and construction details at that time. The environmental impacts of future implementation of the Project, as well as a mitigation strategy that would apply to future improvements, are included in this PEIR. When individual development projects are proposed, the City would evaluate these detailed plans in accordance with this PEIR and determine if the mitigation is adequate or if additional mitigation is needed.

Pursuant to the Project, building out the EVSP Area would include construction of single-family and multi-family residential units, commercial office square footage, retail opportunities, park and recreational facilities, and community services. For the purposes of CEQA analysis, construction activities were estimated assuming an equal amount of development would occur each year between the 2020 baseline and 2035 buildout year and that 75% of existing development would be demolished over the same period. This is because the existing area is largely built out, and redevelopment would be necessary to accommodate the planned growth. It was also assumed that architectural coating phases would typically overlap with building construction.

## 2.5 Discretionary Actions

The Project is a discretionary project, which is defined in CEQA Guidelines section 15357 as a project that “requires the exercise of judgment or deliberation when the public agency or body

decides to approve or disapprove a particular activity.” The Project would require approval of several discretionary actions by the City, which are listed in Table 2-4, Discretionary Actions.

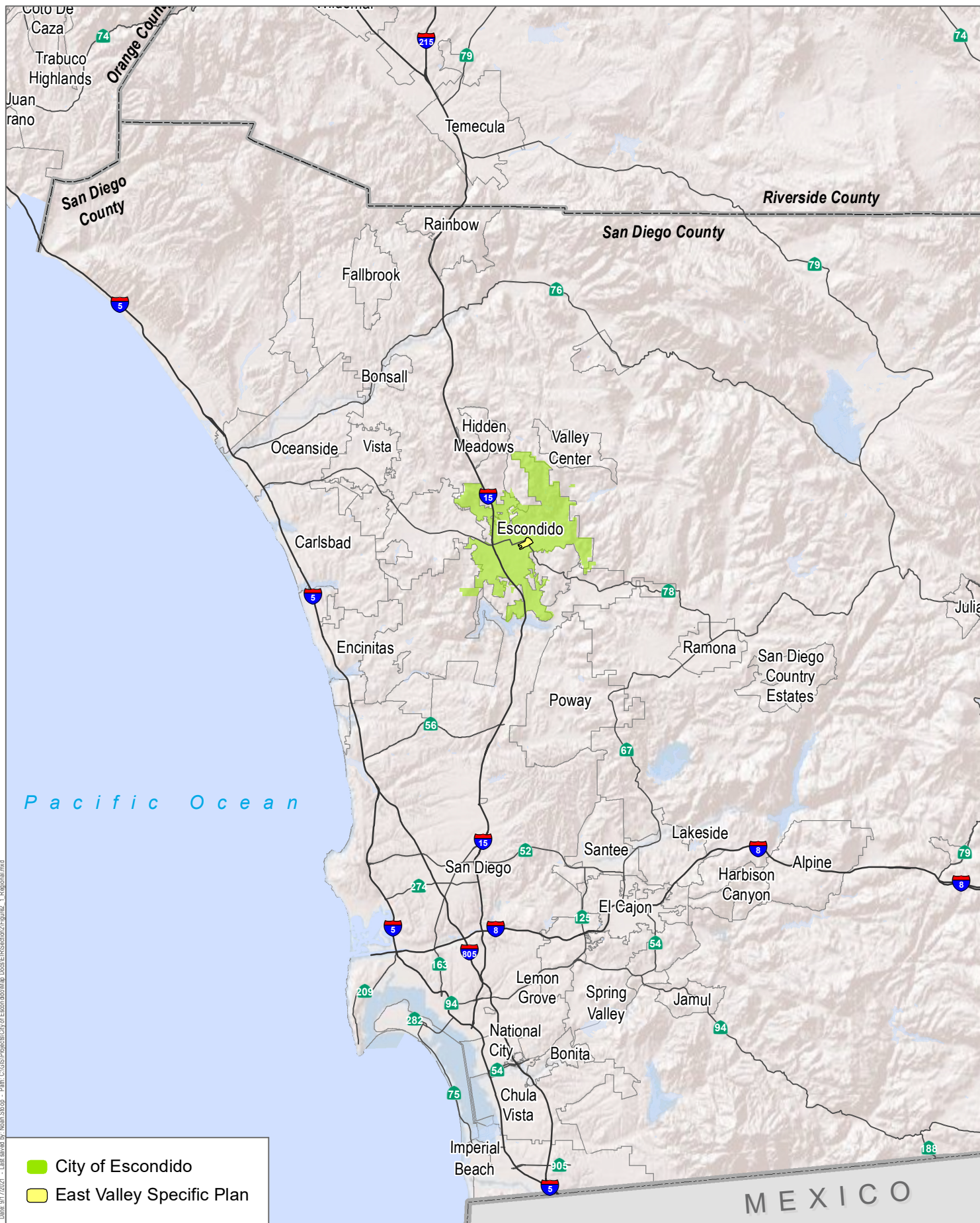
**Table 2-4. Discretionary Actions**

| Discretionary Action                                    | Approving Agency |
|---|------------------|
| Certification of Final PEIR                             | City             |
| Adoption of Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program | City             |
| Adoption of Findings of Fact                            | City             |
| Adoption of Statement of Overriding Considerations      | City             |
| Adoption of EVSP  | City             |

**Notes:** City = City of Escondido; EVSP = East Valley Specific Plan; PEIR = Program Environmental Impact Report

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Source: ESRI 2020.



Harris & Associates

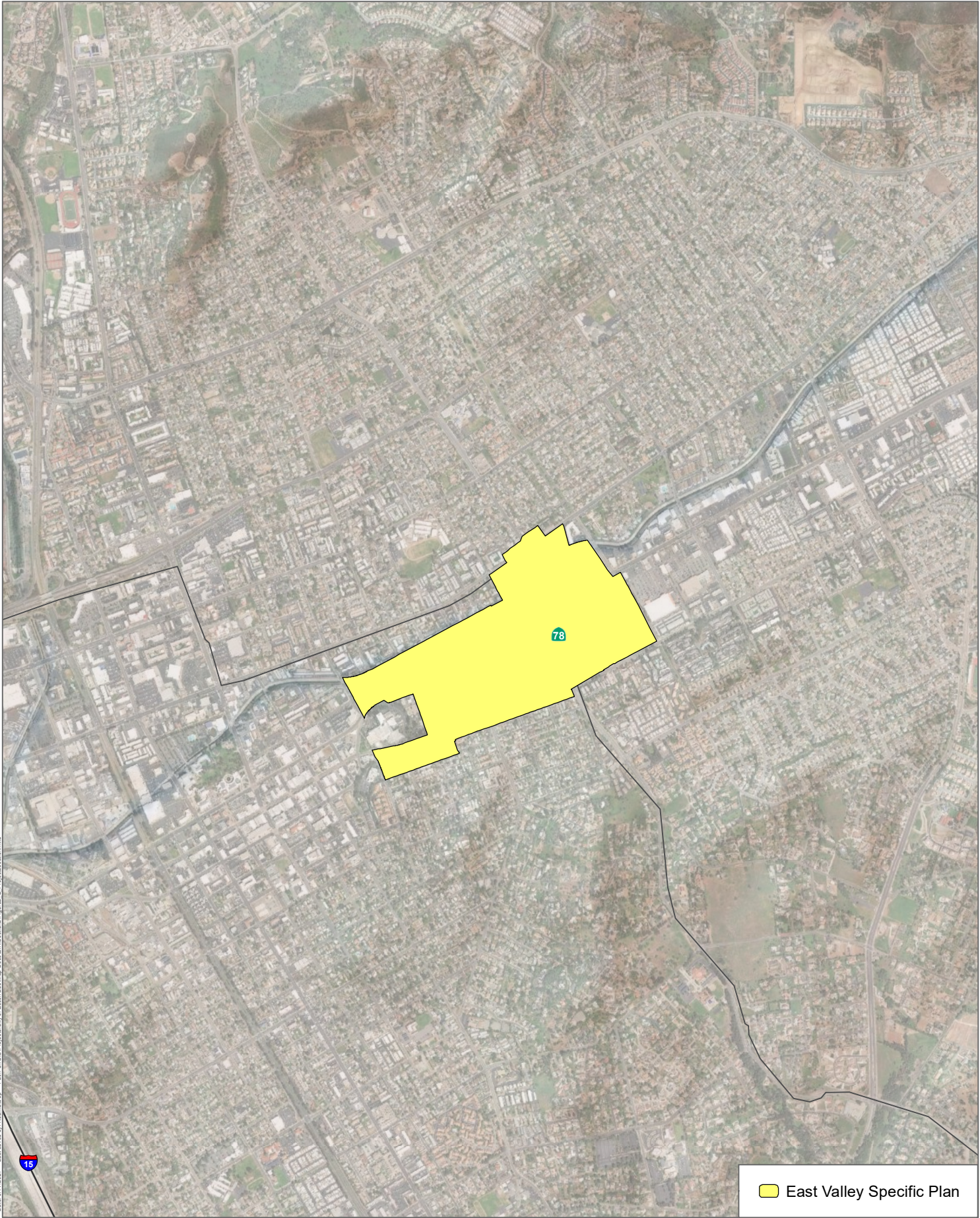


## Figure 2-1

Regional Location  
East Valley Specific Plan

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East Valley Specific Plan

Source: ESRI 2021.

### Figure 2-2

Project Location

East Valley Specific Plan



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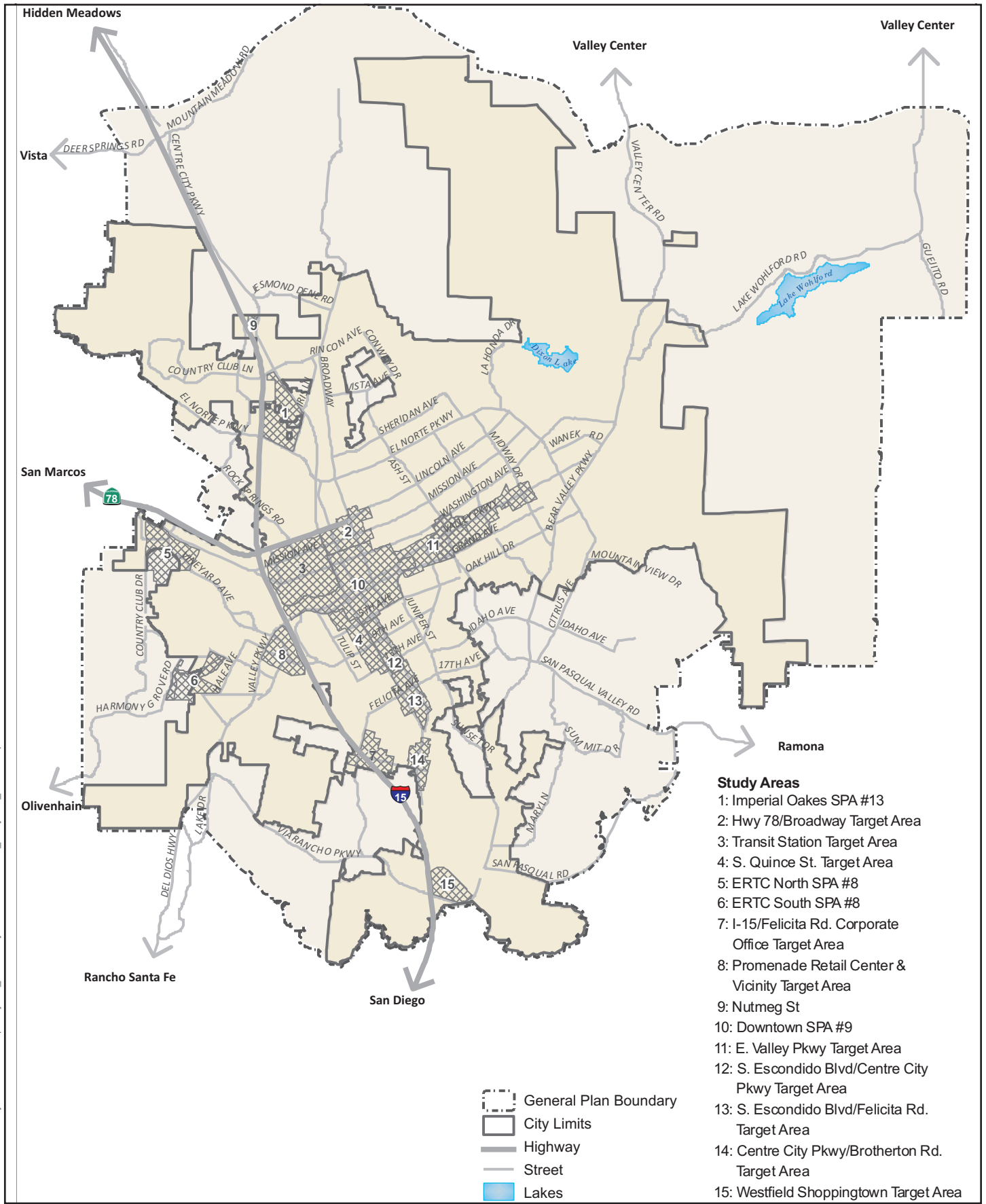


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Source: Rick Engineering 2021; SanGIS Imagery 2017.

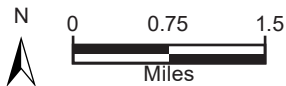


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- Study Areas**
- 1: Imperial Oakes SPA #13
  - 2: Hwy 78/Broadway Target Area
  - 3: Transit Station Target Area
  - 4: S. Quince St. Target Area
  - 5: ERTC North SPA #8
  - 6: ERTC South SPA #8
  - 7: I-15/Felicita Rd. Corporate Office Target Area
  - 8: Promenade Retail Center & Vicinity Target Area
  - 9: Nutmeg St
  - 10: Downtown SPA #9
  - 11: E. Valley Pkwy Target Area
  - 12: S. Escondido Blvd/Centre City Pkwy Target Area
  - 13: S. Escondido Blvd/Felicita Rd. Target Area
  - 14: Centre City Pkwy/Brotherton Rd. Target Area
  - 15: Westfield Shoppingtown Target Area

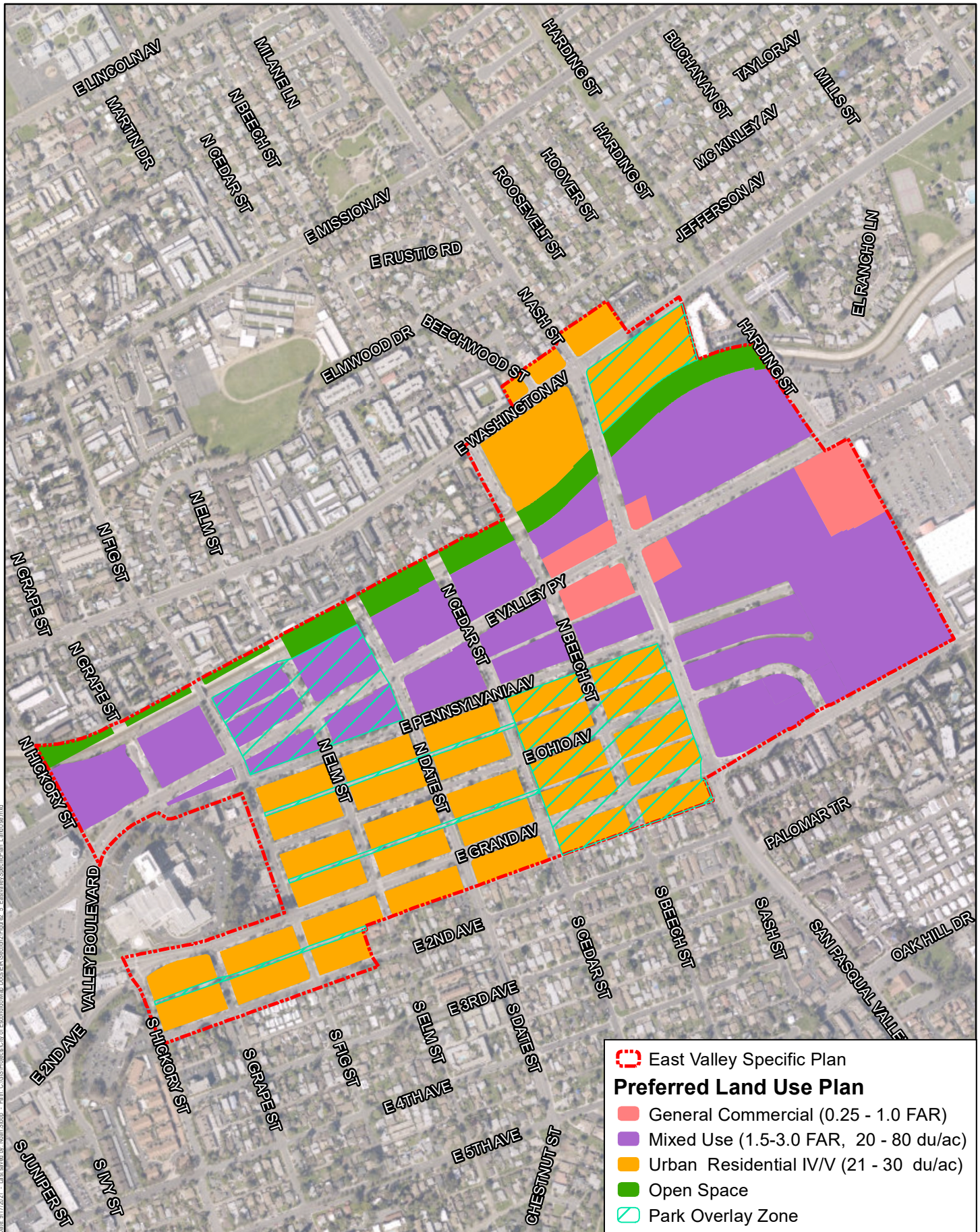
Source: City of Escondido 2012.



**Figure 2-4**  
 2012 General Plan Update Study Areas  
 East Valley Specific Plan

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**East Valley Specific Plan**

**Preferred Land Use Plan**

- General Commercial (0.25 - 1.0 FAR)
- Mixed Use (1.5-3.0 FAR, 20 - 80 du/ac)
- Urban Residential IV/V (21 - 30 du/ac)
- Open Space
- Park Overlay Zone

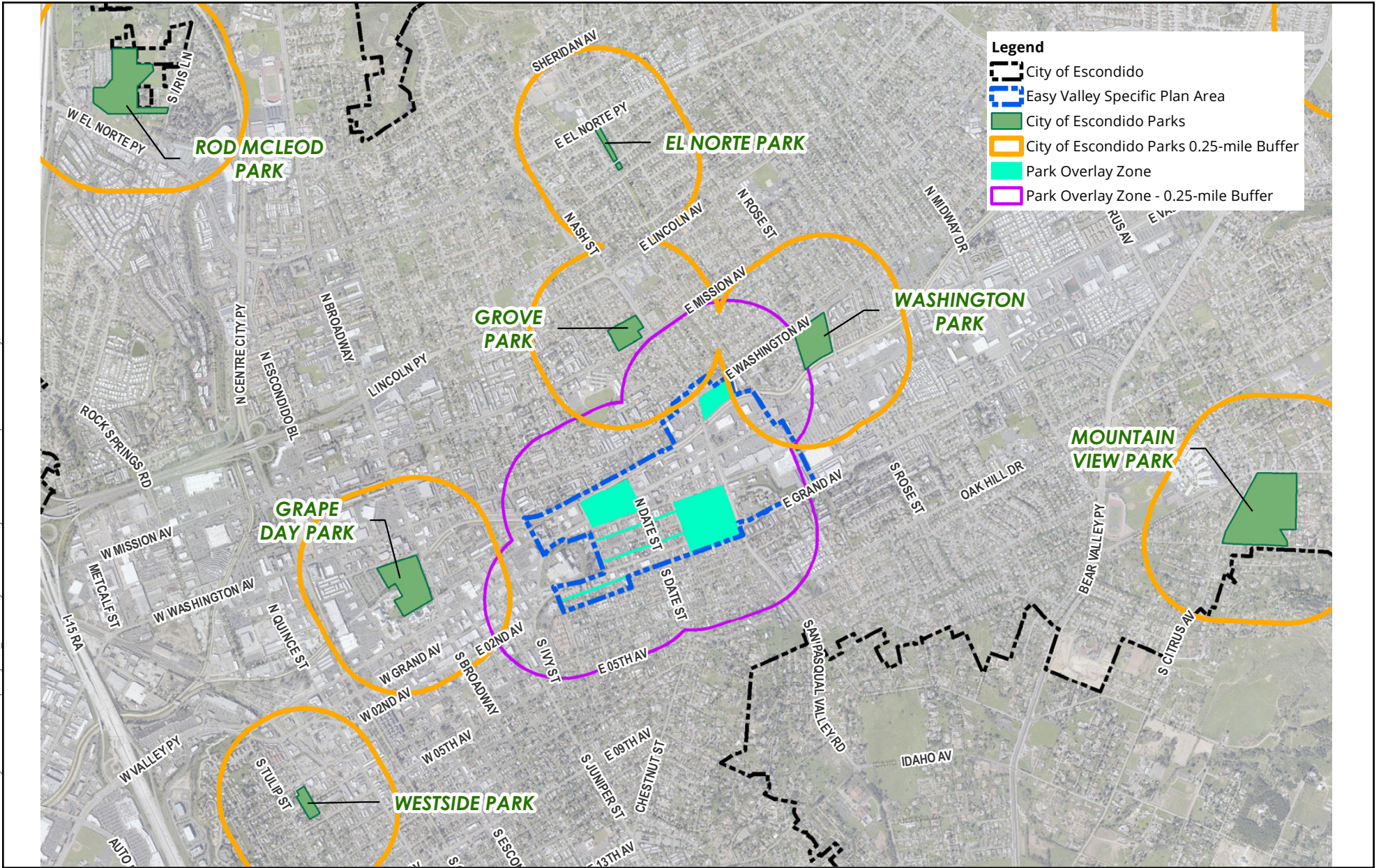
Source: Rick Engineering 2021; SanGIS Imagery 2017.

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Source: City of Escondido 2021.

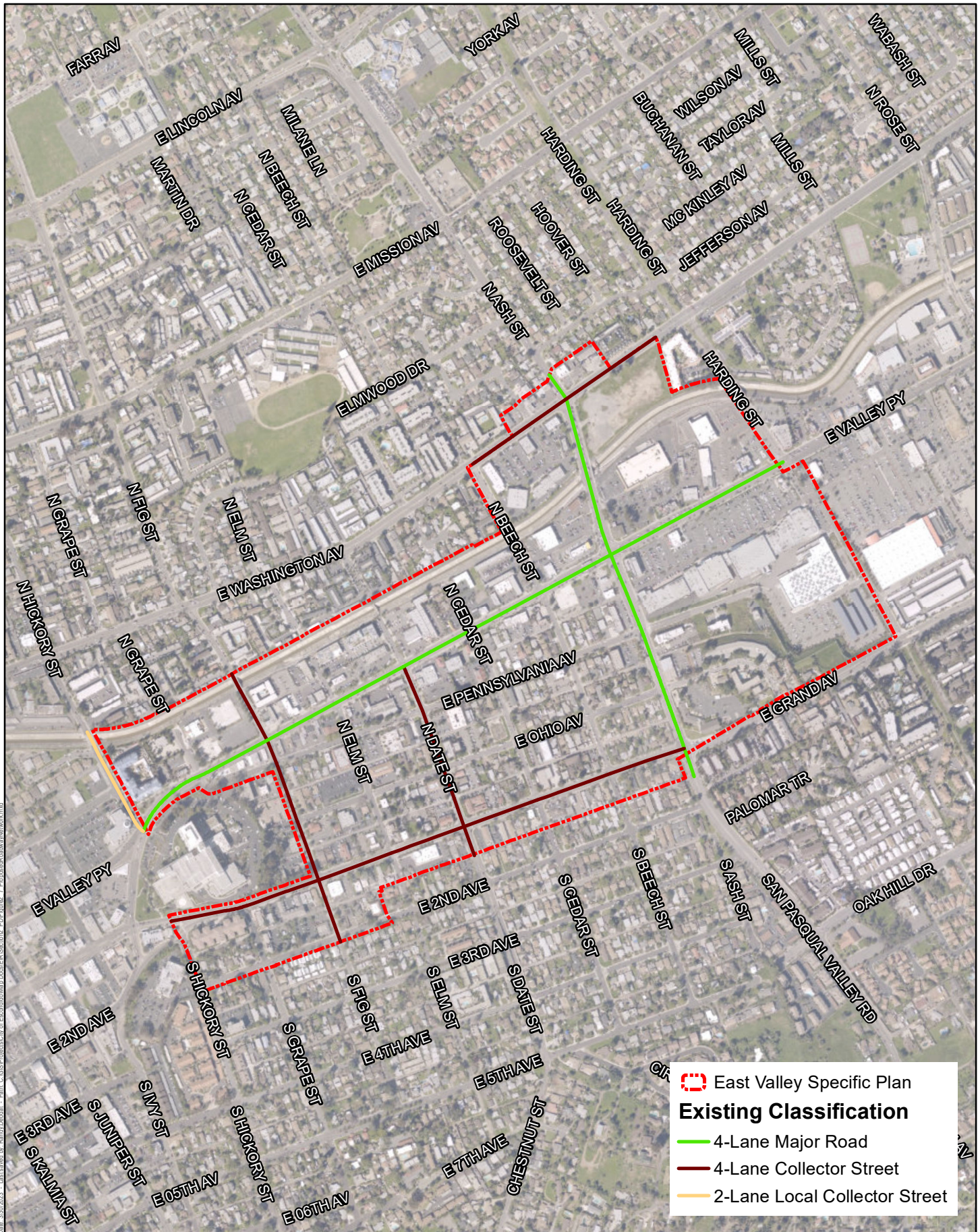



**Figure 2-6**  
0.25-Mile Buffer from Parks  
East Valley Specific Plan






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 East Valley Specific Plan

**Existing Classification**

-  4-Lane Major Road
-  4-Lane Collector Street
-  2-Lane Local Collector Street

Source: Rick Engineering 2021; SanGIS Imagery 2017.



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## Chapter 3 Environmental Analysis

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Sections 3.1 through 3.7 in this chapter contain a discussion of the potential environmental effects from implementation of the EVSP, including existing conditions, regulatory framework, thresholds of significance, impacts (direct, indirect, and cumulative), and mitigation measures.

### Scope of the Environmental Impacts Analysis

In accordance with Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the potential environmental effects from the Project are analyzed for the following environmental issue areas:

- Section 3.1, Aesthetics
- Section 3.2, Air Quality
- Section 3.3, Biological Resources
- Section 3.4, Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources
- Section 3.5, Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Section 3.6, Noise
- Section 3.7, Transportation

### Format of the Environmental Impact Analysis

The following subsections compose the environmental issue area sections in Sections 3.1 through 3.7 of this PEIR.

#### Existing Conditions

According to CEQA Guidelines section 15125, an EIR must include a description of the existing physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of a project to provide the “baseline condition” against which project-related impacts are compared. Normally, the baseline condition is the physical condition that exists when the NOP is published. The NOP for this PEIR was published on February 11, 2021.

#### Regulatory Framework

This subsection provides a summary of regulations, plans, policies, and laws that are relevant to each environmental issue area at the federal, state, regional, and local levels.

#### Thresholds of Significance

This subsection identifies the criteria used to determine whether potential environmental effects are significant. The thresholds of significance used in this analysis were primarily based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. However, in some cases, thresholds were developed specifically for this analysis or were adapted from standards adopted by other agencies or entities. This subsection defines the type, amount, and/or extent of impact that would be considered a

significant, adverse change in the environment. The thresholds of significance are intended to assist the reader in understanding how and why this PEIR reaches a conclusion that an impact is significant, potentially significant, or less than significant.

## Impacts and Mitigation

**Impact Analysis.** The analysis of environmental impacts considers both the construction and operational phases associated with implementation of the Project. As required by CEQA Guidelines section 15126.2(a), direct, indirect, short-term, and long-term impacts are addressed, as appropriate, for the environmental issue area being analyzed. This PEIR uses the following terms to describe the level of significance of impacts identified during the course of the environmental analysis:

- **Less than Significant:** “Less than significant” refers to two conditions:
  - Impacts resulting from implementation of the Project that are not likely to exceed the defined standards of significance.
  - Potentially significant impacts before implementation of mitigation measures. If implementation of the specified mitigation measures would reduce the potentially significant impact to a level that does not exceed the defined standards of significance, the impact is considered less than significant.
- **Potentially Significant:** “Potentially significant” refers to impacts resulting from implementation of the Project that may exceed defined standards of significance before mitigation is considered.
- **Significant and Unavoidable:** “Significant and unavoidable” refers to impacts resulting from implementation of the Project that cannot be eliminated or reduced to below the defined standards of significance or a less than significant level through implementation of feasible mitigation measures.

A “significant effect” is defined by CEQA Guidelines section 15382 as “a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment. . . [but a] social or economic change related to a physical change may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant.”

**Significance of Impact.** This subsection identifies the level of significance of project impacts before mitigation measures are implemented.

**Mitigation Measures.** CEQA Guidelines section 15126.4 requires an EIR to “describe feasible measures which could minimize significant adverse impacts.” CEQA Guidelines section 15364 defines “feasible” as “capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable



period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, legal, social, and technological factors.” The Mitigation Measures subsection discusses measures that could reduce the severity of impacts identified in the Impact Analysis subsection.

A public agency shall provide that measures to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment are fully enforceable through permit conditions, agreements, or other measures. Conditions of project approval may be set forth in referenced documents that address required mitigation measures or, in the case of the adoption of a plan, policy, regulation, or other public project, that incorporate the mitigation measures into the plan, policy, regulation, or project design.

**Significance After Mitigation.** This subsection identifies the level of significance of project impacts after mitigation measures are implemented.

### **Cumulative Impacts and Mitigation**

CEQA requires that EIRs discuss cumulative impacts in addition to direct and indirect project impacts. In accordance with CEQA, the discussion of cumulative impacts must reflect the severity of the impacts and the likelihood of their occurrence; however, the discussion need not be as detailed as the discussion of environmental impacts attributable to the project alone. Further, the discussion should be guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness (CEQA Guidelines section 15130(b)). According to CEQA Guidelines section 15355, “cumulative impacts” are defined as follows:

Two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.

- (a) The individual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects.
- (b) The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time.

CEQA Guidelines section 15130(a)(1) further states that a “cumulative impact [as defined in CEQA Guidelines section 15355] consists of an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing related impacts.”

In addition, CEQA Guidelines section 15130(a) requires that EIRs discuss the cumulative impacts of a project when the project’s incremental effect is cumulatively considerable. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15065, “‘cumulatively considerable’ means that the incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects

of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.” Therefore, the discussion of cumulative impacts in an EIR evaluates whether the impacts of the project would be significant when considered in combination with past, present, and future reasonably foreseeable projects, and whether the project would make a cumulatively considerable contribution to those impacts. CEQA Guidelines section 15130(a) provides that, where a lead agency is examining a project with an incremental effect that is not cumulatively considerable, it need not consider the effect significant but shall briefly describe the basis for its conclusion. CEQA Guidelines section 15130(a)(3) allows for a determination that a project’s contribution to a significant cumulative impact would be rendered less than cumulatively considerable, and thus not significant, with implementation of mitigation.

The geographic scope of the cumulative impact analysis varies depending on the specific environmental issue area being analyzed. The geographic scope defines the geographic area within which projects may contribute to a specific cumulative impact. Therefore, past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects within the defined geographic area for a given cumulative issue must be considered.

CEQA Guidelines section 15130(b) presents the following two possible approaches for considering past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects and indicates that either constitute necessary elements for an adequate discussion of significant cumulative impacts:

1. A list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency; or
2. A summary of projections contained in an adopted local, regional, or statewide plan, or related planning document, that describes or evaluates conditions contributing to the cumulative effect.

The cumulative impacts analyses in this PEIR use the second listed method. The Escondido General Plan was updated in 2012 and is a statement of long-range public policy to guide the use of private and public lands within the City’s boundaries. The Escondido General Plan identifies a broad, comprehensive projection of growth in the EVSP Area. In addition to cumulative development in the City, the analysis of transportation and related impacts (such as noise) considers the effects of regional traffic growth occurring outside the EVSP Area. Potential cumulative impacts that have the potential for impacts beyond the City’s boundaries (e.g., transportation, air quality, noise) have been addressed through cumulative growth in the City and region. Regional growth outside the City has accounted for transportation, air quality, and noise impacts through use of the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) Series 13 Travel Demand Model. This model uses regional growth projections to calculate future traffic volumes. The growth projections adopted by the City and surrounding area are used for the cumulative impact analyses, which are discussed in the individual environmental issue area sections.

## **Conclusion**

This subsection summarizes whether each of the Project's significant environmental effects discussed and analyzed in the impact analysis has or has not been reduced to below a level of significance through mitigation. This subsection includes a discussion supported by a synopsis of the rationale for the conclusion.

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## **3.1 Aesthetics**

This section evaluates the potential for impacts to aesthetics resulting from implementation of the EVSP. The analysis in this section is based on the certified 2012 General Plan Update (City of Escondido 2012a); Downtown Specific Plan, as amended (City of Escondido 2020); and Escondido General Plan Update, Downtown Specific Plan Update, and CAP PEIR (City of Escondido 2012b) and subsequent Addenda to the PEIR (City of Escondido 2013).

### **3.1.1 Existing Conditions**

The EVSP Area is characterized by a valley surrounded by rolling hills and mountains and includes a diversity of human-made and natural features that contribute to the existing visual setting. These features are described below.

#### **3.1.1.1 Scenic Vistas and Resources**

One characteristic that distinguishes the City from other communities in the region is its location in a series of valleys surrounded by visually distinctive hillsides and ridgelines. The hillsides and ridgelines are considered visually prominent in views from the valley floor. The natural setting of the area provides many opportunities for views from surrounding higher elevations. The community's most prominent natural landforms have been identified as primary and secondary ridgelines to guide open space and viewshed preservation.

Other scenic natural features throughout the EVSP Area include creeks and riparian areas, rock outcroppings, and lakes. The EVSP Area includes several large areas of open space that showcase these scenic resources, including parks; Multiple Habitat Conservation Program lands; and other designated conservation areas, including Daley Ranch, Rancho San Pasqual Specific Plan Area, Kit Carson Park, San Pasqual Valley, Bernardo Mountain, and Lake Wohlford.

The City includes several human-made scenic resources throughout the EVSP Area, including prominent vegetation, agricultural lands, and landmarks. Prominent vegetation within the City includes street trees and mature ornamental trees in existing neighborhoods. Both Centre City Parkway and Bear Valley Parkway display mature trees that are considered valuable visual resources for the City.

The City's agricultural production is considered a visual amenity. Agricultural operations in the City are generally on the northern, eastern, and southwestern edges of the City near the unincorporated County. Crops and products include avocados, tomatoes, strawberries, cucumbers, zucchini, citrus, nursery plants and trees, and livestock.

The Old Escondido Historic District is a major landmark area that displays the City's unique heritage. The district features 900 residences, from small craftsman bungalows to magnificent

Victorian homes, built in the mid-1880s to date. The district is bounded by 4th Avenue to the north, 13th Avenue to the south, Escondido Boulevard to the west, and Chestnut Street to the east. To maintain the integrity of the historic district, every homeowner is required to obtain a certificate of appropriateness before initiating exterior improvements or changes, including painting, window replacement, and fence installation, whether a residence is on the historic register or not. Grape Day Park on North Broadway is a registered historic landmark and home to a turn-of-the-century working barn; Santa Fe Railroad Depot; blacksmith shop; and other historic buildings, museums, and monuments.

### **3.1.1.2 State Scenic Highways**

A freeway, highway, road, or other vehicular right-of-way along a corridor with considerable natural landscape and a high aesthetic value would have the potential to be eligible for a state scenic highway designation. State scenic highway corridors generally include the land adjacent to and visible from the vehicular right-of-way. The dimension of the corridor is usually identified using a motorist's line of vision, but a reasonable boundary is selected when the view extends to the distant horizon.

State scenic highways are those highways that are either officially designated as state scenic highways by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) or are eligible for such designation. No officially designated or eligible highways are in the EVSP Area. The closest state scenic highway is SR-78 through Anza-Borrego Desert State Park approximately 35 miles east of the City.

The City has identified several scenic roadways, including I-15; the segments of Del Dios Highway from Via Rancho Parkway to Bear Valley Parkway, Bear Valley Parkway to Valley Parkway, Valley Parkway to Lake Wohlford Road, and Lake Wohlford Road to the Escondido General Plan sphere of influence boundary; South Citrus Avenue from Bear Valley Road to San Pasqual Valley Road; San Pasqual Valley Road/SR-78 from Bear Valley Parkway to the eastern Escondido General Plan sphere of influence boundary; and San Pasqual Road from Bear Valley Parkway to San Pasqual Valley Road. However, none of these roadways are located within the EVSP Area.

### **3.1.1.3 Nighttime Lighting**

The maintenance of dark skies in the County is vital to Palomar Observatory, a world-class observatory in the northern County area that depends on them for astronomical research. Palomar Observatory is at the top of Palomar Mountain (5,500-foot elevation) approximately 35 miles from the City center. It is privately owned and operated by the California Institute of Technology and is used to support some of the premier U.S. and California scientific research programs (County of San Diego 2011).

Nighttime light is produced primarily by upward pointing or upward reflected light from outdoor lighting. This type of lighting illuminates the nighttime sky from below, just as the sun does from above in the daytime, and can be detrimental to astronomical observations by impacting dark skies. Nighttime light that spills outside its intended area can annoy neighbors and be potentially harmful to motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians. Further, the health of natural wildlife can also be adversely affected from nighttime lighting. Nighttime lighting in excess of what is necessary for its purpose is called “light pollution.”

Some land uses tend to have a greater impact on nighttime lighting than others. Commercial land uses tend to have lit parking lots and signs at night and use more lighting for nighttime security. Residential nighttime lighting is generally limited to security lighting and streetlights. The urbanized core of the City, including the EVSP Area, currently generates substantial nighttime light from signs, streetlights and traffic lights, and security lighting.

### **3.1.2 Regulatory Framework**

This section describes the federal, state, and regional/local regulatory framework adopted to address aesthetics.

#### **3.1.2.1 Federal**

No federal regulations apply to visual resources.

#### **3.1.2.2 State**

##### **California Scenic Highway Program**

The California Scenic Highway Program is managed by Caltrans. The program was created in 1963 with the goal of protecting the aesthetic significance of the state’s scenic highways, as provided in Streets and Highways Code section 260 et seq. Accordingly, a highway may be designated as “scenic” based on certain criteria, including how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, the landscape’s scenic quality, and the extent to which development intrudes on the traveler’s enjoyment of the view. The California Scenic Highway Program’s Scenic Highway System List identifies scenic highways that are either eligible for designation or have already been designated as such. The California Scenic Highway Program also includes provisions for the Corridor Protection Program, which includes ordinances and planning policies required by jurisdictions to maintain lands visible from the designated scenic highways (Caltrans 2008). The City does not have roads designated in the California Scenic Highway Program.

### 3.1.2.3 Regional/Local

#### Escondido Zoning Ordinance

The Escondido Zoning Ordinance is in Chapter 33 of the EMC. The Escondido Zoning Ordinance contains several articles that pertain to aesthetic character and resources, which are summarized below.

##### ***Article 35 – Outdoor Lighting***

Article 35, referred to as the Escondido Outdoor Lighting Ordinance, is intended to minimize unnecessary glare for the benefit of citizens and astronomical research at Palomar Observatory. The ordinance includes the following requirements for outdoor lighting:

- Use outdoor light fixtures with good optical control to distribute the light in the most effective and efficient manner
- Use the minimum amount of light to meet the lighting criteria
- Use shielded outdoor light fixtures
- Use low-pressure sodium outdoor light fixtures where required
- Use automatic timing devices to energize outdoor light fixtures only when necessary
- Turn off certain outdoor fixtures between the hours of 11 p.m. and sunrise

##### ***Article 40 – Historical Resources***

The purpose of Article 40 is to enhance the visual character of the City by encouraging the preservation of unique and established architectural traditions. The article requires a condition of approval for any new construction or alteration that would affect the exterior appearance of a historical resource. The article also requires the owner or lessee of a historic property to maintain the property in good repair. A “historical resource” means and includes but is not limited to any object, building, structure, site, area, place, sign, outdoor work of public art, landscape feature, record, or manuscript that is historically or archaeologically significant or is significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of the City and is listed on the City’s historic sites survey.

##### ***Article 55 – Grading and Erosion Control***

The purpose of Article 55 is to ensure that development occurs in a manner that protects the natural and topographic character and identity of the environment; the visual integrity of hillsides and ridgelines; sensitive species and unique geologic/geographic features; and the health, safety, and welfare of the general public by regulating grading on private and public property and providing standards and design criteria.

Additionally, this article recommends that grading designs be sensitive to natural topographic, cultural, or environmental features, as well as mature and protected trees, by preserving the following features in permanent open space easements or such other means that will ensure their



preservation: undisturbed steep slopes (over 35%); riparian areas, mitigation areas, and areas with sensitive vegetation or habitat; unusual rock outcroppings; other unique or unusual geographic features; and significant cultural or historical features.

### 3.1.3 Thresholds of Significance

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Project would have a significant impact on aesthetics if it would:

- **Threshold 1:** Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
- **Threshold 2:** Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.
- **Threshold 3:** In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point.) If the project is in an urbanized area, conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.
- **Threshold 4:** Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

### 3.1.4 Impacts and Mitigation

The following sections address various potential impacts relating to aesthetics that could result from implementation of the Project.

#### 3.1.4.1 Threshold 1: Scenic Vistas

##### Impact Analysis

Views of City scenic vistas from the EVSP Area are limited by existing development. However, the increase in building heights and density could have the potential to impact views of the ridgelines surrounding the City.

New development and redevelopment are required to comply with the Escondido General Plan goals and policies and chapters of the Escondido Zoning Ordinance that address building height, spatial arrangements, and clustering of buildings to help minimize impacts to scenic vistas. In addition, the EVSP would contain its own development standards and guidelines to supplement the City's provisions with more specific guidance on how to address the design of new buildings and renovations to existing structures. Specifically, the design guidelines would be intended to break building massing with articulation while providing varying building height where appropriate. A staggered arrangement could help facilitate better visual access to the City's scenic vistas. Furthermore, the EVSP would include the following Site and Building Design (SBD) goals and policies:

- **SBD-1.5:** Protect single-family residential neighborhoods by establishing step-down height requirements.

- **SBD-1.6:** Ensure new building massing does not result in “urban canyons” by providing regulations that address building lengths, building heights, and building variety.

Adherence to these policies would ensure that the EVSP would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista, and impacts would be less than significant.

### **Significance of Impact**

Implementation of the Project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista, and impacts would be less than significant.

### **Mitigation Measures**

No mitigation measures are required.

### **Significance After Mitigation**

Not applicable.

## **3.1.4.2 Threshold 2: Scenic Resources**

### **Impact Analysis**

No designated state scenic highways are in the EVSP Area. In addition, the area does not include any natural open space resources or rock outcroppings. Historic buildings have been identified in the EVSP Area. However, these resources are not within a designated state scenic highway. Therefore, the EVSP would not substantially damage scenic resources associated with a scenic highway, historic building, or scenic resource.

### **Significance of Impact**

Implementation of the Project would not substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings, in a state scenic highway. No impact would occur.

### **Mitigation Measures**

No mitigation measures are required.

### **Significance After Mitigation**

Not applicable.

### 3.1.4.3 Threshold 3: Conflict with Zoning or Regulations for Scenic Quality Impact Analysis

California Public Resources Code section 21071 defines an “urbanized area” to include the following:

- (a) An incorporated city that meets either of the following criteria:
  - (1) Has a population of at least 100,000 persons, or
  - (2) Has a population of less than 100,000 persons if the population of that city and not more than two contiguous incorporated cities combined equals at least 100,000 persons.

In 2020, the City’s population was 153,008 (City of Escondido 2021). Therefore, the EVSP Area is considered an urbanized area per CEQA, and the first question of this threshold (in non-urbanized areas, substantially degrades the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings) does not apply to the Project because it is directed at non-urbanized areas.

The EVSP would accommodate residential, mixed-use, multi-family residential, and general commercial land uses. The EVSP would focus on maintaining many of the existing uses while clustering them into different areas to create a more cohesive land use pattern and design. The EVSP would designate the majority of properties along East Valley Parkway as Mixed-Use, which would create a more urban and vibrant character with an enhanced public realm through outdoor dining, public plazas, and other amenities as it transitions to larger commercial land uses to the east and downtown to the west. General Commercial uses are clustered at the corner of East Valley Parkway and Ash Street to encourage more compact commercial footprints and to create an activity node proximate to shopping, transit, and residences.

New development and redevelopment would be required to comply with the Escondido General Plan goals and policies and chapters of the Escondido Zoning Ordinance that address scenic quality. In addition, the proposed EVSP would contain its own development standards and guidelines to supplement the City’s provisions with more specific guidance on how to achieve the unique vision for the EVSP, apply to future public improvements and private development, and address the design of new buildings and renovations to existing structures. Specifically, the design guidelines would be intended to define public spaces with architecture and landscaping, buffer adjacent sensitive land uses from undesirable land uses, break building massing with articulation, and improve overall visual and structural performance through quality building materials and best practices. Furthermore, the EVSP would include the following SBD goals and policies, as well as SBD-1.5 and SBD-1.6:

- **SBD-1.1:** Provide objective zoning standards and guidelines that identify ways to achieve attractive, high-quality spaces and development defined by architecture and landscaping and consistent with the enhanced visual character envisioned for the EVSP Area.

- **SBD-1.4:** Identify site criteria and establish enforceable development standards that emphasize tasteful transitions from high- to low-density residential uses and transitions from public to private spaces.
- **SBD-3.3:** Improve the quality of the trail and experience along Escondido Creek through landscaping and design standards.

The EVSP Area is a suburban shopping area developed with low-intensity general retail, office, restaurants, and small-scale service businesses. Established single-family and multi-family residences throughout the EVSP Area are generally more than 30 years old. Historical resources subject to the Escondido Zoning Code (Article 33), Article 40, and Article 55 are located within the EVSP Area. Projects in the EVSP Area that include new construction (primary structure, out-buildings), additions (including porch enclosures, dormers), removal, relocation, change to the site (grading, parking lots, paving), public right-of-way improvements (curb and gutter, sidewalks, street paving, driveways, curb cuts, stamped sidewalk), new freestanding signs, street furniture, and any project requiring a plot plan review would require review by the Escondido Historic Preservation Commission in accordance with EMC section 33-791 to determine if the proposed alteration or improvement is consistent with the design guidelines for historical resources.

Therefore, future development consistent with the EVSP would be required to comply with these policies and would not conflict with applicable zoning or regulations designed to protect scenic quality.

### **Significance of Impact**

Implementation of the Project would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. Impacts would be less than significant.

### **Mitigation Measures**

No mitigation measures are required.

### **Significance After Mitigation**

Not applicable.

#### **3.1.4.4 Threshold 4: Light and Glare**

### **Impact Analysis**

Future development facilitated by the EVSP could add new sources of light and glare. Potential new light sources would be primarily exterior nighttime lighting fixtures; parking area lighting; light glow from windows, doors, and skylights; and accent lighting. The introduction of concentrated or multiple sources of nighttime lighting within proximity to low-density areas could result in potential impacts. While new nighttime lighting sources would be compatible with the

nighttime lighting in adjacent areas, they would still introduce a new source of substantial nighttime lighting.

All future development facilitated by the EVSP would comply with the Escondido Outdoor Lighting Ordinance. Development projects would also be required to comply with the following policy in the EVSP to control nighttime lighting:

- **SBD-1.7:** Design a positive and safe nighttime environment with better lighting design. Visible direct lamp glare from unshielded floodlight fixtures and lighting design that allows light to be cast up into the night sky shall be prohibited.

Additionally, the proposed EVSP would include site design guidelines intended to limit overly bright outdoor lighting and emphasize lighting that is pedestrian-scaled and oriented. Therefore, future development consistent with the EVSP would not adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area.

### **Significance of Impact**

Implementation of the Project would not create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area. Impacts would be less than significant.

### **Mitigation Measures**

No mitigation measures are required.

### **Level of Significance After Mitigation**

Not applicable.

## **3.1.5 Cumulative Impacts and Mitigation**

The following sections address various potential cumulative impacts relating to aesthetics that could result from implementation of the Project.

### **3.1.5.1 Cumulative Threshold 1: Scenic Vistas**

Cumulative projects in the region would have the potential to result in a cumulative impact to scenic vistas if, in combination, they would result in the obstruction, interruption, or detracting from a scenic vista. Adjacent jurisdictions, including incorporated cities and the County, have General Plan policies, zoning, and other ordinances or regulations in place to protect scenic vistas within their jurisdictions. Cumulative projects within these jurisdictions would be required to comply with applicable regulations pertaining to scenic vistas. However, due to the valley shape of the City and the fact that growth would be concentrated on the valley floor, new development in the City under the EVSP would not substantially interfere with views from adjacent jurisdictions. Additionally, views from the EVSP to outside jurisdictions are limited due to this topography. Residential

development facilitated by the EVSP would not result in the significant obstruction, interruption, or detracting of a scenic vista as a result of future development activity due to compliance with existing regulations and Escondido General Plan policies. Therefore, the Project would not contribute considerably to a significant cumulative impact related to scenic vistas.

#### **3.1.5.2 Cumulative Threshold 2: Scenic Resources**

The geographic scope of potential cumulative impacts to state scenic highways is the EVSP Area and surrounding areas of the City. No designated state scenic highways occur in the City. Therefore, the Project would not contribute considerably to a significant cumulative impact to state scenic highways.

#### **3.1.5.3 Cumulative Threshold 3: Degradation of Existing Visual Character or Conflict with Zoning or Regulations for Scenic Quality**

The geographic scope of potential cumulative impacts to the degradation of existing visual character is the EVSP Area and surrounding areas of the City. A significant cumulative impact would occur if cumulative projects would change the overall visual character of the EVSP Area and surrounding areas. Cumulative projects in the region could result in a cumulatively significant impact related to existing visual character because of the change in the setting of the surrounding communities. However, development consistent with the EVSP would be required to comply with Escondido General Plan goals and policies, including those identified in the Land Use and Community Form Element, and the Escondido Zoning Ordinance, which includes several chapters designed to regulate scenic quality in the City, including but not limited to Article 35, Outdoor Lighting; Article 40, Historical Resources; and Article 55, Grading and Erosion Control. Similarly, it is anticipated that future cumulative projects would be required to comply with the same City goals and policies. Therefore, the Project would not contribute considerably to a significant cumulative impact to visual character or conflict with applicable zoning or regulations.

#### **3.1.5.4 Cumulative Threshold 4: Light and Glare**

The geographic scope of potential cumulative impacts to light and glare is the EVSP Area and surrounding areas of the City. Implementation of future development could increase nighttime light and glare in the City. Increased light would be generated by streetlights, residential lighting, parking lot lights, new commercial and mixed-use development, and signage. Increased lighting would potentially adversely affect adjacent properties and the overall nighttime lighting levels in the City. Increased glare in the EVSP Area could potentially occur because of new development, including building materials, roofing materials, or windows that would reflect sunlight. However, development and redevelopment projects in the City, including those in the EVSP Area, would be required to comply with the Escondido Outdoor Lighting Ordinance and Escondido General Plan policies pertaining to light and glare, which would ensure that any potential spillover would be

minimized and would not result in a cumulative impact. Therefore, the Project would not contribute considerably to a significant cumulative impact related to nighttime lighting and glare.

### **3.1.6 Conclusion**

Future residential development consistent with the EVSP would be required to comply with all state and local requirements for avoiding violation of standards during construction and operation, including the City's Zoning Ordinance to ensure that the Project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. Direct and cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

There are no officially designated state scenic highways in the City or EVSP Area. Construction of future projects in the EVSP Area would not result in an impact to any scenic resources, including rock outcroppings, trees, or historical resources, in a state scenic highway. Direct and cumulative impacts would not occur.

New development and redevelopment consistent with the EVSP would be required to comply with Escondido General Plan goals and policies and chapters of the Escondido Zoning Ordinance that address scenic quality. In addition, the proposed EVSP would contain its own development standards and guidelines to supplement the City's provisions, with more specific guidance on how to achieve the unique vision for the EVSP and how to address the design of new buildings and renovations to existing structures. Direct and cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

Future development would create new sources of light and glare in the EVSP Area. However, lighting would be required to comply with the Escondido Outdoor Lighting Ordinance. In addition, EVSP policies pertaining to light and glare ensure that any potential spillover from nighttime lighting would be minimized. Direct and cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

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## 3.2 Air Quality

This section evaluates the potential for impacts to air quality resulting from implementation of the City's EVSP. The analysis in this section is based on the Air Quality Technical Memorandum prepared by Harris & Associates (2023) (Appendix B1) and modeling output (Appendix B2) for the Project.

### 3.2.1 Existing Conditions

Air quality is defined by the concentration of pollutants in relation to their impact on human health. Concentrations of air pollutants are determined by the rate and location of pollutant emissions released by pollution sources, and the atmosphere's ability to transport and dilute such emissions. Natural factors that affect transport and dilution include terrain, wind, and sunlight. Therefore, ambient air quality conditions within the local air basin are influenced by such natural factors as topography, meteorology, and climate, in addition to the amount of air pollutant emissions released by existing air pollutant sources.

Southern California is characterized as a semiarid climate, although it contains three distinct zones of rainfall that coincide with the coast, mountain, and desert. The EVSP Area is located within the San Diego Air Basin (SDAB). The SDAB is a coastal plain with connecting broad valleys and low hills, bounded by the Pacific Ocean to the west and high mountain ranges to the east. The topography in the SDAB region varies greatly, from beaches on the west, to mountains, and then desert to the east.

#### 3.2.1.1 Climate

Regional climate and local meteorological conditions influence ambient air quality. The climate in the SDAB is largely dominated by the strength and position of the semi-permanent high-pressure system over the Pacific Ocean, known as the Pacific High. This high-pressure ridge over the West Coast often creates a pattern of late night and early morning low clouds, hazy afternoon sunshine, daytime onshore breezes, and little temperature variation year-round. Average annual precipitation ranges from approximately 10 inches on the coast to over 30 inches in the mountains to the east (the desert regions of San Diego County generally receive between four and six inches per year).

The favorable climate of the SDAB also works to create air pollution problems. Sinking or subsiding air from the Pacific High-Pressure Zone creates a temperature inversion, known as a "subsidence inversion," which acts as a lid to vertical dispersion of pollutants. Weak summertime pressure gradients further limit horizontal dispersion of pollutants in the mixed layer below the subsidence inversion. The combination of poorly dispersed anthropogenic emissions and strong sunshine leads to photochemical reactions, which results in the creation of ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) at this

surface layer. Daytime onshore flow (i.e., sea breeze) and nighttime offshore flow (i.e., land breeze) are common in Southern California. The sea breeze helps to moderate daytime temperatures in the western portion of the County, which adds to the climatic draw of the region. This also leads to emissions being blown out to sea at night and returning to land the following day. Under certain conditions, this atmospheric oscillation results in the offshore transport of air from the Los Angeles region to the County, which often results in high O<sub>3</sub> concentrations being measured at County air pollution monitoring stations. Transport of air pollutants from Los Angeles to San Diego has also been shown to occur within the stable layer of the elevated subsidence inversion. In this layer, removed from fresh emissions of nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), which scavenge and reduce O<sub>3</sub> concentrations, high levels of O<sub>3</sub> are transported into the County.

### **3.2.1.2 Air Pollutants**

Air quality laws and regulations have divided air pollutants into two broad categories: criteria air pollutants and toxic air contaminants (TACs). Criteria air pollutants are a group of common air pollutants regulated by the federal and state governments by means of ambient standards based on criteria regarding public health and environmental effects of pollution (USEPA 2022a). TACs are pollutants with the potential to cause significant adverse health effects. In California, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) identifies exposure thresholds for TACs that indicate the level below which no significant adverse health effects are anticipated from exposure to the identified substance. However, thresholds are not specified for TACs that have no safe exposure level, or where insufficient data is available to identify an exposure threshold (CARB 2023a).

#### **Criteria Air Pollutants**

Individual air pollutants at certain concentrations may adversely affect human or animal health, reduce visibility, damage property, and reduce the productivity or vigor of crops and natural vegetation. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and CARB have identified six air pollutants of concern at nationwide and statewide levels: carbon monoxide (CO), NO<sub>x</sub>, O<sub>3</sub>, particulate matter (PM), sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), and lead. Additionally, hydrogen sulfide is a state criteria pollutant that is relevant to the discussion of odor-related impacts. The following describes the health effects for each of these criteria air pollutants, with the exception of lead. Emissions from lead typically result from industrial processes such as ore and metals processing, and leaded aviation gasoline (USEPA 2022a). These sources are not proposed as part of the Project; therefore, lead emissions are not included in the project analysis.

#### **Carbon Monoxide**

CO is formed by the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels, almost entirely from automobiles. CO is a colorless, odorless gas that can cause dizziness, fatigue, and impairments to central nervous system functions. When CO gets into the body, it combines with chemicals in the blood and prevents blood from providing oxygen to cells, tissues, and organs. Because the body requires

oxygen for energy, high-level exposure to CO can cause serious health effects, including death (USEPA 2022c).

### **Nitrogen Oxides**

Nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), a reddish brown gas, and nitric oxide (NO), a colorless, odorless gas, are formed from fuel combustion under high temperature or pressure. These compounds are referred to as NO<sub>x</sub>, which is a primary component of the photochemical smog reaction. NO<sub>2</sub> also contributes to other pollution problems, including a high concentration of fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), poor visibility, and acid deposition (i.e., acid rain). NO<sub>2</sub> decreases lung function and may reduce resistance to infection (USEPA 2022a).

### **Ozone**

O<sub>3</sub> (smog) is formed by photochemical reactions between NO<sub>x</sub> and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) rather than being directly emitted. O<sub>3</sub> is a pungent, colorless gas typical of Southern California smog. Major emissions sources include NO<sub>x</sub> and VOC emissions from industrial facilities and electric utilities, motor vehicle exhaust, gasoline vapors, and chemical solvents. Elevated O<sub>3</sub> concentrations result in reduced lung function, particularly during vigorous physical activity. This health problem is particularly acute in sensitive receptors (e.g., those with illnesses, older adults, and young children). O<sub>3</sub> levels peak during summer and early fall (USEPA 2022a).

### **Particulate Matter**

PM is the term used for a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets found in the air. Coarse particles (PM<sub>10</sub>) derive from a variety of sources, including windblown dust and grinding operations. Fuel combustion and resultant exhaust from power plants and diesel buses and trucks are primarily responsible for PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels. Fine particles can also be formed in the atmosphere through chemical reactions. PM<sub>10</sub> can accumulate in the respiratory system and aggravate health problems (e.g., asthma). The USEPA's scientific review concluded that PM<sub>2.5</sub>, which penetrates deeply into the lungs, is more likely than PM<sub>10</sub> to contribute to the health effects listed in a number of recently published community epidemiological studies at concentrations that extend well below those allowed by the current PM<sub>10</sub> standards. These health effects include premature death and increased hospital admissions and emergency room visits (primarily among older adults and individuals with cardiopulmonary disease), increased respiratory symptoms and disease (children and individuals with cardiopulmonary disease (e.g., asthma)), decreased lung function (particularly in children and individuals with asthma), and alterations in lung tissue and structure and in respiratory tract defense mechanisms (CARB 2023b).

## Sulfur Dioxide

SO<sub>2</sub> is a colorless, irritating gas formed primarily from incomplete combustion of fuels containing sulfur. Industrial facilities also contribute to gaseous SO<sub>2</sub> levels. SO<sub>2</sub> irritates the respiratory tract, can injure lung tissue when combined with fine PM, and reduces visibility and the level of sunlight.

## Volatile Organic Compounds

VOCs are formed from the combustion of fuels and the evaporation of organic solvents. VOCs are not defined as criteria pollutants; however, because VOCs accumulate in the atmosphere more quickly during the winter, when sunlight is limited and photochemical reactions are slower, they are a prime component of the photochemical smog reaction that forms O<sub>3</sub>.

### 3.2.1.3 Existing Air Quality

Ambient air pollutant concentrations in the SDAB are measured at air quality monitoring stations operated by CARB and the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD). The City operates the Escondido–East Valley Parkway Monitoring Station located on East Valley Parkway, which measures O<sub>3</sub>, nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), and particulate matter less than 10 microns (PM<sub>10</sub>), and particulate matter less than 2.5 microns (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) concentrations. However, data is not available past 2016 for these pollutants because it has been closed for remodeling. Therefore, concentrations of pollutants from the next closest monitoring station, San Diego–Kearny Villa Road Monitoring Station, are presented in Table 3.2-1, Ambient Air Quality Monitored at the San Diego – Kearny Villa Road Monitoring Station, from 2018 through 2021. Concentrations of one-hour O<sub>3</sub> exceeded the California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) in 2018, 2020, and 2021, and eight-hour O<sub>3</sub> CAAQS and National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) were exceeded in 2018, 2019, and 2020. The NAAQS and CAAQS for PM<sub>10</sub> were not exceeded in 2018. The monitored 24-hour PM<sub>2.5</sub> values were exceeded in 2020 and 2021. The one-hour and annual NAAQS and CAAQS for NO<sub>2</sub> were not exceeded.

No CO data are available from monitoring sites in the SDAB after 2012, and no data are available for SO<sub>2</sub> after 2013. However, with one exception for CO during the firestorms of October 2003, the SDAB has not violated the state or federal standards for CO or SO<sub>2</sub> in the last 20 years (SDAPCD 2017).

**Table 3.2-1. Ambient Air Quality Monitored at the San Diego – Kearny Villa Road Monitoring Station**

| Pollutant  | Standard                         | 2018  | 2019  | 2020  | 2021  |
|--|----------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>O<sub>3</sub></b>   |                                  |       |       |       |       |
| Maximum 1-hour concentration (ppm)                           |                                  | 0.102 | 0.083 | 0.123 | 0.095 |
| Number of days exceeded                                      | State: > 0.12 ppm                | 1     | 0     | 2     | 1     |
| Maximum 8-hour concentration (ppm)                           |                                  | 0.077 | 0.076 | 0.102 | 0.071 |
| Number of days exceeded                                      | State: > 0.07 ppm                | 5     | 1     | 10    | 1     |
|  | Federal: > 0.07 ppm              | 5     | 1     | 10    | 1     |
| <b>PM<sub>10</sub></b>                                       |                                  |       |       |       |       |
| Maximum 24-hour concentration (µg/m <sup>3</sup> )           |                                  | 38    | —     | —     | —     |
| Number of days exceeded                                      | State: > 50 µg/m <sup>3</sup>    | 0     | —     | —     | —     |
|  | Federal: > 150 µg/m <sup>3</sup> | 0     | —     | —     | —     |
| Annual arithmetic average concentration (µg/m <sup>3</sup> ) |                                  | ND    | ND    | ND    | ND    |
| Exceeded for the year  | State: > 20 µg/m <sup>3</sup>    | ND    | ND    | ND    | ND    |
| <b>PM<sub>2.5</sub></b>                                      |                                  |       |       |       |       |
| Maximum 24-hour concentration (µg/m <sup>3</sup> )           |                                  | 32.2  | 15    | 47.5  | 20.9  |
| Number of days exceeded                                      | Federal: > 35 µg/m <sup>3</sup>  | 0     | 0     | 2     | 0     |
| Annual arithmetic average concentration (µg/m <sup>3</sup> ) |                                  | 8     | 8     | 8     | 7.8   |
| Exceeded for the year  | State: > 12 µg/m <sup>3</sup>    | No    | No    | Yes   | ND    |
|  | Federal: > 15 µg/m <sup>3</sup>  | No    | No    | Yes   | ND    |
| <b>NO<sub>2</sub></b>  |                                  |       |       |       |       |
| Maximum 1-hour concentration (ppm)                           |                                  | 0.045 | 0.046 | 0.052 | 0.060 |
| Number of days exceeded                                      | State: > 0.18 ppm                | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     |
| Annual arithmetic average concentration (ppm)                |                                  | 0.008 | 0.008 | 0.007 | 0.007 |
| Exceeded for the year  | State: > 0.030 ppm               | No    | No    | No    | No    |
|  | Federal: > 0.053 ppm             | No    | No    | No    | No    |

**Source:** Appendix B1.

**Notes:** µg/m<sup>3</sup> = micrograms per cubic meter; ND = no data; NO<sub>2</sub> = nitrogen dioxide; O<sub>3</sub> = ozone; PM<sub>2.5</sub> = particulate matter smaller than or equal to 2.5 microns in diameter; PM<sub>10</sub> = particulate matter smaller than or equal to 10 microns in diameter; ppm = parts per million

Existing operational criteria air pollutant emissions for existing development in the EVSP Area (see Table 3.2-2, Existing Maximum Daily East Valley Specific Plan Area Emissions) were estimated using the most recent version of the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) (Version 2020.4.0) (CAPCOA 2020). Model default assumptions for the existing land use mix were assumed except for vehicle use data obtained from the project-specific Transportation Analysis (Appendix G) prepared by Linscott, Law & Greenspan, Engineers (LLG) (2023). The project-generated retail VMT was proportionately reduced to represent VMT from existing retail development.

**Table 3.2-2. Existing Maximum Daily East Valley Specific Plan Area Emissions**

| Emissions Source                | Pollutant (lbs/day) |                 |                |                 |                  |                   |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
|                                 | VOC                 | NO <sub>x</sub> | CO             | SO <sub>x</sub> | PM <sub>10</sub> | PM <sub>2.5</sub> |
| Area <sup>1</sup>               | 949.3               | 17.9            | 1,145.6        | 2               | 154.2            | 154.2             |
| Energy                          | 0.7                 | 6.1             | 4.2            | <0.1            | 0.5              | 0.5               |
| Mobile                          | 100.9               | 90.7            | 794.3          | 1.6             | 172.8            | 46.9              |
| <b>Total Existing Emissions</b> | <b>1,050.9</b>      | <b>114.7</b>    | <b>1,944.1</b> | <b>3.7</b>      | <b>327.5</b>     | <b>201.6</b>      |

**Notes:** CO = carbon monoxide; NO<sub>x</sub> = nitrogen oxides; PM<sub>2.5</sub> = particulate matter smaller than or equal to 2.5 microns in diameter; PM<sub>10</sub> = particulate matter smaller than or equal to 10 microns in diameter; VOC = volatile organic compound; SO<sub>x</sub> = sulfur oxides

<sup>1</sup> Includes model default assumptions for hearth use

## Toxic Air Contaminants

In addition to criteria pollutants, both federal and state air quality regulations also focus on TACs. TACs can be separated into carcinogens and noncarcinogens based on the nature of the effects associated with exposure to the pollutant. For regulatory purposes, carcinogens are assumed to have no safe threshold below which health impacts would not occur. Any exposure to a carcinogen poses some risk of contracting cancer. Noncarcinogens differ in that there is generally assumed to be a safe level of exposure below which no negative health impact is believed to occur. These levels are determined on a pollutant-by-pollutant basis. TACs may be emitted by stationary or mobile sources, as described below.

### Stationary TAC Sources

Common stationary sources of TAC emissions include gasoline stations, dry cleaners, and diesel backup generators, which are subject to local air district permit requirements.

### Mobile TAC Sources

The other, often more significant, sources of community TAC emissions are motor vehicles on freeways, high-volume roadways, or other areas with high numbers of diesel vehicles, such as distribution centers. Off-road mobile sources are also major contributors of TAC emissions and include construction equipment, ships, and trains.

Particulate exhaust emissions from diesel-fueled engines known as diesel particulate matter (DPM) were identified as a TAC by CARB in 1998. Federal and state efforts to reduce DPM emissions have focused on the use of improved fuels, adding particulate filters to engines, and requiring the production of new technology engines that emit fewer exhaust particulates.

Diesel engines tend to produce a much higher ratio of fine particulates than other types of internal combustion engines. The fine particles that make up DPM tend to penetrate deep into the lungs and the rough surfaces of these particles makes it easy for them to bind with other toxins within the exhaust, thus increasing the hazards of particle inhalation. Long-term exposure to DPM is

known to lead to chronic, serious health problems including cardiovascular disease, cardiopulmonary disease, and lung cancer.

### **Sensitive Receptors**

Some members of the population are especially sensitive to air pollutant emissions and should be given special consideration when evaluating air quality impacts from projects. Air quality regulators typically define sensitive receptors as schools (preschool–12th grade), hospitals, resident care facilities, daycare centers, or other facilities that may house individuals with health conditions that would be adversely impacted by changes in air quality. The City defines sensitive receptors as those most susceptible to further respiratory distress, such as those with asthma, older adults, very young children, those already weakened by other disease or illness, and those engaged in strenuous work or exercise (City of Escondido 2012a).

Residential areas are also considered sensitive to air pollution because residents (including children and older adults) tend to be at home for extended periods of time, resulting in sustained exposure to pollutants present. Recreational land uses are considered moderately sensitive to air pollution. Exercise places a high demand on respiratory functions, which can be impaired by air pollution even though exposure periods during exercise are generally short. In addition, noticeable air pollution can detract from the enjoyment of recreation. Industrial and commercial areas are considered the least sensitive to air pollution. Exposure periods are relatively short and intermittent as the majority of the workers tend to stay indoors most of the time.

### **Odor**

Odors are considered an air quality issue both at the local level (e.g., odor from wastewater treatment) and at the regional level (e.g., smoke from wildfires). Odors are generally regarded as an annoyance rather than a health hazard. However, manifestations of a person's reaction to foul odors can range from psychological (e.g., irritation, anger, or anxiety) to physiological (e.g., circulatory and respiratory effects, nausea, vomiting, and headache).

The ability to detect odors varies considerably among the population and is subjective. Some individuals have the ability to smell minute quantities of specific substances while others may not have the same sensitivity but may have sensitivities to odors of other substances. In addition, people may have different reactions to the same odor; an odor that is offensive to one person (e.g., from a fast-food restaurant or bakery) may be perfectly acceptable to another. Unfamiliar odors may be more easily detected and likely to cause complaints than familiar ones.

Offensive odors can potentially affect human health in several ways. First, odorant compounds can irritate the eye, nose, and throat, which can reduce respiratory volume. Second, the VOCs that cause odors can stimulate sensory nerves to cause neurochemical changes that might influence health, for

instance, by compromising the immune system. Finally, unpleasant odors can trigger memories or attitudes linked to unpleasant odors, causing cognitive and emotional effects, such as stress.

Several examples of common land use types that generate substantial odors include wastewater treatment plants, landfills, composting/green waste facilities, recycling facilities, petroleum refineries, chemical manufacturing plants, painting/coating operations, rendering plants, and food packaging plants.

### **3.2.2 Regulatory Framework**

This section describes the federal, state, and local regulatory framework adopted to address air quality.

#### **3.2.2.1 Federal**

##### **Federal Clean Air Act**

The Clean Air Act (CAA) of 1970 is the comprehensive federal law that regulates air emissions from stationary and mobile sources. The CAA authorizes the USEPA to establish NAAQS to protect public health and public welfare and to regulate emissions of hazardous air pollutants. Current NAAQS are listed in Table 3.2-3, National and California Ambient Air Quality Standards. The primary standards listed in Table 3.2-3 have been set at levels intended to protect public health. The USEPA has classified air basins (or portions thereof) as being in “attainment,” “non-attainment,” or “unclassified” for each criteria air pollutant, based on whether or not the NAAQS have been achieved. Non-attainment areas are air basins that do not meet one or more of the CAAQS and are subject to additional restrictions as required by the USEPA. If an area is designated unclassified, it is because inadequate air quality data were available as a basis for a non-attainment or attainment designation. The USEPA classifies the SDAB as in attainment for the federal CO, NO<sub>2</sub>, lead, PM<sub>10</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub>, and SO<sub>2</sub> standards. It is unclassifiable for PM<sub>10</sub> with respect to federal air quality standards. The SDAB is classified as moderate non-attainment for the federal O<sub>3</sub> standard (SDAPCD 2016a). Table 3.2-4, San Diego Air Basin Attainment Status, lists the attainment status of the SDAB for criteria pollutants.

The CAA requires states to develop a plan to attain and maintain the NAAQS in all areas of the country and a specific plan to attain the standards for each area designated non-attainment for a NAAQS. These plans, known as State Implementation Plans (SIPs), are developed by state and local air quality management agencies and submitted to USEPA for approval. The SIP includes strategies and control measures to attain the NAAQS by deadlines established by the CAA. The SIP is periodically modified to reflect the latest emissions inventories, plans, and rules and regulations of air basins as reported by the agencies with jurisdiction over them.



**Table 3.2-3. National and California Ambient Air Quality Standards**

| Pollutant  | Averaging Time                       | California Standards <sup>1</sup>  | Federal Standards <sup>2</sup>            |                                   |
|--|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
|  |                                      | Concentration <sup>3</sup>         | Primary <sup>3, 4</sup>                   | Secondary <sup>3, 5</sup>         |
| Ozone (O <sub>3</sub> ) <sup>6</sup>                           | 1-hour                               | 0.09 ppm (180 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )  | —   | Same as Primary Standards         |
|  | 8-hour                               | 0.070 ppm (137 µg/m <sup>3</sup> ) | 0.070 ppm (137 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )        |                                   |
| Respirable Particulate Matter (PM <sub>10</sub> ) <sup>7</sup> | 24 Hour                              | 50 µg/m <sup>3</sup>               | 150 µg/m <sup>3</sup>                     | Same as Primary Standards         |
|  | Annual Arithmetic Mean               | 20 µg/m <sup>3</sup>               | —   |                                   |
| Fine Particulate Matter (PM <sub>2.5</sub> ) <sup>7</sup>      | 24 Hour                              | —                                  | 35 µg/m <sup>3</sup>                      | Same as Primary Standards         |
|  | Annual Arithmetic Mean               | 12 µg/m <sup>3</sup>               | 12 µg/m <sup>3</sup>                      | 15 µg/m <sup>3</sup>              |
| Carbon Monoxide (CO)   | 8-hour                               | 9 ppm (10 mg/m <sup>3</sup> )      | 9 ppm (10 mg/m <sup>3</sup> )             | None                              |
|  | 1-hour                               | 20 ppm (23 mg/m <sup>3</sup> )     | 35 ppm (40 mg/m <sup>3</sup> )            |                                   |
| Nitrogen Dioxide (NO <sub>2</sub> ) <sup>8</sup>               | Annual Arithmetic Mean               | 0.030 ppm (57 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )  | 0.053 ppm (100 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )        | Same as Primary Standard          |
|  | 1-hour                               | 0.18 ppm (470 mg/m <sup>3</sup> )  | 100 ppb (188 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )          |                                   |
| Sulfur Dioxide (SO <sub>2</sub> ) <sup>9</sup>                 | Annual Arithmetic Mean               | —                                  | 0.030 ppm (for certain areas)             | —                                 |
|  | 24 Hour                              | 0.04 ppm (105 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )  | 0.14 ppm (for certain areas)              | —                                 |
|  | 3 Hour                               | —                                  | —   | 0.5 ppm (1300 µg/m <sup>3</sup> ) |
|  | 1-hour                               | 0.25 ppm (655 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )  | 75 ppb (196 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )           | —                                 |
| Lead <sup>10, 11</sup>   | 30 Day Average                       | 1.5 µg/m <sup>3</sup>              | —   | —                                 |
|  | Calendar Quarter                     | —                                  | 1.5 µg/m <sup>3</sup> (for certain areas) | Same as Primary Standard          |
|  | Rolling 3-Month Average <sup>7</sup> | —                                  | 0.15 µg/m <sup>3</sup>                    |                                   |
| Visibility-Reducing Particles <sup>12</sup>                    | 8-hour                               | See Footnote 12.                   | No Federal Standards                      |                                   |
| Sulfates   | 24 Hour                              | 25 µg/m <sup>3</sup>               | No Federal Standards                      |                                   |
| Hydrogen Sulfide   | 1-hour                               | 0.03 ppm (42 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )   | No Federal Standards                      |                                   |
| Vinyl Chloride <sup>10</sup>                                   | 24 Hour                              | 0.01 ppm (26 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )   | No Federal Standards                      |                                   |

**Source:** CARB 2016.

**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> California standards for O<sub>3</sub>, CO, SO<sub>2</sub> (one-hour and 24-hour), NO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub>, and visibility-reducing particles are values that are not to be exceeded. The standards for sulfates, lead, hydrogen sulfide, and vinyl chloride standards are not to be equaled or exceeded. The CAAQS are listed in the Table of Standards in Section 70200 of Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations.

<sup>2</sup> National standards (other than O<sub>3</sub>, PM, and those based on annual averages) are not to be exceeded more than once per year. The O<sub>3</sub> standard is attained when the fourth highest eight-hour concentration measured at each site in one year, averaged over three years, is equal to or less than the standard. For PM<sub>10</sub>, the 24-hour standard is attained when the expected number of days

- per calendar year with a 24-hour average concentration above  $150 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  is equal to or less than one. For  $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ , the 24-hour standard is attained when 98% of the daily concentrations, averaged over three years, are equal to or less than the standard. Contact the USEPA for further clarification and current national policies.
- <sup>3</sup> Concentration expressed first in units in which it was promulgated. Equivalent units given in parenthesis are based on a reference temperature of  $25^\circ\text{C}$  and a reference pressure of 760 torr. Most measurements of air quality are to be corrected to a reference temperature of  $25^\circ\text{C}$  and a reference pressure of 760 torr; parts per million (ppm) in this table refers to ppm by volume, or micromoles of pollutant per mole of gas.
  - <sup>4</sup> National Primary Standards: The levels of air quality necessary, with an adequate margin of safety to protect the public health.
  - <sup>5</sup> National Secondary Standards: The levels of air quality necessary to protect the public welfare from any known or anticipated adverse effects of a pollutant.
  - <sup>6</sup> On October 1, 2015, the national eight-hour  $\text{O}_3$  primary and secondary standards were lowered from 0.075 to 0.070 ppm.
  - <sup>7</sup> On December 14, 2012, the national annual  $\text{PM}_{2.5}$  primary standard was lowered from  $15 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  to  $12.0 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ . The existing national 24-hour  $\text{PM}_{2.5}$  standards (primary and secondary) were retained at  $35 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ , as was the annual secondary standard of  $15 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ . The existing 24-hour  $\text{PM}_{10}$  standards (primary and secondary) of  $150 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  also were retained. The form of the annual primary and secondary standards is the annual mean, averaged over three years.
  - <sup>8</sup> To attain the one-hour national standard, the three-year average of the annual 98th percentile of the one-hour daily maximum concentrations at each site must not exceed 100 ppb. Note that the national one-hour standard is in units of parts per billion (ppb). California standards are in units of parts per million (ppm). To directly compare the national one-hour standard to the California standards the units can be converted from ppb to ppm. In this case, the national standard of 100 ppb is identical to 0.100 ppm.
  - <sup>9</sup> On June 2, 2010, a new one-hour  $\text{SO}_2$  standard was established and the existing 24-hour and annual primary standards were revoked. To attain the one-hour national standard, the three-year average of the annual 99th percentile of the one-hour daily maximum concentrations at each site must not exceed 75 ppb. The 1971  $\text{SO}_2$  national standards (24-hour and annual) remain in effect until one year after an area is designated for the 2010 standard, except that in areas designated non-attainment for the 1971 standards, the 1971 standards remain in effect until implementation plans to attain or maintain the 2010 standards are approved.  
Note that the one-hour national standard is in units of ppb. California standards are in units of parts per million (ppm). To directly compare the one-hour national standard to the California standard the units can be converted to ppm. In this case, the national standard of 75 ppb is identical to 0.075 ppm.
  - <sup>10</sup> CARB had identified lead and vinyl chloride as TACs with no threshold level of exposure for adverse health effects determined. These actions allow for the implementation of control measures at levels below the ambient concentrations specified for these pollutants.
  - <sup>11</sup> The national standard for lead was revised on October 15, 2008, to a rolling three-month average. The 1978 lead standard ( $1.5 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  as a quarterly average) remains in effect until one year after an area is designated for the 2008 standard, except that in areas designated non-attainment for the 1978 standard, the 1978 standard remains in effect until implementation plans to attain or maintain the 2008 standard are approved.
  - <sup>12</sup> In 1989, CARB converted both the general statewide 10-mile visibility standard and the Lake Tahoe 30-mile visibility standard to instrumental equivalents, which are "extinction of 0.23 per kilometer" and "extinction of 0.07 per kilometer" for the statewide and Lake Tahoe Air Basin standards, respectively.

**Table 3.2-4. San Diego Air Basin Attainment Status**

| Pollutant  | California Standards  | Federal Standards         |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Ozone ( $\text{O}_3$ ) (1 Hour)                    | <b>Non-Attainment</b> | No Federal Standard       |
| Ozone ( $\text{O}_3$ ) (8 Hour)                    | <b>Non-Attainment</b> | <b>Non-Attainment</b>     |
| Respirable Particulate Matter ( $\text{PM}_{10}$ ) | <b>Non-Attainment</b> | Unclassified <sup>1</sup> |
| Fine Particulate Matter ( $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ )      | <b>Non-Attainment</b> | Attainment                |
| Carbon Monoxide (CO)                               | Attainment            | Attainment                |
| Nitrogen Dioxide ( $\text{NO}_2$ )                 | Attainment            | Attainment/Unclassifiable |
| Lead   | Attainment            | Attainment/Unclassifiable |
| Sulfur Dioxide ( $\text{SO}_2$ )                   | Attainment            | Attainment                |

**Source:** Appendix B1.

**Note:**

- <sup>1</sup> Unclassified; indicates data is not sufficient for determining attainment or non-attainment

### 3.2.2.2 State

#### **Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Health Perspective**

CARB has developed the Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Health Perspective to provide guidance on land use compatibility with sources of TACs (CARB 2005). These sources include freeways and high-traffic roads, commercial distribution centers, rail yards, refineries, dry cleaners, gasoline stations, and industrial facilities. The handbook is not a law or adopted policy, but offers advisory recommendations for the siting of sensitive receptors near uses associated with TACs. The handbook indicates that land use agencies have to balance a number of other considerations, including housing and transportation needs, economic development priorities, and other quality of life issues.

#### **California Ambient Air Quality Standards**

CARB, a part of the California Environmental Protection Agency, is responsible for the coordination and administration of air pollution control programs in California. The CAA allows states to adopt Ambient Air Quality Standards and other regulations if they are at least as stringent as federal standards. California has adopted ambient standards (the CAAQS) that are equal to or stricter than the federal standards for six criteria air pollutants. The CAAQS are listed in the Table of Standards in Section 70200 of Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations and provided in Table 3.2-3. Similar to the federal CAA, areas have been designated as attainment, non-attainment, or unclassified with respect to the state Ambient Air Quality Standards. As shown in Table 3.2-4, the SDAB is in non-attainment with the CAAQS for O<sub>3</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>, and PM<sub>2.5</sub>. The SDAB is designated as an attainment area for the state CO, NO<sub>2</sub>, SO<sub>2</sub>, and lead.

#### **Toxic Air Contaminant Regulations**

California regulates TACs primarily through the Tanner Air Toxics Act (AB 1807, Tanner Act) and the Air Toxics Hot Spots Information and Assessment Act of 1987 (AB 2588, Hot Spots Act). The Tanner Act sets forth a formal procedure for CARB to designate substances as TACs. This includes research, public participation, and scientific peer review before CARB designates a substance as a TAC. To date, CARB has designated nearly 200 compounds as TACs. The majority of estimated health risks from TACs can be attributed to a relatively small number of compounds, the most important being PM from diesel-fueled engines (i.e., DPM).

### 3.2.2.3 Regional

#### **San Diego County Air Pollution Control District**

The SDAPCD has jurisdiction over air quality programs in the SDAB. State and local government projects, as well as projects proposed by the private sector, are subject to SDAPCD requirements. Additionally, the SDAPCD, along with CARB, maintains and operates ambient air quality

monitoring stations at numerous locations throughout the SDAB including the Kearny Villa Road monitoring station mentioned previously.

Under the requirements of the California CAA, each local air district is required to develop its own strategies to achieve both state and federal air quality standards for its air basin. The SDAPCD developed the 2016 Revision of the Regional Air Quality Strategy for San Diego County (RAQS) pursuant to California CAA requirements to identify feasible emission-control measures to provide progress in the County toward attaining the state O<sub>3</sub> standard. The pollutants addressed are VOCs and NO<sub>x</sub>, precursors to the photochemical formation of O<sub>3</sub> (the primary component of smog). The RAQS control measures focus on emission sources under the SDAPCD's authority, specifically stationary emission sources (such as power plants, manufacturing and industrial facilities) and some area-wide sources (such as water heaters, architectural coatings, and consumer products). However, the emission inventories and emission projections in the RAQS reflect the impact of all emission sources and all control measures, including those under the jurisdiction of CARB (on-road and off-road motor vehicles) and the USEPA (aircraft, ships, and trains). Thus, while legal authority to control various pollution sources is divided among agencies, the SDAPCD is responsible for reflecting federal, state, and local measures in a single plan to achieve state O<sub>3</sub> standards in the SDAB. The RAQS was initially adopted by the SDAPCD in 1992 and has generally been updated on a triennial basis, in accordance with state requirements. The latest version of the RAQS was adopted in 2016 (SDAPCD 2016b).

Additionally, as mentioned previously, because the SDAB is currently designated as a non-attainment area for the eight-hour O<sub>3</sub> NAAQS, the SDAPCD must submit to USEPA, through CARB, an implementation plan as part of the California SIP identifying control measures and associated emission reductions as necessary to demonstrate attainment of the federal eight-hour O<sub>3</sub> standard within the SDAB. The SDAPCD adopted its 2008 Eight-Hour Ozone Attainment Plan and Reasonable Available Control Technology Demonstration for the 2008 eight-hour O<sub>3</sub> NAAQS for the SDAB in October 2020.

Neither the RAQS nor the SIP addresses emissions of PM in the SDAB. The SDAPCD prepared the report, Measures to Reduce Particulate Matter in San Diego County, in December 2005. This report, which identifies existing federal, state, and local measures to control particulates in the SDAB, outlines potential measures for PM control that the SDAPCD may further evaluate for future rule adoption. It does not outline a plan for Ambient Air Quality Standards compliance that the Project would need to implement. As such, this report is not discussed further in this analysis.

The SDAPCD is also responsible for establishing and enforcing local air quality rules and regulations that address the requirements of federal and state air quality laws. Development projects in the City are subject to the following SDAPCD rules (as well as others):

- **Rule 51, Nuisance:** prohibits emissions that cause injury, detriment, nuisance, or annoyance to any considerable number of persons or to the public; or which endanger the comfort, repose, health, or safety of any such persons or the public; or which cause injury or damage to business or property.
- **Rule 52, Particulate Matter:** establishes limits to the discharge of any PM from non-stationary sources.
- **Rule 54, Dust and Fumes:** establishes limits to the amount of dust or fume discharged into the atmosphere in any 1 hour.
- **Rule 55, Fugitive Dust Control:** sets restrictions on visible fugitive dust from construction and demolition projects.
- **Rule 67, Architectural Coatings:** establishes limits to the VOC content for coatings applied within the SDAPCD.

#### 3.2.2.4 Local

##### Escondido General Plan

###### *Resource Conservation Element*

The Escondido General Plan is a set of long-term goals and policies that decision makers use to guide growth and development and address the community's goals. The plan is divided into various elements that include the Land Use and Community Element, Mobility and Infrastructure Element, Housing Element, Community Health and Services Element, Community Protection Element, Resource Conservation Element, Growth Management Element, Economic Prosperity Element, and any additional topics of local significance. Each of these elements details policies and programs to achieve the established goals.

The Resource Conservation Element focuses on conserving important resources including biological resources, air and water quality, cultural, agricultural, mineral and energy resources, as well as protecting hillside and ridgeline view corridors with particular emphasis on ridgelines, unique landforms and visual gateways (City of Escondido 2012a). The following goals and policies contained in the Resource Conservation Element of the Escondido General Plan are relevant to the analysis found in this section:

- **Resource Conservation Goal 7 (Air Quality and Climate Protection):** Improved air quality in the city and the region to maintain the community's health and reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.

- **Air Quality and Climate Protection Policy 7.1:** Participate in regional planning efforts and coordinate with the San Diego Air Pollution Control District and San Diego Association of Governments in their efforts to reduce air quality impacts and attain state and federal air quality standards.
- **Air Quality and Climate Protection Policy 7.2:** Reduce regional greenhouse gas emissions through the following measures including, but not limited to:
  - a. Implementing land use patterns that reduce automobile dependence (compact, mixed-use, pedestrian, and transit-oriented development, etc.);
  - b. Reducing the number of vehicular miles traveled through implementation of Transportation Demand Management programs, jobs-housing balance, and similar techniques;
  - c. Supporting public transportation improvements;
  - d. Encouraging the use of alternative modes of transportation by expanding public transit, bicycle, and pedestrian networks and facilities;
  - e. Participating in the development of park-and-ride facilities;
  - f. Maintaining and updating the city’s traffic signal synchronization plan;
  - g. Promoting local agriculture;
  - h. Promoting the use of drought-tolerant landscaping; and
  - i. Encouraging the use of non-polluting alternative energy systems.
- **Air Quality and Climate Protection Policy 7.3:** Require that new development projects incorporate feasible measures that reduce construction and operational emissions.
- **Air Quality and Climate Protection Policy 7.4:** Locate uses and facilities/operations that may produce toxic or hazardous air pollutants an adequate distance from each other and from sensitive uses such as housing and schools as consistent with California Air Resources Board recommendations.
- **Air Quality and Climate Protection Policy 7.5:** Consider the development of park and ride facilities within the city in coordination with Caltrans.
- **Air Quality and Climate Protection Policy 7.6:** Restrict the number and location of drive-through facilities in the city and require site layouts that reduce the amount of time vehicles wait for service.
- **Air Quality and Climate Protection Policy 7.7:** Encourage businesses to alter local truck delivery schedules to occur during non-peak hours, when feasible.
- **Air Quality and Climate Protection Policy 7.11:** Educate the public about air quality, its effect on health, and efforts the public can make to improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

### ***Escondido Environmental Quality Regulations***

The Environmental Quality Regulations (EQRs), as established in EMC Chapter 33, Article 47, implement CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines by applying the provisions and procedures contained in CEQA to development projects proposed within the City. The EQRs establish screening thresholds to determine if additional analysis is required to determine whether a project would result in significant impacts. Section 33-924(G) pertains to air quality impacts. A project would require a technical study if it would exceed the thresholds identified in the EMC. However, a project that exceeds these criteria does not necessarily have a significant impact on the environment. The EQRs for air quality only determine if further analysis is required to determine the potential significant impacts of the Project. It was reasonably assumed that the Project would exceed the screening level criteria identified in the EQRs; therefore, a technical memorandum (Appendix B1) was prepared for the Project.

#### **3.2.3 Thresholds of Significance**

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Project would have a significant impact on air quality if it would:

- **Threshold 1:** Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan.
- **Threshold 2:** 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.
- **Threshold 3:** Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.
- **Threshold 4:** Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people.

#### **3.2.4 Impacts and Mitigation**

The following sections address various potential impacts relating to air quality that could result from implementation of the Project.

##### **3.2.4.1 Threshold 1: Consistency with Applicable Air Quality Plan**

#### **Impact Analysis**

The SIP is the document that sets forth the state's strategies for achieving federal air quality standards. The applicable air quality planning documents for the SDAPCD are the 2016 RAQS (SDAPCD 2016b) and the Ozone Attainment Plan (SDAPCD 2020), which is the SDAPCD portion of the SIP. The RAQS and Ozone Attainment Plan were prepared by the SDAPCD for CARB to be included as part of the SIP. These plans demonstrate how the SDAB would either maintain or strive to attain the NAAQS. Both documents were developed in conjunction with each other by the SDAPCD to reduce regional O<sub>3</sub> emissions.

The SDAPCD relies on information from CARB and SANDAG, including projected growth in the region and resulting mobile emissions, area emissions, and other source emissions, to project future emissions and to develop appropriate strategies for the reduction of source emissions through regulatory controls. The majority of regional emissions (67%) result from motor vehicle emissions. These emissions are reduced primarily through emissions standards, which are established by CARB, but are further reduced at the district level through incentive programs to encourage the use of alternative transportation (SDAPCD 2016a). Because of the limited jurisdiction that SDAPCD has over mobile source emissions and the limited control that individual projects have on influencing the public's ultimate use of motor vehicles, compliance with the RAQS is based on whether or not an individual project would comply with the emissions projections contained in the RAQS. Reduction strategies were applied to the region as a whole and determined to adequately meet the NAAQS based on the regional emissions projections. A project that proposes growth that exceeds growth assumptions would potentially conflict with the RAQS and SIP because it would potentially result in mobile source emissions that would exceed the projected emissions inventory.

The CARB mobile source emission projections and SANDAG growth projections are based on population and vehicle trends and land use plans, such as the Escondido General Plan. That is, the emissions estimates that CARB and the SDAPCD use to plan for achieving Ambient Air Quality Standards compliance are based on the land uses projected by SANDAG. If a project proposes development that is greater than that anticipated in the Escondido General Plan and/or SANDAG's growth projections, that project might be in conflict with the SIP and RAQS, and may contribute to a potentially significant cumulative impact on air quality.

The EVSP would redesignate and rezone most of a 191-acre area in the City from Commercial and Office to Mixed-Use and High-Density Residential, adding a net increase of 5,583 units at full buildout. As a designated Target Area, the EVSP Area was previously identified in the Escondido General Plan Land Use and Community Form Element as an area to promote development (and redevelopment), enhance job growth, and increase housing options to accommodate the City's share of projected regional growth. As stated in the Escondido General Plan Land Use and Community Form Element, "area plans," in concert with zoning, define and guide future development in the target areas. The EVSP would provide the necessary area plan and zoning changes to specifically implement the Escondido General Plan vision for the East Valley Parkway Target Area. The vision for the Escondido General Plan Land Use and Community Form Element includes increased mixed-use development, improved recreational spaces, and implementation of smart growth principles. Specific land use designations included are Office, General Commercial, and Mixed-Use Overlay that would accommodate a minimum of 30 units per acre. Consistent with this vision, the EVSP would designate the area for General Commercial, Mixed-Use, Open Space, and Urban Residential development. Therefore, development under the EVSP would be planned growth consistent with Escondido General Plan. Because the EVSP would be consistent with



growth assumptions in the Escondido General Plan, it would also be consistent with the RAQS and the SIP. Therefore, the EVSP would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of applicable air quality plans, and impacts are less than significant.

### **Significance of Impact**

Implementation of the Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of applicable air quality plans, and impacts are less than significant.

### **Mitigation Measures**

No mitigation measures are required.

### **Significance After Mitigation**

Not applicable.

#### **3.2.4.2 Threshold 2: Cumulative Increase in Criteria Pollutant**

##### **Impact Analysis**

As discussed in Section 3.2.2, Regulatory Framework, the City has adopted screening level thresholds to determine whether an air quality technical report should be prepared for a project; however, the City has not adopted significance thresholds by which to evaluate the significance of air quality impacts once a report has been deemed necessary. In lieu of any set quantitative air quality significance thresholds, the SDAPCD's Regulation II, Rule 20.2, Table 20-2-1, "Air Quality Impact Analysis (AQIA) Trigger Levels" are used to determine the potential significance of air quality impacts, consistent with the certified 2012 General Plan Update, Downtown Specific Plan Update, and CAP PEIR (City of Escondido 2012b). These AQIA trigger levels generally apply to new or modified stationary sources of air pollutants, which include only one source of air pollutant emissions. For CEQA purposes, the thresholds can be used to demonstrate that a project's total emissions from all sources would not result in a significant impact to air quality (County of San Diego 2007). For PM<sub>2.5</sub>, the USEPA "Proposed Rule to Implement the Fine Particle NAAQS" published in 2005, which quantifies significant emissions as 10 tons per year (55 pounds per day), is used as the significance threshold. The thresholds are listed in Table 3.2-5, Screening Level Criteria Thresholds for Air Quality Impacts.

**Table 3.2-5. Screening Level Criteria Thresholds for Air Quality Impacts**

| Pollutant         | Emission Rate (pounds/day) |
|-------------------|----------------------------|
| PM <sub>10</sub>  | 100                        |
| PM <sub>2.5</sub> | 55                         |
| NO <sub>x</sub>   | 250                        |
| SO <sub>x</sub>   | 250                        |
| CO                | 550                        |
| VOC               | 75                         |

**Sources:** SDAPCD Regulation II, Rule 20.2; County of San Diego 2007.

**Notes:** CO = carbon monoxide; NO<sub>x</sub> = oxides of nitrogen; PM<sub>10</sub> = particulate matter less than 10 microns; PM<sub>2.5</sub> = particulate matter less than 2.5 microns; SO<sub>x</sub> = oxides of sulfur; VOC = volatile organic compounds

The thresholds listed in Table 3.2-5 represent screening level thresholds that can be used to evaluate whether project-related emissions could cause a significant impact on air quality. Emissions below the screening level thresholds do not cause a significant impact. For non-attainment pollutants (O<sub>3</sub>, with O<sub>3</sub> precursors NO<sub>x</sub> and VOCs, and PM<sub>10</sub>), if emissions exceed the thresholds shown in Table 3.2-5, the Project could result in a cumulatively considerable net increase in these pollutants and, thus, could have a significant impact on the ambient air quality.

### **Construction**

Construction of future projects under the EVSP would result in temporary air pollutants associated with soil disturbance, dust emissions, employee and material delivery vehicle exhaust, off-gassing from paving and coating activities, and combustion pollutants from off-road construction equipment. Construction-related air pollution emissions can vary from day to day, depending on the level of activity, the type of activity, and the prevailing weather conditions. The primary air pollutants of concern from construction activities are particulate matter (including both PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>), CO, and O<sub>3</sub> precursors (including VOCs) and NO<sub>x</sub>).

Maximum daily construction emissions from EVSP buildout were estimated using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod), version 2020.4.0. The Project is a land use plan and does not propose any specific construction projects and the details of future construction under the plan are currently unknown. Therefore, estimated maximum daily construction emissions were estimated using assumptions for a typical construction year consistent with the certified 2012 General Plan Update, Downtown Specific Plan Update, and CAP PEIR (City of Escondido 2012b). It was assumed for the EVSP that an equal amount of development would occur each year between the 2020 baseline and 2035 buildout year, and that 75% of existing development would be demolished over the same period, which is higher than what was assumed in the certified 2012 General Plan Update, Downtown Specific Plan Update, and CAP PEIR. This is because the existing area is largely built out, and redevelopment would be necessary to accommodate the planned growth. It was also assumed that architectural coating phases would typically overlap with building construction. Detailed assumptions and modeling datasheets are provided in Appendix

B1. Estimated maximum daily construction emissions are provided in Table 3.2-6, Estimated Maximum Daily Construction Emissions (pounds/day).

**Table 3.2-6. Estimated Maximum Daily Construction Emissions (pounds/day)**

| Construction Phase                              | VOC       | NO <sub>x</sub> | CO         | SO <sub>x</sub> | PM <sub>10</sub> | PM <sub>2.5</sub> |
|---|-----------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Demolition                                      | 3.4       | 35.9            | 23.1       | <0.1            | 7.3              | 2.4               |
| Site Preparation                                | 4.0       | 40.5            | 21.7       | <0.1            | 21.8             | 12.0              |
| Grading   | 4.3       | 46.4            | 31.5       | 0.1             | 8.7              | 5.2               |
| Building Construction and Architectural Coating | 70.6      | 23.5            | 30.0       | <0.1            | 4.6              | 2.0               |
| Paving  | 1.1       | 11.1            | 15.0       | <0.1            | 0.7              | 0.5               |
| <i>SDAPCD Threshold</i>                         | <i>75</i> | <i>250</i>      | <i>550</i> | <i>250</i>      | <i>100</i>       | <i>55</i>         |
| <b>Significant?</b>                             | <b>No</b> | <b>No</b>       | <b>No</b>  | <b>No</b>       | <b>No</b>        | <b>No</b>         |

**Sources:** Appendix B1; County of San Diego 2007; SDAPCD 2018.

**Notes:** CO = carbon monoxide; NO<sub>x</sub> = oxides of nitrogen; PM<sub>10</sub> = particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter; PM<sub>2.5</sub> = particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter; VOC = volatile organic compound

As shown in Table 3.2-6, construction emissions estimates indicate that development allowed under the EVSP would not result in significant air emissions during construction. These results reflect the assumption of equal amounts of development occurring each year. Realistically, construction emissions for all pollutants may be greater or lower depending on how future development in the EVSP Area is implemented. It is assumed the future construction would include site watering twice per day in compliance with SDAPCD Rule 55, Fugitive Dust Rule, and low VOC architectural coatings in compliance with SDAPCD Rule 67, Architectural Coatings, which would further reduce emissions.

Construction of future development consistent with the EVSP would not result in significant criteria pollutant emissions during construction. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

### **Operation**

Long-term air pollutant emissions impacts are those associated with stationary sources and mobile sources involving any project-related changes. Stationary sources of emissions include the use of architectural coatings, consumer products, landscape equipment, and energy use. Area sources of air pollutant emissions associated with future development under the EVSP would include fuel combustion emissions from space and water heating, fuel combustion emissions from landscape maintenance equipment, VOC emissions from periodic repainting of interior and exterior surfaces, and natural gas use. Increased traffic volumes also contribute to regional emissions of criteria pollutants.

The total estimated operational emissions from implementation of the EVSP were calculated with CalEEMod (Version 2020.4.0) using default assumptions for the proposed land use mix. Residential dwelling units, total lot acreage, and land use square footages at EVSP buildout were obtained from the EVSP, prepared by Rick Engineering (City of Escondido 2023). CalEEMod default vehicle

mileage and trips rate assumptions were adjusted for consistency with the total daily vehicle miles traveled (VMT) for buildout of the EVSP provided by Linscott, Law & Greenspan, Engineers (Appendix G). It is assumed that new residential units would generally not include hearths. Buildout conditions assume 10% of residences include hearths. The change in Citywide retail VMT attributable to the Project is modeled for project retail buildout. According to the Transportation Analysis (Appendix G), the Project is anticipated to accommodate local serving retail projects, which would result in reduced VMT compared to typical retail development.

Table 3.2-7 provides calculated operational emissions for EVSP buildout. Buildout emissions are compared to existing emissions to calculate the net change in maximum daily emissions.

**Table 3.2-7. Net Change in Project Operational Emissions**

| Source                                | Air Pollutant Emissions (lbs/day) |                 |                |                 |                  |                   |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
|                                       | VOC                               | NO <sub>x</sub> | CO             | SO <sub>x</sub> | PM <sub>10</sub> | PM <sub>2.5</sub> |
| Area                                  | 266.8                             | 16.1            | 511.3          | 0.1             | 3.6              | 3.6               |
| Energy                                | 2.1                               | 18.2            | 9.6            | 0.1             | 1.4              | 1.4               |
| Mobile                                | 141.5                             | 108.4           | 1,079.8        | 2.2             | 286.9            | 77.3              |
| <b>Total Daily Buildout Emissions</b> | <b>410.4</b>                      | <b>142.7</b>    | <b>1,600.7</b> | <b>2.4</b>      | <b>291.9</b>     | <b>82.3</b>       |
| <i>Existing Emissions</i>             | <i>1,050.9</i>                    | <i>114.7</i>    | <i>1,944.1</i> | <i>3.7</i>      | <i>327.5</i>     | <i>201.6</i>      |
| <b>Net Change</b>                     | <b>-640.5</b>                     | <b>+28</b>      | <b>-343.4</b>  | <b>-1.3</b>     | <b>-35.6</b>     | <b>-119.3</b>     |
| <i>SDAPCD Thresholds</i>              | <i>75</i>                         | <i>250</i>      | <i>550</i>     | <i>250</i>      | <i>100</i>       | <i>55</i>         |
| <b>Significant?</b>                   | <b>No</b>                         | <b>No</b>       | <b>No</b>      | <b>No</b>       | <b>No</b>        | <b>No</b>         |

Source: Appendix B1.

Notes: CO = carbon monoxide; ICAPCD = Imperial County Air Pollution Control District; NO<sub>x</sub> = nitrogen oxides; PM<sub>2.5</sub> = particulate matter measuring no more than 2.5 microns in diameter; PM<sub>10</sub> = particulate matter measuring no more than 10 microns in diameter; VOC = volatile organic compound; SO<sub>x</sub> = sulfur oxides

As shown in Table 3.2-7, Net Change in Project Operational Emissions, operational emissions for buildout of the EVSP would not exceed the SDAPCD thresholds for any pollutant, primarily due to the replacement of older residences with new development that does not include natural gas hearths. Future development would be required to demonstrate consistency with the Escondido CAP (City of Escondido 2023), which includes reduction measures for VMT and energy use that would lower criteria pollutant emissions. Additionally, individual development projects would continue to be required to show consistency with the Escondido EQRs. Development under the Project would not contribute to the potentially existing significant cumulative impacts related criteria pollutant emissions. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

### Significance of Impact

Implementation of the Project would result in less than significant increases in criteria pollutant emissions during construction and operation.

## **Mitigation Measures**

No mitigation measures are required.

## **Significance After Mitigation**

Not applicable.

### **3.2.4.3 Threshold 3: Sensitive Receptors**

#### **Impact Analysis**

Sensitive receptors include daycare centers, schools, retirement homes, hospitals, and residential homes or other facilities that may house individuals with health conditions who are adversely impacted by changes in air quality. The two primary emissions of concern regarding health effects for land development projects are CO hotspots and TACs. An analysis of the potential health impacts from operational emissions is also discussed below.

#### ***Carbon Monoxide Hotspots***

Areas with high vehicle density, such as congested intersections and parking garages, have the potential to create high concentrations of CO, known as “CO hotspots.” Localized CO concentration is a direct function of motor vehicle activity at signalized intersections (e.g., idling time and traffic flow conditions), particularly during peak commute hours and meteorological conditions. Under specific meteorological conditions (e.g., stable conditions that result in poor dispersion), CO concentrations may reach unhealthy levels with respect to local sensitive land uses. CO hotspots due to traffic almost exclusively occur at signalized intersections that operate at a level of service (LOS) E or below. Future projects under the EVSP may result in or contribute to a CO hotspot if they worsen traffic flow at signalized intersections operating at LOS E or F.

To verify that the Project would not cause or contribute to a violation of the CO standard, a screening evaluation of potential CO hotspots was conducted based on the Transportation Analysis prepared by LLG (Appendix G). The Transportation Analysis for the Project evaluated the LOS (i.e., increased congestion) impacts at intersections affected by the Project (the transportation study area). Since the City does not have CO hotspot guidelines, the County’s CO hotspot screening guidance (County of San Diego 2007) was followed to determine if the Project requires a site-specific hotspot analysis. Per Caltrans and the UC Davis Institute of Transportation Studies Transportation Project-Level Carbon Monoxide Protocol (CO Protocol) (Caltrans 2010a), the County recommends that a local CO hotspot analysis be conducted if the intersection meets one of the following criteria: (1) the Project causes road intersections to operate at LOS E or worse and where peak-hour trips exceeds 3,000 trips, or (2) the Project causes road intersections to operate at LOS E or worse and, under cumulative conditions, when the addition of peak-hour trips from the Project and surrounding projects exceeds 2,000 trips.

The Transportation Analysis (Appendix G) for the Project identified eight intersections in the transportation study area where project implementation would have the potential to degrade an intersection to LOS E or worse, or significantly increase delay at an intersection that would be deficient without the addition of project traffic. These intersections include the following:

- El Norte Parkway and Broadway (LOS F during the AM peak hour and LOS E during the PM peak hour)
- Lincoln Parkway and Broadway (LOS E during the AM and PM peak hours)
- Mission Avenue and Broadway (LOS E during the AM peak hour and LOS F during the PM peak hour)
- Mission Avenue and Hickory Street (LOS F during the AM and PM peak hours)
- Mission Avenue and Harding Street (LOS F during the AM and PM peak hours)
- Washington Avenue and Juniper Street (LOS F during the AM and PM peak hours)
- Washington Avenue and Ash Street (LOS E during the AM peak hour)
- Valley Parkway and Rose Street (LOS E during the AM and PM peak hours)

Three of the impacted intersections (Mission Avenue and Hickory Street, Mission Avenue and Harding Street, Washington Avenue and Juniper Street) are not projected to exceed 3,000 trips during peak hour with project implementation. Therefore, based on County guidance, these intersections would not have the potential to result in a CO hotspot. However, the following five impacted intersections would exceed 3,000 trips during AM and/or PM peak hour with the addition of project traffic:

- El Norte Parkway and Broadway
- Lincoln Parkway and Broadway
- Mission Avenue and Broadway
- Washington Avenue and Ash Street
- Valley Parkway and Rose Street

The California Line Source (CALINE 4) model was used to estimate the potential CO impact at these intersections during the most congested peak hour, as specified by Caltrans CO modeling protocol (Caltrans 2010b). Receptor locations were set 30 feet from the roadway centerline at the intersection, although actual receptor locations would generally be at a greater distance. Carbon monoxide emission factors were generated using the EMFAC 2021 model. An ambient CO concentration of 4.2 ppm was conservatively used to reflect ambient conditions, consistent with the certified 2012 General Plan Update, Downtown Specific Plan Update, and CAP PEIR modeling because recent monitoring data is not available for CO. Table 3.2-8, Estimated Carbon Monoxide Concentrations, displays the estimated CO concentrations at the affected intersections. Modeling output is provided in Appendix B2.

**Table 3.2-8. Estimated Carbon Monoxide Concentrations**

| Intersection                     | 1-Hour CO Concentration (ppm)       | 8-Hour CO Concentration (ppm) <sup>1</sup> | Impact?   |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-----------|
| El Norte Parkway and Broadway    | 0.1                                 | 0.07                                       | No        |
| Lincoln Parkway and Broadway     | 0.1                                 | 0.07                                       | No        |
| Mission Avenue and Broadway      | 0.1                                 | 0.07                                       | No        |
| Washington Avenue and Ash Street | 0.1                                 | 0.07                                       | No        |
| Valley Parkway and Rose Street   | 0.1                                 | 0.07                                       | No        |
| <b>Significance Threshold</b>    | <b>20 (State)/<br/>35 (Federal)</b> | <b>9 (State and Federal)</b>               | <b>No</b> |

Source: CALINE 4.

**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> The eight-hour concentration is based on a persistence factor of 0.7 for urban uses (Caltrans 2010b).

The highest estimated one-hour carbon monoxide concentration is 0.1 ppm at any modeled intersection. This would not exceed the state one-hour standard of 20 ppm or the federal one-hour standard of 35 ppm. Based on an urban persistence factor of 0.7 (for an urban area), the maximum cumulative eight-hour carbon monoxide concentration at this intersection would be 0.7 ppm, which is below the 9 ppm state and federal eight-hour standards. Therefore, potential carbon monoxide impacts would be less than significant.

### ***Toxic Air Contaminants***

#### **Construction**

The greatest potential for TAC emissions during project construction activities under the EVSP would be related to emissions of DPM associated with heavy equipment operations during site preparation, grading, and utilities construction activities. Construction-related activities would result in short-term emissions of DPM from off-road, heavy-duty diesel equipment exhaust. However, specific future construction activities under the EVSP are currently unknown. Construction activities would be spread throughout the EVSP Area and generally would not take place in a singular location or at the same time.

Generation of DPM from construction projects typically occurs in a single area for a short period of time. Health risks are generally evaluated over a 30-year exposure period. The duration of construction activities near any specific sensitive receptor would be temporary and short term. Additionally, with ongoing implementation of USEPA and CARB requirements for cleaner fuels, off-road diesel engine retrofits, and new, low-emission diesel engine types, the DPM emissions of individual equipment would be substantially reduced over the years as construction of projects consistent with the EVSP continues. Therefore, impacts associated with temporary DPM emissions from development under the EVSP would be less than significant.

## Operation

CARB's Air Quality and Land Use Handbook (CARB 2005) lists several potential sources of substantial DPM emissions, including (1) freeways or urban roads with 100,000 vehicles per day, (2) commercial facilities that require heavy-truck deliveries or include drive-through facilities, (3) extraction operations or cement manufacturing, (4) power plants, (5) recycling and garbage transfer stations, (6) industrial land uses that require heavy-truck trips, (7) farming operations, and (8) dry cleaners using perchloroethylene.

There are no industrial land uses designated or permitted within the EVSP Area. However, sources of other TACs that may be accommodated by the EVSP include dry-cleaning facilities, gas stations, commercial/drive-through facilities, and automotive repair shops.

Dry-cleaning facilities, gas stations, and automotive repair facilities are considered permitted facilities to potentially be accommodated in the General Commercial land use designation in the EVSP with drive-through restaurants being subject to a conditional use permit. Many dry-cleaning facilities use perchloroethylene (Perc), the most common solvent used in the industry. Perc dry cleaners are required to comply with CARB and SDAPCD regulations, but some emissions still occur (CARB 2005). Refueling at gas stations releases benzene, a potent carcinogen, into the air. Automotive repair shops are a source of solvents that are potential TACs. The Air Quality and Land Use Handbook recommends that new sensitive receptors be located more than 300 feet from any dry-cleaning operations, and more the 500 feet from operations using more than one machine. The vast majority of dry cleaners in California have only one machine (CARB 2005). Sensitive land uses should not be sited in the same building as a dry-cleaning facility. These siting distances apply only to facilities where clothes are cleaned. They do not apply to storefronts or other facilities that serve as pick-up or drop-off locations for off-site cleaning facilities. A 50-foot separation between the nearest sensitive receptor and a gas station is recommended for typical gas dispensing facilities, but a separation of 300 feet is recommended for large gas stations with a throughput of 3.6 million gallons per year or greater. The handbook does not recommend a separation distance for automotive repair facilities. Potential impacts need to be addressed on a case-by-case basis. The smart growth principles of the certified 2012 General Plan Update, Downtown Specific Plan Update, and CAP PEIR (City of Escondido 2012b) emphasize residential land uses in proximity to neighborhood-serving retail and commercial uses, which could include dry-cleaning facilities, gas stations, and automotive repair facilities. Therefore, sensitive receptors would potentially be located within proximity to these uses. A potentially significant impact would occur.

Future commercial and retail developments proposed within the EVSP would not attract a disproportionate amount of diesel trucks that would be considered a source of substantial TAC emissions. In 2004, CARB adopted an Airborne Toxic Control Measure to limit heavy-duty diesel motor vehicle idling to reduce public exposure to DPM and other TACs and their pollutants. The measure applies to diesel-fueled commercial vehicles with gross vehicle weight ratings greater



than 10,000 pounds that are licensed to operate on highways, regardless of where they are registered. The measure does not allow diesel-fueled commercial vehicles to idle for more than five minutes at any given time. Potential localized air toxic impacts from on-site sources of DPM would be minimal because heavy-duty trucks would take multiple routes throughout the City, and the trucks that would frequent the area would not idle for extended periods of time.

Based on CARB's siting recommendations in the Air Quality and Land Use Handbook (CARB 2005), a detailed Health Risk Assessment should be conducted for proposed sensitive receptors within 1,000 feet of a warehouse distribution center, 300 feet of a large gas station, 50 feet of a typical gas dispensing facilities, or 300 feet of a dry-cleaning facility that uses perchloroethylene (i.e., PCE), among other siting recommendations. Because specific project details, including location and use, are not currently known at this time, there is a potential for future facilities to expose sensitive receptors to TACs and for new sensitive receptors to be sited within the screening level distance of a source of TACs. This impact would be potentially significant.

#### ***Assessment of Project Operational Health Impacts from Criteria Pollutants***

As shown in Section 3.2.4.3, buildout of land uses in the EVSP Area would not result in significant and unavoidable criteria pollutant emissions. Current scientific, technological, and modeling limitations prevent the evaluation of likely health consequences from expected adverse operational criteria pollutant emissions. Therefore, this section explains in detail why it is not feasible to provide such a meaningful assessment of potential health impacts from operational emissions.

The SDAPCD's regional thresholds are based in part on Section 180(e) of the CAA and are intended to provide a means of consistency in significance determination in the environmental review process. Notwithstanding, simply exceeding the regional mass daily thresholds does not constitute a particular health impact to an individual nearby. This is because the mass daily thresholds are emitted into the air in pounds per day, whereas health effects are determined based on the concentration of emissions in the air at a particular location (e.g., parts per million by volume of air or micrograms per cubic meter of air). State and federal Ambient Air Quality Standards were developed to protect the most susceptible population groups from adverse health effects and were established in terms of parts per million or micrograms per cubic meter for the applicable emissions.

As noted in the Brief of Amicus Curiae filed by the South Coast Air Quality Management District in *Sierra Club v. County of Fresno* (2018) 6 Cal.5th 502 (SCAQMD 2015), the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) acknowledged that, for criteria pollutants, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to quantify operational health impacts from land development for various reasons, including modeling limitations, and where in the atmosphere air pollutants interact and form. Furthermore, as noted in the Brief of Amicus Curiae by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) in the *Sierra Club* litigation, currently

available modeling tools are not equipped to provide a meaningful analysis of the correlation between an individual development project's air pollutant emissions and specific human health impacts. The SJVAPCD explained that "running the photochemical grid model used for predicting O<sub>3</sub> attainment with emissions solely from one project would thus not be likely to yield valid information given the relative scale involved." O<sub>3</sub> is not directly emitted into the air but is instead formed as O<sub>3</sub> precursors undergo complex chemical reactions through sunlight exposure (SJVAPCD 2015).

In fact, the SJVAPCD indicated that even a project with criteria pollutant emissions that exceed a CEQA threshold would not necessarily cause localized human health impacts because, even when faced with relatively high emissions, the SJVAPCD cannot determine "whether and to what extent emissions from an individual project directly impact human health in a particular area" (SJVAPCD 2015). The SCAQMD reiterated that "an agency should not be required to perform analyses that do not produce reliable or meaningful results" (SCAQMD 2015).

Additionally, the SCAQMD acknowledges that health effects quantification from O<sub>3</sub>, as an example, is correlated with increases in ambient level of O<sub>3</sub> in the air (concentration) that an individual person breathes. The SCAQMD states that it would take a large amount of additional emissions to cause a modeled increase in ambient O<sub>3</sub> levels over the entire region and that, based on its own modeling in the 2012 Air Quality Management Plan, a reduction of 432 tons/864,000 pounds per day of NO<sub>x</sub> and a reduction of 187 tons/374,000 pounds per day of VOCs would reduce O<sub>3</sub> levels at the highest monitored site by only nine parts per billion (ppb). As such, the SCAQMD concludes that it is not currently possible to accurately quantify O<sub>3</sub>-related health impacts caused by NO<sub>x</sub> or VOC emissions from relatively small projects (defined as projects with regional scope) due to photochemistry and regional model limitations (SCAQMD 2015).

To underscore this point, the SCAQMD goes on to state that it has only been able to correlate potential health outcomes for very large emissions sources as part of its rulemaking activity. Specifically, 6,620 pounds per day of NO<sub>x</sub> and 89,180 pounds per day of VOCs were expected to result in approximately 20 premature deaths per year and 89,947 school absences due to O<sub>3</sub>. As shown in Table 3.2-7, buildout of the EVSP would generate far less than 6,620 pounds per day of NO<sub>x</sub> or 89,190 pounds per day of VOC emissions and is considered a conservative analysis. Additionally, the potential emissions from the Project would be emitted throughout the EVSP Area over a 15-year period, and the impacts of individual projects and number of potentially affected receptors are not currently known.

Therefore, the Project's emissions are not sufficiently high to use a regional modeling program to correlate health effects on a basin-wide level. Further, the SJVAPCD acknowledges this: "The Air District is simply not equipped to analyze what extent the criteria pollutant emissions of an individual CEQA project directly impacts human health in a particular area even for projects with

relatively high levels of emissions of criteria pollutant precursor emissions” (SCAQMD 2015). Therefore, health impacts due to criteria pollutant emissions would be less than significant.

### **Significance of Impact**

Implementation of the EVSP would have the potential to expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations as a result of exposure to TACs during project operation.

### **Mitigation Measures**

Implementation of Mitigation Measure AIR-1 would reduce potential impacts to sensitive receptors by requiring the preparation of a Health Risk Assessment for development of new sensitive receptors near sources of TACs.

**AIR-1: Siting Sensitive Receptors near Dry-Cleaning, Gas Stations, and Automotive Repair Facilities.** New sensitive receptors shall be screened for potential toxic air contaminants sources within 500 feet of the proposed sensitive receptor location. If a source of toxic air contaminants such as dry-cleaning facilities, gas stations, commercial/drive-through facilities, or automotive repair shops is identified within the applicable screening distance outline in the California Air Resources Board’s Air Quality and Land Use Handbook, a Health Risk Assessment, or equivalent health risk evaluation shall be prepared by a qualified air quality professional. Sensitive receptors include daycare centers, schools, retirement homes, hospitals, medical patients in residential homes, or other facilities that may house individuals with health conditions who would be adversely impacted by changes in air quality. A Health Risk Assessment, or equivalent health risk evaluation, shall also be required for such facilities proposed within 500 feet of a sensitive receptor.

The Project shall not be considered for approval until a Health Risk Assessment, or equivalent health risk evaluation, has been completed and approved by the City of Escondido, Community Development Department. Health risks shall be significant if the identified risk shall exceed an incremental cancer risk greater than 10 in 1 million, or a health hazard index (chronic or acute) greater than one. If a potentially significant health risk is identified, the Health Risk Assessment shall identify appropriate measures (i.e., sealed heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system with adequate filtration) to reduce the potential health risk to below the significant risk thresholds, or the sensitive receptor or proposed facility shall be sited in another location.

### **Significance After Mitigation**

Implementation of Mitigation Measure AIR-1 would reduce potential impacts associated with exposure of sensitive receptors to TACs to a less than significant level.

#### **3.2.4.4 Threshold 4: Odors**

##### **Impact Analysis**

The following analysis of odor impacts during construction and operation applies to the EVSP.

##### ***Construction***

Construction associated with implementation of the EVSP could result in minor amounts of odor compounds associated with diesel heavy equipment exhaust. However, because the construction equipment would be operating at various locations throughout the EVSP boundary and construction would not take place all at once, individual receptors would be exposed to minimal construction odor at any given time. Because any operations near existing receptors would be temporary, impacts associated with odors during construction would be less than significant.

##### ***Operation***

CARB's Air Quality and Land Use Handbook includes a list of the most common sources of odor complaints received by local air districts. Typical sources of odor complaints include facilities such as sewage treatment plants, landfills, recycling facilities, waste transfer stations, petroleum refineries, biomass operations, coating operations, fiberglass manufacturing, foundries, rendering plants, and livestock operations. The allowed uses in the EVSP would include commercial, retail, office, and residential land uses; none of the odor-causing facilities listed above would be allowed. In addition, any potential future odor sources would be subject to SDAPCD Rule 51, Nuisance, regarding odor control and are not permitted to allow nuisance odors to affect nearby receptors. Therefore, project operations would not result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people. Impacts would be less than significant.

##### **Significance of Impact**

Implementation of the Project would not result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people. Impacts would be less than significant.

##### **Mitigation Measures**

No mitigation measures are required.

##### **Significance After Mitigation**

Not applicable.

#### **3.2.5 Cumulative Impacts and Mitigation**

The following sections address various potential cumulative impacts relating to air quality that could result from implementation of the Project.

### **3.2.5.1 Cumulative Threshold 1: Consistency with Applicable Air Quality Plan**

The RAQS and SIP are intended to address cumulative impacts in the SDAB based on future growth predicted by SANDAG. Cumulative projects located in the region would have the potential to result in a cumulative impact to air quality plans if, in combination, they would conflict with or obstruct implementation of the RAQS and/or applicable portions of the SIP. Projects that are inconsistent with the regional planning documents that the RAQS and SIP are based on would have the potential to result in cumulative impacts if they would include development beyond regional projections. As described previously, implementation of the Project would be consistent with the growth projections in the RAQS and SIP. Cumulative projects located in adjacent jurisdictions would generally be consistent with the SIP and the RAQS because projects would be required to be consistent with adopted General Plans or other planning documents accounted for in the RAQS growth projections. Implementation of the Project, in combination with other cumulative projects, would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the RAQS or SIP air quality plans. A cumulative impact would not occur, and the Project's contribution would not be cumulatively considerable.

### **3.2.5.2 Cumulative Threshold 2: Cumulative Increase in Criteria Pollutant**

An existing cumulative impact exists in the SDAB related to PM<sub>10</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub>, and O<sub>3</sub> precursors (NO<sub>x</sub> and VOC) due to the non-attainment of these pollutants. As previously described, the thresholds listed in Table 3.2-6 reflect the potential for the Project to result in a potentially significant contribution of criteria pollutant emissions to regional air quality and Ambient Air Quality Standards attainment. A project that is consistent with the thresholds in Table 3.2-6 is considered to result in less than cumulatively considerable emissions. The EVSP would not exceed the maximum daily thresholds during construction or operation. Therefore, the Project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution related to criteria pollutant emissions.

### **3.2.5.3 Cumulative Threshold 3: Sensitive Receptors**

Cumulative growth in the EVSP Area would have the potential to increase congestion and potentially result in CO hotspots. However, as described previously, the increase in vehicle trips associated with the implementation of the Project, in combination with cumulative trips, would not result in congestion that would result in a CO hotspot at any intersection during construction or operation. Therefore, a significant cumulative impact related to CO hotspots would not occur.

The cumulative projects located in the SDAB would also have the potential to result in a significant cumulative impact associated with sensitive receptors if, in combination, they would expose sensitive receptors to a substantial concentration of TACs that would significantly increase health risks. Impacts would generally be localized and not cumulative in nature because impacts related to a particular source of TACs would be limited to the proximity of the source. Cumulative projects with the potential to generate substantial pollutant concentrations would be required to comply

with the CARB program to reduce diesel emissions. Similar to the Project, cumulative projects in the City and adjacent jurisdictions would be required to comply with CARB's recommendations for siting new sensitive receptors and requirements for reducing diesel emissions. Stationary sources in the SDAB would be required to obtain operating permits from the SDAPCD and comply with emission thresholds for TACs. In addition, Mitigation Measure AIR-1 would be implemented to limit the siting of new sensitive receptors near existing sources of TACs in the City. The Project would be required to obtain operating permits from the SDAPCD and comply with emission thresholds for TACs or hazardous air pollutants. Therefore, the Project, in combination with other cumulative projects in the region, would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution associated with impacts to sensitive receptors.

#### **3.2.5.4 Cumulative Threshold 4: Odors**

Impacts related to objectionable odors are limited to the area immediately surrounding the odor source and are not cumulative in nature because the air emissions that cause odors disperse beyond the sources of the odor. As the emissions disperse, the odor becomes decreasingly detectable. The Project would not result in odor impacts. Therefore, implementation of the Project, in combination with other cumulative projects, would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution associated with impacts to objectionable odors.

### **3.2.6 Conclusion**

#### **3.2.6.1 Consistency with Applicable Air Quality Plan**

Implementation of the Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of applicable air quality plans because the EVSP would be consistent with growth assumptions in the Escondido General Plan, and it would also be consistent with the RAQS and the SIP. Impacts would be less than significant.

#### **3.2.6.2 Cumulative Increase in Criteria Pollutant**

Implementation of the EVSP would not result in significant increases in criteria pollutant emissions during construction or operation. Impacts would be less than significant.

#### **3.2.6.3 Sensitive Receptors**

Implementation of the EVSP would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations as a result of exposure to CO hotspots but would have the potential to result in exposure to TACs during project operation. Implementation of Mitigation Measure AIR-1 would reduce potential impacts associated with exposure of sensitive receptors to TACs to a less than significant level by requiring the preparation of a health risk evaluations for development of new sensitive receptors near sources of TACs or new sources of TACs.

#### **3.2.6.4 Odors**

Implementation of the Project would not result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) that would adversely affect a substantial number of people because the EVSP does not allow land uses that would typically emit odors. Impacts would be less than significant.

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### 3.3 Biological Resources

This section evaluates the potential for impacts to biological resources resulting from implementation of the EVSP. The analysis in this section is based on the Biological Resources Letter Report prepared by Harris & Associates (2022) (Appendix C) for the Project.

#### 3.3.1 Existing Conditions

This section describes the existing conditions for the EVSP Area as they relate to biological resources.

##### 3.3.1.1 Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types

The vegetation communities and land cover types identified in the EVSP include open water and urban/developed land (Figure 3.3-1, Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types). Table 3.3-1, Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types in the East Valley Specific Plan, presents the acreages of the vegetation communities and land cover types in the EVSP. The County of San Diego Geographic Information System (GIS) and National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) Wetland Mapper databases were used to identify and quantify the vegetation communities and aquatic resources in the EVSP Area. No on-site biological surveys or field reconnaissance were conducted as a part of the Project.

**Table 3.3-1. Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types in the East Valley Specific Plan**

| Vegetation Community and Land Cover Type | EVSP Area (acres) <sup>2</sup> |
|--|--------------------------------|
| <b>Aquatic</b>                           |                                |
| Open Water <sup>1</sup>                  | 3.6                            |
| <i>Subtotal</i>                          | 3.6                            |
| <b>Disturbed and Urban/Developed</b>     |                                |
| Urban/Developed Land                     | 190.2                          |
| <i>Subtotal</i>                          | 190.2                          |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>193.8</b>                   |

**Source:** Appendix C.

**Notes:** EVSP = East Valley Specific Plan

<sup>1</sup> Sensitive vegetation community.

<sup>2</sup> Vegetation community acreages have been rounded to the nearest one-tenth acre.

#### Aquatic Vegetation Communities

##### *Open Water*

Open water habitat is composed of year-round bodies of water in the form of lakes, streams, ponds, or rivers. This includes portions of water bodies that are usually covered by water and contain less than 10% vegetative cover.

One open water channel, Escondido Creek, occurs in the northern portion of the EVSP Area (Figure 3.3-1). Escondido Creek is a predominantly concrete-lined channel that primarily conveys water from the upper Carlsbad Watershed, including Lake Wohlford and Dixon Lake, as well as urban stormwater runoff from the EVSP Area and surrounding the City.

## **Disturbed and Urban/Developed Lands**

### ***Urban/Developed Land***

Urban/developed land includes areas of existing residential, commercial, and industrial development (locations of existing manufactured structures), roadways, parking lots, pedestrian paths, horticultural open spaces, landscape buffers and courtyards, plazas, gardens, recreation fields, and areas dominated by non-native (introduced) vegetation.

The majority of the EVSP Area consists of urban/developed land (Figure 3.3-1). The urban/developed land in the EVSP Area has the potential to provide nursery and foraging habitat for wildlife species, including birds, small mammals, and reptiles.

### **3.3.1.2 Aquatic Resources**

Escondido Creek runs through the northern portion of the EVSP Area (Figures 3.3-1 and 3.3-2, Aquatic Resources). This open water channel is classified as riverine by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) NWI report.

Aquatic resources delineations were not conducted for the EVSP Area. However, wetlands and waters potentially subject to the regulatory jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) (33 U.S.C. section 1344), Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) pursuant to Section 401 of the CWA or the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) pursuant to Section 1600 et seq. of the California Fish and Game (CFG) Code likely occur in the EVSP Area. The aquatic vegetation community, open water, occurs in the EVSP Area and may fall under the regulatory jurisdiction of the USACE, RWQCB, or CDFW.

Wetland and non-wetland waters, including non-vegetated stream channels, erosional features, gullies, riverine, and concrete-lined channels, have the potential to occur in the EVSP Area (Figure 3.3-2). These features may fall under the regulatory jurisdiction of the USACE, RWQCB, or CDFW.

### **3.3.1.3 Sensitive Species**

Sensitive species are those recognized by federal, state, or local agencies as being potentially vulnerable to impacts because of rarity, local or regional reductions in population numbers, isolation/restricted genetic flow, or other factors. Special-status plants include those listed as

threatened or endangered, proposed for listing, or candidates for listing by the USFWS and CDFW; those considered sensitive by the CDFW; and those species included in the California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) inventory, maintained by the California Native Plant Society. Sensitive wildlife species include those listed as threatened or endangered, those proposed for listing, candidates for listing by the USFWS and CDFW; or those considered sensitive by the CDFW.

Distributions of historical sensitive plant and wildlife species observations in the City were reviewed in preparation of the Biological Resources Letter Report (Appendix C). The sensitive plant species that are either known to occur or have some potential to occur in the City include thread-leaved brodiaea (*Brodiaea filifolia*), Orcutt's brodiaea (*Brodiaea orcuttii*), California adolphia (*Adolphia californica*), San Diego ambrosia (*Ambrosia pumila*), San Diego sagewort (*Artemisia palmeri*), Coulter's saltbush (*Atriplex coulteri*), wart-stemmed ceanothus (*Ceanothus verrucosus*), southern tarplant (*Centromadia parryi* ssp. *australis*), smooth tarplant (*Centromadia pungens* ssp. *laevis*), variegated dudleya (*Dudleya variegata*), Palmer's goldenbush (*Ericameria palmeri* ssp. *palmeri*), San Diego barrel cactus (*Ferocactus viridescens*), Palmer's grapplinghook (*Harpagonella palmeri*), decumbent goldenbush (*Isocoma menziesii* var. *decumbens*), San Diego marsh-elder (*Iva hayesiana*), Robinson's pepper-grass (*Lepidium virginicum* var. *robinsonii*), San Diego goldenstar (*Muilla clevelandii*), and Nuttall's scrub oak (*Quercus dumos*).

The sensitive wildlife species that either are known to occur or have some potential to occur in the City include San Diego fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta sandiegonensis*), monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), Quino checkerspot butterfly (*Euphydryas editha quino*), Hermes copper butterfly (*Lycaena Hermes*), arroyo toad (*Anaxyrus californicus*), western spadefoot (*Spea hammondi*), California legless lizard (*Anniella pulchra*), orange-throated whiptail (*Aspidoscelis hyperythra*), coastal whiptail (*Aspidoscelis tigris stejnegeri*), red diamond rattlesnake (*Crotalus ruber*), southwestern pond turtle (*Clemmys marmorata pallida*), Coronado skink (*Eumeces skiltonianus interparietalis*), Blainville's horned lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvillei*), Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), Bell's sparrow (*Artemisiospiza belli belli*), burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), coastal cactus wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus sandiegonensis*), northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus hudsonius*), southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*), yellow-breasted chat (*Icteria virens*), California black rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis coturniculus*), white-faced ibis (*Plegadis chihi*), coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*), western bluebird (*Sialia mexicana*), least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*), pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*), Dulzura (California) pocket mouse (*Chaetodipus californicus femoralis*), northwestern San Diego pocket mouse (*Chaetodipus fallax fallax*), Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*), Stephens' kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys stephensi*), western mastiff bat (*Eumops perotis californicus*), western red bat (*Lasiurus blossevillii*), hoary bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*), western yellow bat (*Lasiurus xanthinus*), San Diego black-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus bennettii*), San Diego desert woodrat (*Neotoma lepida intermedia*), pocketed free-tailed bat (*Nyctinomops femorosaccus*), big free-tailed bat (*Nyctinomops macrotis*),

southern mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus fuliginata*), Pacific pocket mouse (*Perognathus longimembris pacificus*), and American badger (*Taxidea taxus*).

As previously discussed, the EVSP Area is fully built out, consisting of urban/developed land with the channelized Escondido Creek running through the northern portion of the area. Therefore, the sensitive plant and wildlife species that have the potential to occur in the City were determined to have no potential to occur in the EVSP Area.

#### **3.3.1.4 Critical Habitat**

Critical habitat refers to specific geographic areas that contain features essential to the conservation of an endangered or threatened species and that may require special management and protection. Critical habitat may also include areas that are not currently occupied by the species but would be needed for its recovery. Critical habitat for San Diego ambrosia, arroyo toad, and coastal California gnatcatcher occurs around the edges of the City as shown on Figure 3.3-3, Critical Habitat. No critical habitat occurs in the EVSP Area.

#### **3.3.1.5 Wildlife Corridors**

Wildlife corridors include both local movement routes and regional corridors and linkages. Local movement routes often connect resources, such as water sources, foraging areas, and den/cover sites, on a localized level, often on a daily or nightly basis. Corridors can be continuous habitat features, or “stepping stones,” such as rest areas along a bird migration route. Corridors often follow linear topographic, water, or vegetation features. The overall biological value of a site is based on a variety of factors, including habitat types present, quality of habitat, diversity of biological resources present, potential to support sensitive biological resources, patch size, and connectivity to other high-quality habitat, among others.

The certified 2012 General Plan Update, Downtown Specific Plan Update, and CAP PEIR (City of Escondido 2012a) and Escondido General Plan (City of Escondido 2012b) identify five large areas of natural habitats, located in the northeastern, eastern, southern, southwestern, and northwestern portions of the City, that contain the majority of the City’s remaining open space and have been identified by the County of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP). These core areas provide two primary landscape linkages: (1) east–west across the northern portion of the City, including Daley Ranch, between the County of San Diego and northern San Marcos; and (2) east–west across the southern portion of the City, as part of the San Pasqual River Valley corridor. The southern habitat linkage, in particular, is considered essential for maintaining natural genetic exchange and population connectivity for the California gnatcatcher and coastal cactus wren populations in the San Pasqual River Valley. The areas north of Daley Ranch are considered a core linkage in the Draft North County MSCP Plan. The EVSP Area is not within either of these two linkages.

The EVSP Area is not likely to function as a wildlife movement corridor because it is primarily made up of and surrounded by urban/developed land that does not provide connections to open space areas in the City.

### **3.3.2 Regulatory Framework**

This section describes the federal, state, and local regulatory framework adopted to protect biological resources.

#### **3.3.2.1 Federal**

##### **Federal Endangered Species Act (U.S. Code, Title 16, Sections 1531 through 1543)**

The federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) and its subsequent amendments provide guidance for the conservation of endangered and threatened species and the ecosystems on which they depend. In addition, FESA defines species as “threatened” or “endangered” and provides regulatory protection for listed species. FESA also provides a program for the conservation and recovery of threatened and endangered species and the conservation of designated critical habitat that the USFWS determines to be required for the survival and recovery of these listed species.

##### **Migratory Bird Treaty Act**

All migratory bird species that are native to the United States or its territories are protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (16 U.S.C. section 703–712), as amended under the Migratory Bird Treaty Reform Act of 2004 (Division E, Title I, Section 143, of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2005, Pub. L. 108-447) (MBTA). The MBTA is generally protective of migratory birds but does not actually stipulate the type of protection required. In common practice, the MBTA is now used to place restrictions on disturbance of active bird nests during the nesting season (generally February 1 to August 31). In addition, USFWS commonly places restrictions on disturbances allowed near active raptor nests.

##### **Federal Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. Section 1251 et seq.)**

The CWA provides guidance for the restoration and maintenance of the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation’s waters. Section 401 of the CWA requires a project proponent to obtain a federal license or permit that allows activities resulting in a discharge to waters of the United States to obtain state certification, thereby ensuring that the discharge would comply with provisions of the CWA. The State Water Resources Control Board administers the certification program in California. Section 402 of the CWA establishes a permitting system for the discharge of any pollutant (except dredged or fill material) into waters of the United States. Section 404 of the CWA establishes a permit program administered by the USACE that regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, including wetlands.

Pursuant to Section 404 CWA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) regulates the discharge of dredged and/or fill material into “waters of the United States.” The term “wetlands” (a subset of waters) is defined in Code of Federal Regulations, Title 33, Part 328.3(b), as “those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.” In the absence of wetlands, the limits of USACE jurisdiction in non-tidal waters, such as intermittent streams, extend to the “ordinary high water mark,” which is defined in Code of Federal Regulations, Title 33, Part 328.3(e).

Section 320.4(b)(2) of the USACE General Regulatory Policies (33 CFR 320–330) lists criteria for consideration when evaluating wetland functions and values. These include wildlife habitat (spawning, nesting, rearing, and resting), food chain productivity, water quality, groundwater recharge, and wetland areas for storm and flood water storage.

### **3.3.2.2 State**

#### **California Endangered Species Act (CFG Code Section 2050 et seq.)**

The California Endangered Species Act (CESA) establishes the policy of the state to conserve, protect, restore, and enhance threatened or endangered species and their habitats. CESA mandates that state agencies should not approve projects that would jeopardize the continued existence of threatened or endangered species if reasonable and prudent alternatives are available that would avoid jeopardy. There are no state agency consultation procedures under CESA. For projects that would affect a listed species under both CESA and FESA, compliance with FESA would satisfy CESA if the CDFW determines that the federal incidental take authorization is consistent with CESA under CFG Code section 2080.1. For projects that would result in take of a species only listed under CESA, the project proponent must apply for a take permit pursuant to CFG section 2081(b).

#### **California Fish and Game Code Section 1602**

Pursuant to CFG Code section 1602, a project proponent is required to notify the CDFW before the start of any project that would divert, obstruct, or change the natural flow, bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake. Pursuant to the CFG Code, a “stream” is defined as a body of water that flows at least periodically, or intermittently, through a bed or channel that has banks and supports fish or other aquatic life. Based on this definition, a watercourse with surface or subsurface flows that supports or has supported riparian vegetation is a stream and is subject to CDFW jurisdiction. Altered or artificial watercourses valuable to fish and wildlife are subject to CDFW jurisdiction. The CDFW also has jurisdiction over dry washes that carry water during storm events.

Preliminary notification and project review generally occur during the environmental process. When an existing fish or wildlife resource may be substantially adversely affected, the CDFW is

required to propose reasonable project changes to protect the resource. These modifications are formalized in a streambed alteration agreement, which becomes part of the plans, specifications, and bid documents for a project.

### **California Fish and Game Code Sections 3511, 4700, 5050, and 5515**

California fully protected species are described in CFG Code sections 3511, 4700, 5050, and 5515. These statutes prohibit take or possession of fully protected species. The CDFW is unable to authorize incidental take of fully protected species when activities are proposed in areas inhabited by those species.

### **California Fish and Game Code Sections 2080 and 2081**

Section 2080 of the CFG Code states that “[n]o person shall import into this state, export out of this state, or take, possess, purchase, or sell within this state, any species, or any part or product thereof, that the commission [CFG Commission] determines to be an endangered species or a threatened species, or attempt any of those acts, except as otherwise provided in this chapter, the Native Plant Protection Act . . . , or the California Desert Native Plants Act . . . .” Pursuant to CFG Code section 2081, the CDFW may authorize individuals or public agencies to import, export, take, or possess state-listed endangered, threatened, or candidate species. These otherwise prohibited acts may be authorized through permits or memoranda of understanding if the take is incidental to an otherwise lawful activity, the impacts of the authorized take are minimized and fully mitigated, the permit is consistent with any regulations adopted pursuant to any recovery plan for the species, and the project operator ensures adequate funding to implement the measures required by the CDFW.

### **California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503, 3503.5, 3513, and 3800**

Section 3503 of the CFG Code states that it is unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird. Section 3503.5 of the CFG Code specifically states that it is unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any raptor (i.e., species in the orders Falconiformes and Strigiformes), including nests or eggs. Typical violations of the CFG Code include destruction of active nests resulting from removal of vegetation in which the nests are located. Violation of CFG Code section 3503.5 could also include failure of active raptor nests resulting from disturbance of nesting pairs by nearby project construction. CFG Code sections 3503 and 3503.5 do not provide for the issuance of any type of incidental take permit.

Section 3513 of the CFG Code upholds the MBTA by prohibiting any take or possession of birds that are designated by the MBTA as migratory nongame birds except as allowed by federal rules and regulations promulgated pursuant to the MBTA.

Section 3800 of the CFG Code affords protection to nongame birds, which are birds occurring naturally in California that are not resident game birds, migratory game birds, or fully protected birds.

### **CEQA Guidelines Section 15380(b)**

Although threatened and endangered species are protected by specific federal and state statutes, CEQA Guidelines section 15380(b) provides that a species not listed on the federal or state list of protected species may be considered “rare” or “endangered” if the species can be shown to meet certain specified criteria. These criteria have been modeled after the rare or endangered species definition in FESA and Sections 2050 through 2059.26 of the CFG Code dealing with rare or endangered plants and wildlife. CEQA Guidelines section 15380 primarily concerns situations in which a public agency is reviewing a project that may have a significant effect on, for example, a candidate species that has not been listed by either the USFWS or CDFW. Thus, CEQA provides an agency with the ability to protect a species from the potential impacts of a project until the respective government agencies have an opportunity to designate the species as protected, if warranted. CEQA also calls for the protection of other locally or regionally significant resources, including natural communities. Although natural communities do not currently have legal protection of any kind, CEQA calls for an assessment of whether any such resources would be affected and requires findings of significance if there would be substantial losses. Natural communities listed as sensitive by the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) are considered by the CDFW to be significant resources for which the CEQA Guidelines require the addressing of related impacts. Local planning documents, such as General Plans, often identify these resources as well.

### **California Native Plant Protection Act (CFG Code Section 1900 et seq.)**

The California Native Plant Protection Act (NPPA) requires state agencies to use their authority to carry out programs to conserve endangered and rare native plants. Provisions of the NPPA prohibit the take of listed plants from the wild and require notification to the CDFW at least 10 days in advance of any change in land use. This allows the CDFW to salvage listed plant species that would otherwise be destroyed. The project proponent is required to conduct botanical inventories and consult with the CDFW during project planning to comply with the provisions of the NPPA and sections of CEQA that apply to rare or endangered plants.

### **Natural Communities Conservation Planning Act**

The Natural Communities Conservation Planning (NCCP) program is a cooperative effort to protect habitats and species. It began under the state’s NCCP Act of 1991 and is broader in its orientation and objectives than CESA or FESA. CESA and FESA are designed to identify and protect individual species that have already declined significantly in number. The primary objective of the NCCP program is to conserve natural communities at the ecosystem level while accommodating compatible land use. The NCCP program seeks to anticipate and prevent the controversies and gridlock caused by species’ listings by focusing on the long-term stability of wildlife and plant communities and including key interests in the process.



The NCCP program is a voluntary program that allows the state to enter into planning agreements (NCCP Plans) with landowners, local governments, and other stakeholders to prepare plans that identify the most important areas for a threatened or endangered species and the areas that may be less important. NCCP Plans may become the basis for a state permit to take threatened and endangered species in exchange for conserving their habitat. The CDFW and USFWS have worked to combine the NCCP program with the federal Habitat Conservation Plan process to provide take permits for state and federally listed species. Under the NCCP Act, local governments can take the lead in developing NCCP Plans and become the recipients of state and federal take permits.

### **California Wetland Definition**

Unlike the federal government, California has adopted the Cowardin et al. (1992) definition of “wetlands.” For this classification, wetlands must have one or more of the following three attributes: (1) at least periodically, the land supports predominantly hydrophytes (at least 50% of the aerial vegetative cover); (2) the substrate is predominantly undrained hydric soil; and (3) the substrate is non-soil and saturated with water or covered by shallow water at some time during the growing season of each year.

Under normal circumstances, the federal definition of “wetlands” requires all three wetland identification parameters to be met, whereas the Cowardin et al. (1992) definition requires the presence of at least one of these parameters. For this reason, identification of wetlands by state agencies consists of the union of all areas that are periodically inundated or saturated or in which at least seasonal dominance by hydrophytes may be documented or in which hydric soils are present.

### **Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act**

The State Water Resources Control Board works in coordination with the nine RWQCBs to preserve, protect, enhance, and restore water quality. Each RWQCB makes decisions related to water quality for its region and may approve, with or without conditions, or deny projects that could affect waters of the state. The RWQCB’s authority comes from the CWA and the state’s Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Porter-Cologne Act). The Porter-Cologne Act broadly defines “waters of the state” as “any surface water or groundwater, including saline waters, within the boundaries of the state.”

Under the Porter-Cologne Act, the State Water Resources Control Board and the nine RWQCBs also have the responsibility of granting CWA National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits and waste discharge requirements for point-source and nonpoint-source discharges to waters. These regulations limit impacts on aquatic and riparian habitats from a variety of urban sources.

### 3.3.2.3 Local

#### **Escondido Mature and Protected Tree Ordinance**

The City establishes regulations and standards for the preservation, protection, and selected removal of mature and protected trees. A City-issued vegetation removal permit is required before clearing, pruning, or destroying vegetation and before any encroachments by construction activities that disturb the root system within the dripline (i.e., the outer extent margin of a tree's canopy) of any mature and protected trees. Issuance of a vegetation removal permit requires the submittal of a tree survey and, as applicable, a tree protection and/or replacement mitigation plan. Tree protection, removal, and replacement standards are outlined in the Escondido General Plan and in EMC Chapter 33 (Zoning), Article 55 (Grading and Erosion Control) (Ordinance 2001-21). The Escondido General Plan recognizes any oak tree species and other mature trees, as defined below, as significant aesthetic and ecological resources deserving protection within the boundaries of the City. EMC sections 33-1052 and 33-1068 set forth rules and standards for mature tree removal, protection, and replacement.

#### ***Escondido Municipal Code Section 33-1052 (Definitions)***

EMC section 33-1052 defines “mature tree” as follows:

*Mature tree* is any self-supporting woody perennial plant, native or ornamental, with a single well-defined stem or multiple stems supporting a crown of branches. The single stem, or one of multiple stems of any mature oak tree (*genus quercus*), shall have a diameter four (4) inches or greater when measured at four and one-half (4½) feet DBH [diameter at breast height] above the tree's natural grade. All other mature trees shall have a diameter of eight (8) inches DBH, or greater, for a single stem or one of the multiple stems.

EMC section 33-1052 defines “protected tree” as follows:

*Protected tree* is any oak (*genus quercus*) that has a ten (10) inch or greater DBH, or any other species or individual specimen listed on the local historic register, or determined to substantially contribute to the historic character of a property or structure listed on the local historic register, pursuant to Article 40 of the Escondido Zoning Code.

#### ***Escondido Municipal Code Sections 33-1068.A–C (Vegetation Clearing and Protection)***

Pursuant to EMC sections 33-1068.A, 33-1068.B, and 33-1068.C, the City has established regulations and standards to safeguard life and property and the public welfare concerning the preservation, protection, and selected removal of mature trees, protected trees, and historically significant trees located within the boundaries of the City. A vegetation removal permit and appropriate standards for the replacement of vegetation approved for removal is required before clearing, pruning, or destroying City-regulated vegetation, and before any encroachments by

construction activities that destroy or disturb the root system within the dripline of regulated trees. Issuance of a vegetation removal permit requires the submittal of a tree survey and may potentially require a tree replacement and/or protection plan.

***Escondido Municipal Code Section 33-1069 (Vegetation Protection and Replacement)***

Pursuant to EMC section 33-1069, the owner and developer shall take every feasible effort and measure to avoid damage to existing trees to remain on site during clearing, grading, and construction activity, including the placement of City-approved tree protection barriers. If mature trees cannot be preserved on site, they shall be replaced at a minimum ratio of 1:1. If protected trees cannot be preserved on site they shall be replaced at a minimum ratio of 2:1. However, the number, size, and species of replacement trees can be determined on a case-by-case basis by the City's Director of Community Development.

**Escondido General Plan**

***Resource Conservation Element***

The Escondido General Plan is a set of long-term goals and policies that decision makers use to guide growth and development and address the community's goals. The Escondido General Plan is divided into various elements that include the Land Use and Community Element, Mobility and Infrastructure Element, Housing Element, Community Health and Services Element, Community Protection Element, Resource Conservation Element, Growth Management Element, Economic Prosperity Element, and any additional topics of local significance. Each of these elements details policies and programs to achieve the established goals.

The Resource Conservation Element (Chapter VII of the Escondido General Plan) focuses on conserving important resources, including biological, water, air and climate, historic and cultural, agricultural, mineral, and energy resources, as well as protecting hillside and ridgeline view corridors with particular emphasis on ridgelines, unique landforms, and visual gateways (City of Escondido 2012b). The following goals and policies contained in the Resource Conservation Element are relevant to the analysis found in this section:

- **Biological and Open Space Resources Goal 1:** Preservation and enhancement of Escondido's open spaces and significant biological resources as components of a sustainable community.
  - **Biological and Open Space Resources Policy 1.1:** Establish and maintain an interconnected system of open space corridors, easements, trails, public/quasi-public land, and natural areas that preserves sensitive lands, permanent bodies of water, floodways, and slopes over 35 percent, and provides for wildlife movement.
  - **Biological and Open Space Resources Policy 1.6:** Preserve and protect significant wetlands, riparian, and woodland habitats as well as rare, threatened

or endangered plants and animals and their habitats through avoidance. If avoidance is not possible, require mitigation of resources either on- or off-site at ratios consistent with State and federal regulations, and in coordination with those agencies having jurisdiction over such resources.

- **Biological and Open Space Resources Policy 1.7:** Require that a qualified professional conduct a survey for proposed development projects located in areas potentially containing significant biological resources to determine their presence and significance. This shall address any flora or fauna of rare and/or endangered status, declining species, species and habitat types of unique or limited distribution, and/or visually prominent vegetation.
- **Biological and Open Space Resources Policy 1.8:** Require that proposed development projects implement appropriate measures to minimize potential adverse impacts on sensitive habitat areas, such as buffering and setbacks. In the event that significant biological resources are adversely affected, consult with appropriate state and federal agencies to determine adequate mitigation or replacement of the resource.
- **Biological and Open Space Resources Policy 1.9:** Encourage proposed development projects to minimize the removal of significant stands of trees unless needed to protect public safety and to limit tree removal to the minimum amount necessary to assure continuity and functionality of building spaces.
- **Biological and Open Space Resources Policy 1.10:** Prohibit any activities in riparian areas other than those permitted by appropriate agencies to protect those resources.
- **Biological and Open Space Resources Policy 1.11:** Construct appropriate barriers to be maintained by property owners or homeowners' associations that restrict access to areas containing sensitive biological resources.
- **Biological and Open Space Resources Policy 1.12:** Promote the use of native plants for public and private landscaping purposes within the city.
- **Biological and Open Space Resources Policy 2.5:** Ensure safe and efficient maintenance of trails that minimize impacts to the environment.
- **Biological and Open Space Resources Policy 2.9:** Employ sustainable practices for landscaping, use pervious paving materials to minimize stormwater runoff, and employ other techniques for the construction and improvement of the trail network.
- **Goal 6:** Preservation and protection of the City's surface water and groundwater quality and resources.
  - **Water Resources and Quality Policy 6.2:** Protect the surface water resources in the city including Lake Wohlford, Dixon Lake, Lake Hodges, Escondido Creek, and other waterways.

- **Water Resources and Quality Policy 6.4:** Require new development to preserve areas that provide opportunities for groundwater recharge (i.e., areas where substantial surface water infiltrates into the groundwater), stormwater management, and water quality benefits.
- **Water Resources and Quality Policy 6.5:** Maintain natural and improved drainages as permanent open space.
- **Water Resources and Quality Policy 6.6:** Control encroachments into wetlands and designated floodways to protect the community’s water resources.
- **Water Resources and Quality Policy 6.8:** Maintain Escondido’s natural creek system in an undisturbed state with a minimum of a 50-foot buffer and setback for development, or as established by appropriate wildlife agencies, unless stream course alteration, channelization, and/or improvements are approved by necessary state and federal agencies and the City.
- **Water Resources and Quality Policy 6.9:** Conserve and restore creeks to their natural states whenever possible, and allow areas where channelization has occurred for flood control purposes to serve as urban open space.
- **Water Resources and Quality Policy 6.10:** Require that drainage channels be designed to accommodate riparian vegetation growth.
- **Water Resources and Quality Policy 6.12:** Regulate construction and operational activities through the use of stormwater protection measures in accordance with the City’s National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit.
- **Water Resources and Quality Policy 6.14:** Require new development to protect the quality of water resources and natural drainage systems through site design and use of source controls, stormwater treatment, runoff reduction measures, best management practices, and Low Impact Development measures.

### **County of San Diego Draft North County Multiple Species Conservation Program**

The EVSP Area is within the incorporated City boundary, which is not within the jurisdiction of the County of San Diego Draft North County MSCP Plan. In addition, the North County MSCP Plan is in draft form and not yet adopted. Therefore, the EVSP Area is not subject to the Draft North County MSCP Plan.

#### **3.3.3 Thresholds of Significance**

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Project would have a significant impact on biological resources if it would:

- **Threshold 1:** 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.

- **Threshold 2:** Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- **Threshold 3:** Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means.
- **Threshold 4:** 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.
- **Threshold 5:** Conflict with any applicable policies protecting biological resources.
- **Threshold 6:** Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other applicable Habitat Conservation Plan.

### 3.3.4 Impacts and Mitigation

The following sections address various potential impacts relating to biological resources that could result from implementation of the Project.

#### 3.3.4.1 Threshold 1: Candidate, Sensitive, or Special-Status Species

##### Impact Analysis

##### ***Sensitive Plant Species***

The EVSP Area consists of and is entirely surrounded by urban/developed land with one open water concrete channel, Escondido Creek, running through the northern portion of the EVSP Area, which is completely fenced in (Figure 3.3-1). No critical habitat for sensitive plant species occurs in the EVSP Area (Figure 3.3-3). As discussed in Section 3.3.1.3, the urban/developed lands in the EVSP Area are not likely to support sensitive plant species because these areas have been previously disturbed and do not contain suitable habitat. Therefore, future development consistent with the EVSP would not result in direct or indirect impacts to sensitive plant species.

##### ***Sensitive Wildlife Species***

The EVSP Area consists of and is surrounded by urban/developed land with Escondido Creek running through the northern portion of the EVSP Area, which is completely fenced in (Figure 3.3-1). No critical habitat for sensitive wildlife species occurs in the EVSP Area (Figure 3.3-3). As discussed in Section 3.3.1.3, the urban/developed lands in the EVSP Area are not likely to support sensitive wildlife species because these areas have been previously disturbed and do not contain suitable habitat. Therefore, future development consistent with the EVSP would not result in direct or indirect impacts to sensitive wildlife species.

### ***Nesting Birds***

Implementation of future development in the EVSP Area would have the potential to impact nesting birds. Activities such as vegetation clearing, grubbing, or trimming could potentially harm active nesting birds. In addition to vegetation disturbance, impacts to nesting birds may include noise and other disturbances due to the proximity of construction activities. Construction activities conducted during the bird and raptor breeding season (typically January 15 through September 15) could directly or indirectly impact nesting birds and raptors. Implementation of projects consistent with the EVSP could result in potentially significant direct and indirect impacts to nesting birds and raptors.

### **Significance of Impact**

Implementation of the Project would have the potential to result in significant direct and indirect impacts to nesting birds during construction.

### **Mitigation Measures**

Mitigation Measure BIO-1 requires pre-construction nesting bird surveys for projects in the EVSP Area that contain or are adjacent to mature trees or are within or adjacent to undeveloped land and/or open space in the EVSP Area and, for projects that would remove trees or vegetation, to reduce potential impacts to nesting birds protected by the CFG Code and the MBTA.

**BIO-1: Pre-Construction Nesting Bird Surveys.** To the extent feasible, grubbing, trimming, or clearing of vegetation from the EVSP Area shall not occur during the general bird nesting season (January 15 through September 15). If grubbing, trimming, or clearing of vegetation cannot feasibly occur outside the general bird nesting season, a qualified biologist shall perform a pre-construction nesting bird survey in the areas in the EVSP Area with vegetation supporting nesting birds. Nesting bird surveys shall occur within 72 hours before the start of vegetation clearing or grubbing to determine if active bird nests are present. If no active bird nests are identified in the EVSP Area or within a 300-foot buffer of the EVSP Area, no further mitigation is necessary. If active nests of bird species covered by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act are detected in the EVSP Area during the pre-construction survey, construction activities shall stay outside a 300-foot buffer around the active nest. For raptor species, this buffer shall be expanded to 500 feet. It is recommended that a biological monitor be present to delineate the boundaries of the buffer area and to monitor the active nest to ensure that nesting behavior is not adversely affected by construction activity. Once the young birds have fledged and a qualified biologist has determined the nest is inactive, normal construction activities can occur.

## Significance After Mitigation

With implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1, potential direct and indirect impacts to nesting birds from implementation of the EVSP would be reduced to a less than significant level.

### 3.3.4.2 Threshold 2: Riparian Habitat or Other Sensitive Natural Communities

#### Impact Analysis

The EVSP Area consists of and is entirely surrounded by urban/developed land with Escondido Creek running through the northern portion of the EVSP Area (Figure 3.3-1). The urban/developed land in the EVSP Area does not support sensitive vegetation communities. Escondido Creek is designated as open water habitat, which has the potential to support sensitive aquatic vegetation communities (Figure 3.3-1). While no development is proposed in the Escondido Creek channel, an aquatic resources delineation was not conducted, and any potential impacts to this sensitive vegetation community from projects within or adjacent to the Creek would be potentially significant. Therefore, implementation of future projects within or adjacent to Escondido Creek consistent with the EVSP could result in potentially significant direct and indirect impacts to sensitive vegetation communities.

#### Significance of Impact

Implementation of the EVSP would have the potential to result in significant direct and indirect impacts to sensitive vegetation communities within or surrounding Escondido Creek.

#### Mitigation Measures

Implementation of BIO-2 and BIO-3 would require an aquatic resources delineation and aquatic resources permitting be conducted for development within or adjacent to the Escondido Creek channel.

**BIO-2: Aquatic Resources Delineation.** Future projects within or adjacent to Escondido Creek that have the potential to impact sensitive aquatic resources shall be required to conduct an aquatic resources delineation following the methods outlined in the 1987 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual and the Regional Supplement to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Arid West Region to map the extent of wetlands and non-wetland waters, determine jurisdiction, and assess potential impacts. The aquatic resources shall be conducted by a qualified biologist. The results of the delineation shall be presented in an Aquatic Resources Delineation Report and be incorporated into the California Environmental Quality Act documents required for approval and permitting of the Project.

**BIO-3: Aquatic Resources Permitting.** Future projects within or adjacent to Escondido Creek that have been determined through Mitigation Measure BIO-2 to have a significant impact to sensitive aquatic resources shall obtain required permits and authorizations



from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board. The regulatory agency authorizations shall include impact avoidance and minimization measures and mitigation measures for unavoidable impacts. Specific avoidance and minimization measures and mitigation measures for impacts to jurisdictional resources shall be determined through discussions with the regulatory agencies during the project permitting process and may include monetary contributions to a mitigation bank or habitat creation, restoration, or enhancement.

### **Significance After Mitigation**

With implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-2 and BIO-3, potential impacts to sensitive aquatic vegetation from implementation of the EVSP would be reduced to a less than significant level.

#### **3.3.4.3 Threshold 3: Wetlands**

##### **Impact Analysis**

Escondido Creek runs through the northern portion of the EVSP Area (Figure 3.3-1). While no development is proposed in the Escondido Creek channel, an aquatic resources delineation was not conducted, and any potential impacts to this aquatic resource from projects within or adjacent to Escondido Creek would be potentially significant. Potential impacts to state or federal jurisdictional aquatic resources, including direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means, would require permits from the USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW. Therefore, future projects consistent with the EVSP within or adjacent to Escondido Creek could result in significant direct and indirect impacts to jurisdictional aquatic resources.

##### **Significance of Impact**

Implementation of the EVSP would have the potential to impact state or federal jurisdictional aquatic resources within or adjacent to Escondido Creek.

##### **Mitigation Measures**

Mitigation Measures BIO-2 and BIO-3, as described in Section 3.3.4.2, would be implemented to reduce potential impacts to aquatic resources.

##### **Significance After Mitigation**

With implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-2 and BIO-3, potential impacts to state or federally protected aquatic resources would be reduced to a less than significant level.

#### **3.3.4.4 Threshold 4: Native Resident or Migratory Fish or Wildlife Species**

##### **Impact Analysis**

The EVSP Area is entirely surrounded by urban/developed land with Escondido Creek running through the northern portion of the EVSP Area, which is completely fenced in (Figure 3.3-1). The urban/developed land occurring in the EVSP Area is not likely to function as a wildlife movement corridor or nursery site because it has been previously disturbed and does not support native habitat. Therefore, development consistent with the EVSP would not result in direct or indirect impacts to wildlife corridors and habitat linkages.

While the EVSP Area is unlikely to function as a wildlife corridor or habitat linkage because it does not support native habitat, development in the EVSP Area has the potential to remove trees or other vegetation that provides nursery sites to wildlife, particularly birds. Therefore, implementation of future projects consistent with the EVSP that would remove trees or vegetation would result in potentially significant direct and indirect impacts to nursery sites.

##### **Significance of Impact**

Implementation of the EVSP would have the potential to remove trees or other vegetation that provide nursery sites to wildlife, particularly birds.

##### **Mitigation Measures**

Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1, as described in Section 3.3.4.1, would reduce potential impacts to nursery habitat by requiring pre-construction nesting bird surveys on project sites that contain or are adjacent to mature trees, are within or adjacent to undeveloped land, and for projects that would remove trees or vegetation.

##### **Significance After Mitigation**

With implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1, potential impacts to nursery sites would be reduced to a less than significant level.

#### **3.3.4.5 Threshold 5: Policies Protecting Biological Resources**

##### **Impact Analysis**

Development in the EVSP Area, located within the City, is required to comply with policies protecting biological resources identified in the Resource Conservation Element of the Escondido General Plan (City of Escondido 2012b).

As discussed under Thresholds 1 and 5, the Project would not significantly impact sensitive plant species, wildlife corridors, or habitat linkages. Therefore, future projects consistent with the EVSP

would not conflict with the Escondido General Plan Goal 1, Policies 1.1 through 1.12, regarding the preservation of open spaces, preserves, and biological resources in the EVSP Area.

As discussed under Thresholds 1 through 4, the Project has the potential to impact sensitive wildlife species (nesting birds in particular), jurisdictional aquatic resources, and nursery sites. However, with implementation of mitigation measures for sensitive wildlife species, sensitive vegetation communities, jurisdictional aquatic resources, and nursery sites, the Project would not conflict with the Escondido General Plan Goal 1, Policies 1.1 through 1.12, and Goal 6, Policies 6.1 through 6.6, 6.8 through 6.10, 6.12, and 6.14, regarding the preservation of open spaces, preserves, and biological resources in the EVSP Area and related to conserving water resources.

No impacts related to conflicts with applicable policies or ordinances protecting biological resources would occur from implementation of projects consistent with the EVSP.

### **Significance of Impact**

Because implementation of the EVSP would not conflict with applicable policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, there would be no potential impacts.

### **Mitigation Measures**

No mitigation measures are required.

### **Significance After Mitigation**

Not applicable.

#### **3.3.4.6 Threshold 6: Habitat Conservation Plan**

##### **Impact Analysis**

As discussed in Section 3.3.2, the EVSP Area is located within the County of San Diego Draft North County MSCP Plan Area and is, therefore, not subject to its requirements.

The EVSP Area occurs within the boundaries of the Draft Escondido Multiple Habitat Conservation Program (MHCP) Subarea Plan; however, the Draft Escondido MHCP Subarea Plan has not been approved or adopted. Therefore, the Draft Escondido MHCP Subarea Plan does not apply to the EVSP Area. Once approved, the Draft Escondido MHCP Subarea Plan would be the applicable conservation plan for the EVSP. Existing habitat conservation agreements and required permitting from the CDFW and USFWS would ensure that future implementation of the Draft Escondido MHCP Subarea Plan would not be precluded by new development in the EVSP. Therefore, impacts to regional conservation plans would not occur from the implementation of projects consistent with the EVSP.

### **Significance of Impact**

Because implementation of the EVSP would not conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other applicable Habitat Conservation Plan, there would be no potential impacts.

### **Mitigation Measures**

No mitigation measures are required.

### **Significance After Mitigation**

Not applicable.

### **3.3.5 Cumulative Impacts and Mitigation**

The following sections address various potential cumulative impacts relating to biological resources that could result from implementation of the Project.

#### **3.3.5.1 Cumulative Threshold 1: Candidate, Sensitive, or Special-Status Species**

The area considered for cumulative impacts to candidate, sensitive, or special-status species includes the EVSP Area and immediately surrounding lands and waterways. Cumulative development in combination with the projects in the EVSP Area may impact sensitive plant and wildlife species. Implementation of projects in the EVSP Area would increase density and intensity of existing land uses. However, all projects approved in the City's jurisdiction are required to be consistent with the Escondido General Plan conservation and open space goals and policies (City of Escondido 2012b), the Escondido Zoning Ordinance, and Escondido Excavation and Grading Ordinance. In addition, implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1 would reduce impacts from the EVSP on sensitive wildlife species. Therefore, future projects consistent with the EVSP would have an incremental contribution to cumulative impacts associated with candidate, sensitive, or special-status species, and impacts would not be cumulatively considerable. Cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

#### **3.3.5.2 Cumulative Threshold 2: Riparian Habitat or Other Sensitive Natural Communities**

The area considered for cumulative impacts to riparian habitat or other sensitive communities includes the EVSP Area and immediately surrounding lands and waterways. Cumulative development in combination with the projects in the EVSP Area may impact riparian habitat. Implementation of projects in the EVSP Area would increase density and intensity of existing land uses. However, all projects approved in the City's jurisdiction are required to be consistent with the Escondido General Plan conservation and open space goals and policies (City of Escondido

2012b), the Escondido Zoning Ordinance, and Escondido Excavation and Grading Ordinance. In addition, implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-2 and BIO-3 would reduce impacts from the EVSP on riparian habitat. Therefore, future projects consistent with the EVSP would have an incremental contribution to cumulative impacts associated with riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities, and impacts would not be cumulatively considerable. Cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

### **3.3.5.3 Cumulative Threshold 3: Wetlands**

The area considered for cumulative impacts to wetlands includes the EVSP Area and immediately surrounding lands and waterways. Cumulative development in combination with the projects in the EVSP Area may impact wetlands and jurisdictional aquatic resources. Implementation of projects in the EVSP Area would increase density and intensity of existing land uses. However, all projects approved in the City's jurisdiction are required to be consistent with the Escondido General Plan conservation and open space goals and policies (City of Escondido 2012b), the Escondido Zoning Ordinance, and Escondido Excavation and Grading Ordinance. In addition, implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-2 and BIO-3 would reduce impacts from the EVSP on wetlands. Therefore, projects in the EVSP Area would have an incremental contribution to cumulative impacts associated with wetlands, and impacts would not be cumulatively considerable. Cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

### **3.3.5.4 Cumulative Threshold 4: Native Resident or Migratory Fish or Wildlife Species**

The area considered for cumulative impacts to native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species includes the EVSP Area and immediately surrounding lands and waterways. Cumulative development in combination with the projects in the EVSP Area may impact 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. However, all projects approved in the City's jurisdiction are required to be consistent with the Escondido General Plan conservation and open space goals and policies (City of Escondido 2012b), the Escondido Zoning Ordinance, and the Escondido Excavation and Grading Ordinance. In addition, implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 would reduce impacts from the EVSP on potential nursery sites. Therefore, projects in the EVSP Area would have an incremental contribution to cumulative impacts associated with wildlife movement, and impacts would not be cumulatively considerable. Cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

### **3.3.5.5 Cumulative Threshold 5: Policies Protecting Biological Resources**

The area considered for cumulative impacts to local ordinances includes the EVSP Area and immediately surrounding lands and waterways. Cumulative development in combination with the projects in the EVSP Area may impact 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. However, all projects, approved in the City's jurisdiction are required to be consistent with the Escondido General Plan conservation and open space goals and policies (City of Escondido 2012b). In addition, the EVSP would have a less than significant impact on local ordinances. Therefore, the projects in the EVSP Area would have an incremental contribution to cumulative impacts associated with local ordinances, and impacts would not be cumulatively considerable. Cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

### **3.3.5.6 Cumulative Threshold 6: Habitat Conservation Plan**

The area considered for cumulative impacts to habitat conservation plans includes the San Diego region. As discussed, there is no adopted applicable Habitat Conservation Plan for the North County region. However, all projects approved in the City's jurisdiction are required to be consistent with the Escondido General Plan conservation and open space goals and policies (City of Escondido 2012b). In addition, future development in the City would be required to comply with the applicable MHCP or MSCP plans that have been adopted at the time the development is proposed. Therefore, the projects in the EVSP Area would not contribute to cumulative impacts associated with habitat conservation plans and would not be cumulatively considerable. Cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

### **3.3.6 Conclusion**

Much of the future development in the EVSP Area is expected to occur with Downtown, South Centre City, and East Valley areas of Escondido and would be consistent with the land use designations included in the Escondido General Plan.

Implementation of projects in the EVSP Area would result in potentially significant impacts to nesting birds, jurisdictional aquatic resources, and nursery habitats. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1 would reduce potential impacts to nesting birds by requiring pre-construction nesting bird surveys. With implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1, potential direct and indirect impacts to nesting birds from implementation of projects in the EVSP Area would be reduced to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measures BIO-2 and BIO-3 would be implemented to reduce impacts to state or federally protected aquatic resources by conducting aquatic resources delineation and aquatic resources permitting for development within or adjacent to the Escondido Creek channel. With implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-2 and BIO-3, potential impacts to sensitive aquatic vegetation and state or federally protected aquatic resources would be reduced to a less than significant level.

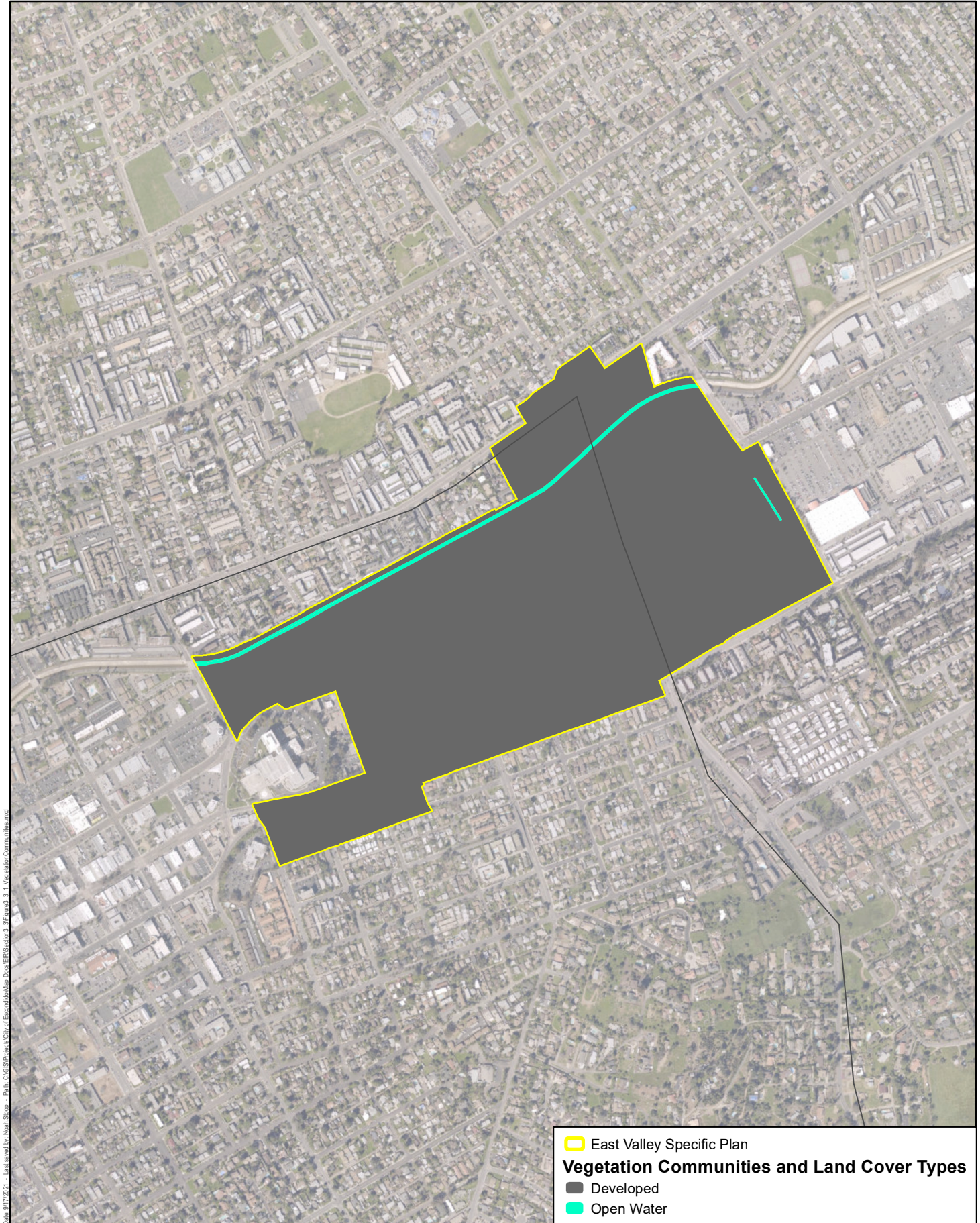
Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1 would reduce potential impacts to nursery habitat by requiring pre-construction nesting bird surveys on project sites that contain or are adjacent to mature trees, are within or adjacent to undeveloped land, and for projects that would remove trees or vegetation in the EVSP Area. With implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1, potential

impacts to wildlife corridors, linkages, and nursery habitat from implementation of projects in the EVSP Area would be reduced to a less than significant level.

With implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3, potential impacts to sensitive biological resources from implementation of future projects in the EVSP Area would be less than significant.

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□ East Valley Specific Plan  
**Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types**  
■ Developed  
— Open Water

Source: National Wetlands Inventory 2021; SanGIS Vegetation 2013; SanGIS Imagery 2017.

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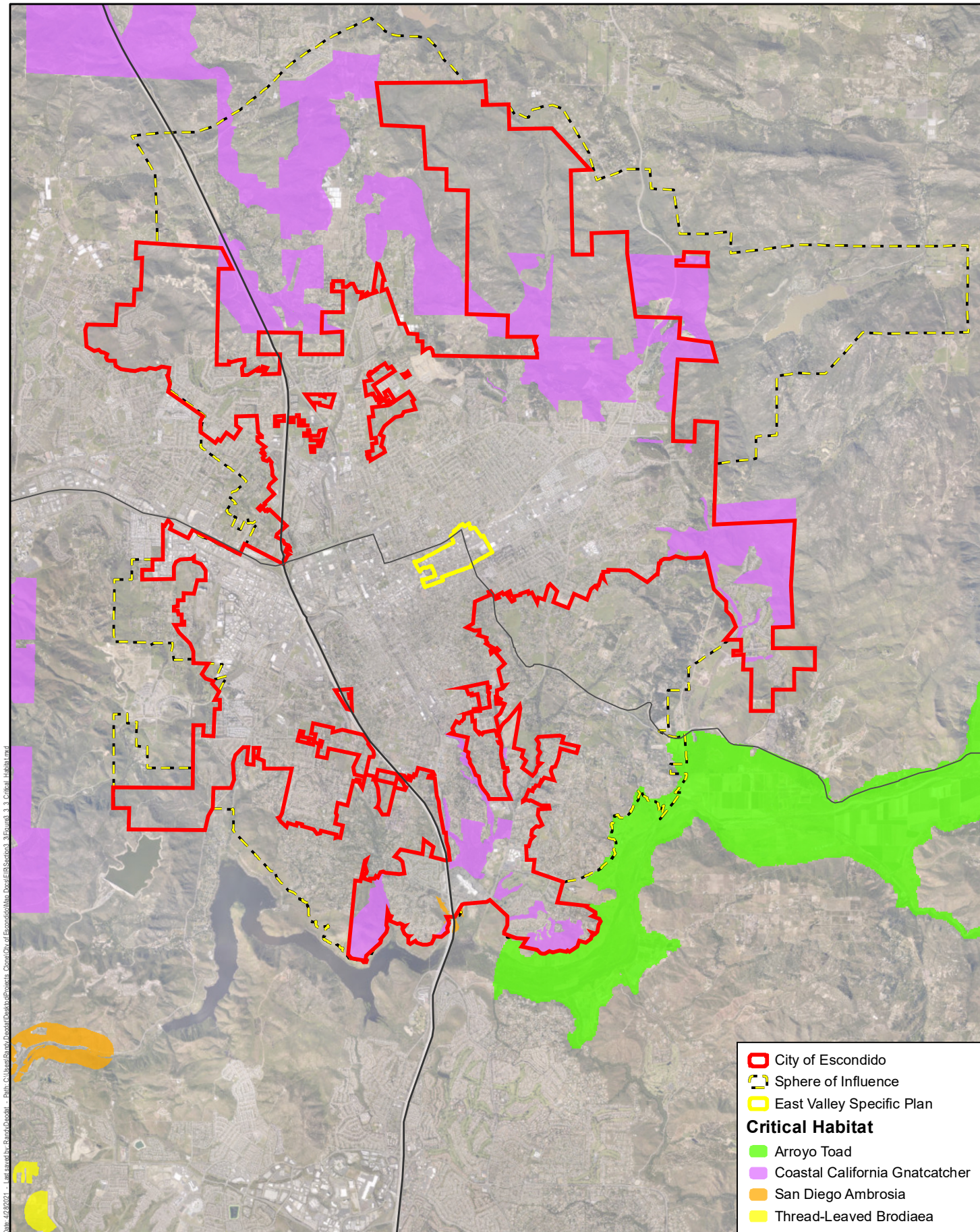
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□ East Valley Specific Plan  
**National Wetlands Inventory Category**  
■ Riverine

Source: National Wetlands Inventory 2021; SanGIS Imagery 2017.



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 Date: 2/2/2021 1:11:54 PM

- ▭ City of Escondido
- Sphere of Influence
- East Valley Specific Plan
- Critical Habitat**
- ▭ Arroyo Toad
- ▭ Coastal California Gnatcatcher
- ▭ San Diego Ambrosia
- ▭ Thread-Leaved Brodiaea

Source: USFWS 2007, 2010, 2011; SanGIS Imagery 2017.

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## **3.4 Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources**

This section evaluates the potential for impacts to cultural resources and Tribal Cultural Resources (TCRs) resulting from implementation of the EVSP and identifies known and potential cultural resources in the EVSP Area. The analysis in this section is based on the Cultural Resources Technical Report prepared by ASM Affiliates (ASM) (2021) (Appendix D) and SB 18 and AB 52 consultation conducted by the City. Confidential records and maps are on file at the City and with the South Coastal Information Center.

### **3.4.1 Existing Conditions**

The following sections describe the history of the EVSP Area and discuss known cultural resources, TCRs, archaeological resources, and built environment resources in or around the Project's area of potential effect.

Cultural resources are districts, buildings, sites, structures, areas of traditional use, or objects that represent the physical evidence of human activities. Cultural resources can be divided into two categories: archaeological resources (prehistoric and historic) and built environment resources (architectural).

A California Historical Resources Information System search was conducted for the EVSP Area. In addition, archival research, including the review of historical maps and queries to the California Office of Historic Preservation Historic Property Directory and the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), for cultural resources was conducted. A total of 18 previous cultural studies have been conducted in the EVSP Area (see Appendix A of the Cultural Resources Technical Report (Appendix D)). See the Cultural Resources Technical Report (Appendix D) for details regarding the cultural resources and TCRs analysis.

#### **3.4.1.1 Archaeological Resources**

The South Coastal Information Center records search identified one previously recorded archaeological resource in the EVSP Area. The resource is a buried, historical, mid-20th century refuse deposit and was identified in a disturbed fill. This resource is not considered a historical resource pursuant to the CEQA and would not be impacted by the Project.

#### **3.4.1.2 Historical (Built) Resources**

A total of 448 built environmental resources were identified as a result of the South Coastal Information Center records search, the Office of Historic Preservation Built Environment Resource Directory, and the list of historical resources maintained by the City (see Table 1 of the Cultural Resources Technical Report (Appendix D)).

A reconnaissance-level survey was conducted in 1983 and updated in 1990 to review the known resources and to identify potential areas where undocumented resources may exist. The results of



this survey led to the Escondido Historical Register (which currently includes 282 listings), a historic preservation program, the Old Escondido Historic District, and the adoption of the Mills Act Program.

The Old Escondido Historic District was established by the City in 1989. This designated historic district includes approximately 900 residences built between the mid-1880s and the 1960s. The district includes residences constructed in a variety of styles, such as Art Deco, Victorian, Craftsman, and post-World War II contemporary.

A survey update in 2001 incorporated built resources that had become 50 years old since the previous survey. This study placed particular emphasis on resources dating between 1940 and 1955. The 2001 survey also proposed eight potential areas (Adobe, Commercial Core, Los Arboles, Melvin Schrock Thematic, Mercado, Washington Manor, Transportation Corridor, and Westside) for consideration as historic districts. None of the potential districts have been formally designated.

A reconnaissance-level survey for the Project was conducted by ASM that focused on residential neighborhoods developed during the 1950s and 1960s to identify potential districts. A neighborhood developed in 1960 on the northern side of Mission Avenue at Beech and Cedar Streets included ranch-style residences that originally included architectural details such as scalloped bargeboards, carved brackets, and diamond-shaped windows. Although it appeared that more than 50% of the residences have been altered, most typically by replacing the original windows, developments like this one should be further evaluated before targeting the area for future residential development. A similar neighborhood developed in 1963 was surveyed north of Washington Avenue between Camellia and Rose Streets, and the majority of residences in this area appeared to have been altered as well. Because buildings from the early 1970s are now becoming historic, ASM also surveyed some neighborhoods developed during this time. A development on Pleasant Hill Street north of Rock Springs Road is a good example of an area that could be a potential historic district. Constructed in 1975, the residences have a contemporary style with features such as shed roofs, exposed beams, and use of brick and board-and-batten details.

In addition to residential development, commercial and institutional buildings built between 1950 and 1970 were noted during the reconnaissance survey. A building currently used as a dentist office at 511 2nd Avenue (1957) is a strong example of mid-century modern design. The Holiday Wine Cellar at the corner of Mission Avenue and Escondido Boulevard is in the potentially eligible Transportation Corridor District but may also be individually eligible as an example of tiki-inspired architecture. Several churches constructed from 1950 to 1970 were also noted during the survey, such as the one currently occupied by Canvas Church at 1300 South Juniper Street (1959).

### **Historic Districts**

The City has two proposed historic districts that overlap with the EVSP Area. The eastern end of the Commercial Core Historic District is on the western end of the EVSP Area on the streets west



of Fig Street (Figure 3.4-1a, Commercial Core Historic District). The northwestern corner of the proposed Los Arboles Historic District extension also overlaps with the EVSP Area (Figure 3.4-1b, Los Arboles Historic District). Both districts have been determined to be eligible for listing under the City’s criteria and the Escondido Historic Preservation Ordinance (EMC Article 40 section 33-797(C)(c)).

### ***Commercial Core Historic District***

The proposed Commercial Core of the City is made up of Grand Avenue and its tributary streets, which have been the center of City business, government, and social life since 1886 and compose Downtown Escondido. Even through economically weak periods, Grand Avenue and the surrounding streets have remained at the center of the City, representing one of the few cities in the County with a traditional downtown. Although the area has been impacted by the introduction of shopping malls in the 1950s and 1980s, built environment representatives from each historic-era development surge remain.

### ***Los Arboles Historic District***

The proposed Los Arboles Historic District encompasses a significant concentration of buildings representing various period styles, from board-and-batten to 1950s contemporary, of workers’ housing. Primarily composed of one-story homes, the area represents the City’s residential history. The district derives its name from the City designation of the Los Arboles neighborhood.

#### **3.4.1.3 Tribal Cultural Resources**

TCRs are defined in California Public Resources Code section 21074 as “[s]ites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects” that are of cultural value to a California Native American Tribe and that are either on or determined eligible for inclusion on the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) or included in a local register of historical resources. In addition, TCRs include resources determined by a lead agency, at its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant under the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of California Public Resources Code section 5024.1.

A Sacred Lands File records search request was submitted by ASM to the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) on February 23, 2021. The NAHC responded on March 9, 2021, with a positive result for the Sacred Lands File records search of the EVSP Area. The NAHC provided a list of Tribal contacts who have knowledge of the EVSP Area. The City sent information requests and AB 52 consultation letters to the Tribal contacts provided by the NAHC; ASM also sent information request letters to these Tribal contacts. Requests to the NAHC, the NAHC’s response and results, a list of contacts for information about the EVSP Area, and associated letters from ASM are available in Appendix C of the Cultural Resources Technical Report (Appendix D).

### 3.4.2 Regulatory Framework

This section describes the federal, state, and local regulatory framework adopted to address cultural resources and TCRs.

#### 3.4.2.1 Federal

##### **National Historic Preservation Act**

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 established the NRHP as the official federal list of cultural resources that have been nominated by state offices for their historical significance at the local, state, or national level. Listing in the NRHP provides recognition that a property is significant to the nation, the state, or the community and assumes that federal agencies consider historical value in the planning for federal and federally assisted projects. Properties listed in the NRHP or determined eligible for listing must meet certain criteria for historical significance and possess integrity of form, location, and setting. Structures and features must usually be at least 50 years old to be considered for listing in the NRHP, barring exceptional circumstances. Criteria for listing in the NRHP are set forth in Title 36, Part 60.4 of the Code of Federal Regulations. Pursuant to Part 60.4, the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association and that:

- A. Are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. Are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; represent the work of a master; possess high artistic values; or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. Have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Eligible properties must meet at least one of the criteria and exhibit integrity, which is measured by the degree to which the resource retains its historic properties and conveys its historic character, the degree to which the original fabric has been retained, and the reversibility of changes to the property. The fourth criterion is typically reserved for archaeological and paleontological resources.

##### **Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act**

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) is a federal law passed in 1990. NAGPRA provides a process for museums and federal agencies to return certain Native American cultural items—human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony—to lineal descendants and culturally affiliated Native American Tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations. NAGPRA includes provisions for unclaimed and culturally unidentifiable

Native American cultural items, intentional and inadvertent discovery of Native American cultural items on federal and Tribal lands, and penalties for noncompliance and illegal trafficking. Implementation of the Project would be conducted in compliance with NAGPRA.

Federal curation regulations are also provided in Title 36, Part 79, of the Code of Federal Regulations and apply to collections that are excavated or removed under the authority of the Antiquities Act (16 U.S.C. sections 431–433), the Reservoir Salvage Act (16 U.S.C. sections 469–469c), section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. section 470h-2), or the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (16 U.S.C. sections 470aa–mm). Such collections generally include those that are the result of a prehistoric or historical resources survey, excavation, or other study conducted in connection with a federal action, assistance, license, or permit.

### **3.4.2.2 State**

#### **Assembly Bill 52**

AB 52 (Chapter 532, Statutes of 2014) establishes a formal consultation process for California Native American Tribes as part of CEQA and equates significant impacts on TCRs with significant environmental impacts (California Public Resources Code section 21084.2).

Sacred places can include Native American sanctified cemeteries, places of worship, religious or ceremonial sites, and sacred shrines. In addition, both unique and non-unique archaeological resources, as defined in California Public Resources Code section 21083.2, can be TCRs if they meet the statutory criteria. The lead agency relies on substantial evidence to make the determination that a resource qualifies as a TCR when it is not already listed in the CRHR or a local register.

AB 52 defines a “California Native American Tribe” as a Native American Tribe in California that is on the contact list maintained by the NAHC (California Public Resources Code section 21073). Under AB 52, formal consultation with Tribes is required before determining the level of environmental document if a Tribe has requested to be informed by the lead agency of proposed projects and if the Tribe, upon receiving notice of a project, accepts the opportunity to consult within 30 days of receipt of the notice. AB 52 also requires that consultation, if initiated, address project alternatives and mitigation measures for significant effects if specifically requested by the Tribe. AB 52 states that consultation is considered concluded when the parties agree to measures to mitigate or avoid a significant effect on TCRs or when either the Tribe or the lead agency concludes that mutual agreement cannot be reached after making a reasonable, good-faith effort. Under AB 52, any mitigation measures recommended by the lead agency or agreed on with the Tribe may be included in the final environmental document and in the adopted Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program if the mitigation measures were determined to avoid or lessen a significant impact on a TCR.

If the recommended measures are not included in the final environmental document, then the lead agency must consider the four mitigation methods described in California Public Resources Code section 21084.3(e). Confidential information submitted by a Tribe or otherwise obtained during the consultation process is not subject to public review or disclosure. Confidential information shall be published in a confidential appendix to the environmental document, with a general description of that information for public review, unless the Tribe consents to disclosure of all or some of the otherwise confidential information to the public.

### **California Government Code Sections 6254(r) and 6254.10**

Sections 6254(r) and 6254.10 of the California Government Code were enacted to protect archaeological sites from unauthorized excavation, looting, or vandalism. Section 6254(r) explicitly authorizes public agencies to withhold information from the public relating to “Native American graves, cemeteries, and sacred places maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission.” Section 6254.10 specifically exempts from disclosure requests for “records that relate to archaeological site information and reports, maintained by, or in the possession of the Department of Parks and Recreation, the State Historical Resources Commission, the State Lands Commission, the Native American Heritage Commission, another state agency, or a local agency, including the records that the agency obtains through a consultation process between a Native American tribe and a state or local agency.”

### **California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and California Public Resources Code Section 5097.9**

California Health and Safety Code section 7050.5 addresses the protection of human remains discovered in any location other than a dedicated cemetery and makes it a misdemeanor for any person who knowingly mutilates or disinters, wantonly disturbs, or willfully removes any human remains in or from any location other than a dedicated cemetery without authority of law, except as provided in California Public Resources Code section 5097.99. Section 7050.5 further states that, in the event of discovery or recognition of any human remains in any location other than a dedicated cemetery, no further excavation or disturbance of the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent remains would occur until the coroner of the county in which the human remains are discovered has determined that the remains are not subject to the provisions concerning investigation of the circumstances, manner, and cause of any death and that the recommendations concerning the treatment and disposition of the human remains have been made to the person responsible for the excavation, or to their authorized representative, in the manner provided in California Public Resources Code section 5097.98. If the county coroner determines that the remains are not subject to the county coroner’s authority and if the county coroner recognizes the human remains to be those of a Native American or has reason to believe that they are those of a Native American, they shall contact, by telephone and within 24 hours, the NAHC. Whenever the NAHC receives notification of a discovery of Native American human remains from

the county coroner, the agency shall immediately notify the most likely decedents if it believes them to be the most likely descendants of the deceased Native American. The most likely descendants may inspect the site of the discovery and make recommendations on the removal or reburial of the remains.

### **California Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act**

The California NAGPRA, enacted in 2001, required the state agencies and museums that receive state funding and that have possession or control over collections of human remains or cultural items, as defined, to complete an inventory and summary of these remains and items on or before January 1, 2003, with certain exceptions. California NAGPRA also provides a process for the identification and repatriation of these items to the appropriate Tribes.

### **California Register of Historical Resources**

The CRHR is a state government program for use by state and local agencies, private groups, and citizens to identify, evaluate, register, and protect California's historical resources. The CRHR is the authoritative guide to the state's significant historical and archaeological resources and encourages public recognition and protection of resources of architectural, historic, archaeological, and cultural significance; identifies historical resources for state and local planning purposes; determines eligibility for state historic preservation grant funding; and affords certain protections under CEQA.

The term "historical resource" includes but is not limited to any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript that is historically or archaeologically significant or is significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California (California Public Resources Code section 5020.1(j)). Historical resources may be designated as such through three different processes:

- Official designation or recognition by a local government pursuant to local ordinance or resolution (California Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k))
- A local survey conducted pursuant to California Public Resources Code section 5024.1(g)
- Listing in or eligibility for listing in the NRHP (California Public Resources Code section 5024.1(d)(1))

To be eligible for listing in the CRHR, a building must satisfy at least one of the following four criteria:

- **Criterion 1:** It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.
- **Criterion 2:** It is associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history.

- **Criterion 3:** It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values.
- **Criterion 4:** It has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.

### **Native American Historic Cultural Sites (California Public Resources Code Section 5097 et. seq.)**

State law addresses the disposition of Native American burials in archaeological sites and protects such remains from disturbance, vandalism, or inadvertent destruction; establishes procedures to be implemented if Native American skeletal remains are discovered during construction of a project; and establishes the NAHC to resolve disputes regarding the disposition of such remains. In addition, the Native American Historic Resource Protection Act makes it a misdemeanor punishable by up to one year in jail to deface or destroy a Native American historic or cultural site that is listed or may be eligible for listing in the CRHR.

### **Senate Bill 18 – Traditional Tribal Cultural Places**

As of March 1, 2005, SB 18 (California Government Code sections 65352.3 and 65352.4) requires that, before the adoption or amendment of a General Plan proposed on or after March 1, 2005, a city or county must consult with Native American Tribes with respect to the possible preservation of, or the mitigation of impacts to, specified Native American places, features, and objects within that jurisdiction. The consultation intends to establish a meaningful dialogue regarding potential means to preserve Native American places of importance. It allows for Tribes to hold conservation easements and for Tribal Cultural Places to be included in open space planning.

#### **3.4.2.3 Local**

#### **Criteria for Local Register Listing or Local Landmark Designation**

Before granting a resource Escondido Local Register of Historical Places or Historical Landmark status, the City Council shall consider the definitions for historical resources and historic districts and shall find that the resource conforms to one or more of the criteria listed below. A structural resource proposed for the local register shall be evaluated against criteria 1 through 7 and must meet at least two of the criteria, signs proposed shall meet at least one of criteria 8 through 10, landscape features shall meet criterion 11, and archaeological resources shall meet criterion 12. Local register resources proposed for local landmark designation shall be evaluated against criterion 13. The criteria are as follows (City of Escondido 2022):

1. Escondido historical resources that are strongly identified with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture, history, prehistory, or development of the City of Escondido, region, state or nation;

2. Escondido building or buildings that embody distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type, specimen, or are representative of a recognized architect's work and are not substantially altered;
3. Escondido historical resources that are connected with a business or use that was once common but is now rare;
4. Escondido historical resources that are the sites of significant historic events;
5. Escondido historical resources that are 50 years old or have achieved historical significance within the past 50 years;
6. Escondido historical resources that are an important key focal point in the visual quality or character of a neighborhood, street, area or district;
7. Escondido historical building that is one of the few remaining examples in the city possessing distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type;
8. Sign that is exemplary of technology, craftsmanship or design of the period when it was constructed, uses historical sign materials and is not significantly altered;
9. Sign that is integrated into the architecture of the building, such as the sign pylons on buildings constructed in the Modern style and later styles;
10. Sign that demonstrates extraordinary aesthetic quality, creativity, or innovation;
11. Escondido landscape feature that is associated with an event or person of historical significance to the community or warrants special recognition due to size, condition, uniqueness or aesthetic qualities;
12. Escondido archaeological site that has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory;
13. Escondido significant historical resource that has an outstanding rating of the criteria used to evaluate local register requests.

### **Criteria for Local Historic District Designation**

The City Council may designate an area as a historic district if it finds that the proposed historic district meets all of the following criteria (City of Escondido 2022):

1. The proposed historical district is a geographically definable area possessing a significant concentration or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects unified by past events, or aesthetically by plan or physical development;
2. The collective historical value of the proposed historical district may be is greater than that of each individual resource;
3. The proposed designation is in conformance with the purpose of the city's historic preservation provisions set forth in this article and the city's general plan.

## Escondido General Plan

### ***Resource Conservation Element***

The Escondido General Plan is a set of long-term goals and policies that decision makers use to guide growth and development and address the community's goals. The Escondido General Plan is divided into various elements that include the Land Use and Community Form Element, Mobility and Infrastructure Element, Housing Element, Community Health and Services Element, Community Protection Element, Resource Conservation Element, Growth Management Element, Economic Prosperity Element, and any additional topics of local significance. Each element details policies and programs to achieve the established goals.

The Resource Conservation Element focuses on conserving important resources, including biological, air and water quality, cultural, agricultural, mineral, and energy resources, as well as protecting hillside and ridgeline view corridors, with particular emphasis on ridgelines, unique landforms, and visual gateways. The following goals and policies in the Resource Conservation Element of the Escondido General Plan are relevant to the analysis in this section (City of Escondido 2012):

- **Resource Conservation Goal 5 (Historic and Cultural Resources):** Preservation of important cultural and paleontological resources that contribute to the unique identity and character of Escondido.
  - **Cultural Resources Policy 5.1:** Maintain and update the Escondido Historic Sites Survey to include significant resources that meet local, state, or federal criteria.
  - **Cultural Resources Policy 5.2:** Preserve significant cultural and paleontological resources listed on the national, state, or local registers through maintenance or development of appropriate ordinances that protect, enhance, and perpetuate resources; incentive programs; and/or the development review process.
  - **Cultural Resources Policy 5.3:** Consult with appropriate organizations and individuals (e.g., South Coastal Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System, Native American Heritage Commission, Native American groups and individuals, and San Diego Natural History Museum) early in the development process to minimize potential impacts to cultural and paleontological resources.
  - **Cultural Resources Policy 5.4:** Recognize the sensitivity of locally significant cultural resources and the need for more detailed assessments through the environmental review process.
  - **Cultural Resources Policy 5.5:** Preserve historic buildings, landscapes, and districts with special and recognized historic or architectural value in their original locations through preservation, rehabilitation (including adaptive reuse), and restoration where the use is compatible with the surrounding area.



- **Cultural Resources Policy 5.6:** Review proposed new development and/or remodels for compatibility with the surrounding historic context.
- **Cultural Resources Policy 5.7:** Comply with appropriate local, state, or federal regulations governing historical resources.
- **Cultural Resources Policy 5.8:** Consider providing financial incentives, and educational information on existing incentives provided by the federal government to private owners and development in order to maintain, rehabilitate, and preserve historic resources.
- **Cultural Resources Policy 5.9:** Educate the public on the City’s important historic resources [and] increase awareness for protection.

### **Escondido Municipal Code**

Article 40, Historical Resources, of the EMC establishes the City’s Historic Preservation Committee, the Escondido Local Register of Historical Places, and the designation process for Escondido Local Landmarks. Any person may nominate a historical resource to the local register or for landmark designation; however, the application must be made to the Planning Division on forms provided by the City. In addition, requests for local landmark designation must include a letter signed by the property owner consenting to the initiation. Article 40 additionally establishes it as unlawful to tear down, demolish, construct, alter, remove, or relocate any historical resource or any portion thereof that has been listed on the Escondido Historic Sites Survey, on the local register, designated as a local landmark, or located within a Historical Overlay District or to alter any feature of such without first obtaining a permit as outlined in EMC section 33-798. This includes obtaining a certificate of appropriateness for any new construction or alteration that would affect the exterior appearance of a historical resource listed on the local register or located within a Historical Overlay District, including the back, sides, and street facade, even when a building permit is not otherwise required. Additional permits and review by the Planning Commission may also be required.

Improvements and alterations to properties listed on the Escondido Historic Sites Survey outside a Historical Overlay District are also subject to staff administrative review to ensure that improvements and alterations do not preclude future listing in the local register. Further, Article 40 requires that all repairs, alterations, constructions, restorations, or changes in use of applicable historical resources shall conform to the requirements of the State Historical Building Code and the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. Demolitions to such resources would require a permit acquired in accordance with EMC sections 33-801, 33-802, and 33-803.

Article 55, Grading and Erosion Control, of the EMC ensures that development occurs in a manner that protects the natural and topographic character and identity of the environment, the visual integrity of hillsides and ridgelines, sensitive species and unique geologic/geographic features, and the health, safety, and welfare of the general public by regulating grading on private and public

property and providing standards and design criteria. Additionally, the article recommends that grading designs be sensitive to natural topographic, cultural, or environmental features and mature and protected trees by implementing the following features that should be preserved in permanent open space easements or through such other means that would ensure their preservation: undisturbed steep slopes (over 35%); riparian areas, mitigation areas, and areas with sensitive vegetation or habitat; unusual rock outcroppings; other unique or unusual geographic features; and significant cultural or historical features.

### 3.4.3 Thresholds of Significance

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Project would have a significant impact on historical resources, archaeological resources, or TCRs if it would:

- **Threshold 1:** Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15064.5.
- **Threshold 2:** Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15064.5.
- **Threshold 3:** Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries.
- **Threshold 4:** Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a Tribal Cultural Resource, defined in California Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American Tribe, and that is:
  - Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in California Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or
  - A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of California Public Resources Code section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of California Public Resource Code section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

### 3.4.4 Impacts and Mitigation

The following sections address various potential impacts relating to cultural resources and TCRs that could result from implementation of the Project.

### 3.4.4.1 Threshold 1: Historic Built Environment Resources

#### Impact Analysis

The EVSP Area contains a variety of historic sensitivity levels. The red parcels indicated on the Architectural Resources Sensitive Map (Figure 3.4-2, Sensitivity Map for Built Environment Cultural Resources) identify resources recommended as eligible or listed on the local register. These include residential resources such as the Craftsman bungalow at 1110 Pennsylvania Avenue (1915) and the Greek Revival-style house converted to apartments at 829 East Ohio Avenue (1890). There are also some commercial resources, such as the former Christo's Café at 1004 East Valley Parkway (1935), that have been altered since they were designated and may no longer be eligible but require further evaluation.

The orange areas on the Sensitivity Map for Built Environment Cultural Resources (Figure 3.4-2) indicate potential historic districts that have been identified. The eastern end of the Commercial Core Historic District is on the western end of the map on the streets west of Fig Street. The historic district also overlaps with the northwestern corner of the Los Arboles Historic District extension. This area contains small workers' homes primarily from the 1950s.

There are concentrations of yellow in some portions of the Sensitivity Map for Built Environment Cultural Resources (Figure 3.4-2), particularly on Ohio and Pennsylvania Avenues, indicating neighborhoods that are, at the writing of this PEIR, more than 45 years old, with construction dates before 1976.

Green areas of the Sensitivity Map for Built Environment Cultural Resources (Figure 3.4-2) were developed between 1977 and 2020 and are located primarily east of Ash Street and along portions of East Valley Parkway. Levels 1–3 (red, orange, and yellow) are considered potentially sensitive areas for built environment resources, while Level 4 (green) is considered likely not sensitive.

Currently, 448 built environmental resources are in the EVSP Area. Two built environment structures are listed in the local register, and currently, 28 additional built environment resources that have been recommended as eligible for CRHR and/or NRHP listing are in the EVSP Area. The EVSP Area contains Levels 1, 2, and 3 (red, orange, and yellow, respectively) of historical resource sensitivity, indicating that the area is likely to contain historical resources. Future development in the EVSP Area would have the potential to impact potentially sensitive areas for built environment resources (Levels 1–3). Therefore, the Project would have the potential to result in a significant impact to historic built environment resources.

#### Significance of Impact

Implementation of the Project would have the potential to impact historical resources. Impacts would be potentially significant.

## Mitigation Measures

Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce significant impacts to historical resources.

**CUL-1: Historical Evaluation.** In areas identified as having a Level 1 (red) sensitivity on the Sensitivity Map for Built Environment Cultural Resources in the EVSP Area (Figure 3) in the Cultural Resources Technical Report, projects with the potential to impact historical resources should be avoided or designed to ensure that the Project would not result in a significant impact. A Historical Resources Assessment Report shall be completed for properties to assess impacts to individual resources and the district. This Historical Resources Assessment Report shall be completed by an architectural historian who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for Architectural History and shall consider mitigation measures that take all prudent and feasible measures to minimize harm. Significance evaluations shall not be required if the historical resource has been evaluated for California Environmental Quality Act significance or for California Register of Historical Resources eligibility within the last five years and if there has been no change in the conditions that contributed to the determination of significance or eligibility. A historical resource shall be re-evaluated if its condition or setting has either improved or deteriorated, if new information is available, or if the resource is becoming increasingly rare due to the loss of other similar resources. The Historical Resources Assessment Report shall include an evaluation of whether the Project meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. New construction in a historic district shall also be reviewed to ensure that it meets the standards so that it shall not have an adverse impact (including visual impacts or impacts to setting).

Projects in Level 2 (orange) areas where potential historical resources have been identified shall also be avoided or redesigned when possible. Areas in Level 2 (orange) indicate the presence of a potential historic district, but specific contributors have not been identified. A Historical Resources Assessment Report that includes an evaluation of the resource both individually and as a contributor to the proposed historic district shall be completed. If the resource is determined to be a non-contributor or not individually eligible, the Historical Resources Assessment Report shall also assess the potential for adverse impacts (including visual impacts or impacts to setting) to the proposed district in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines.

Projects in the Level 3 (yellow) area of sensitivity have the potential to impact a historical resource because the level includes all buildings more than 45 years old. A Historical Resources Assessment Report evaluating the building and any potential historic district

to which the historical resource may contribute shall be prepared. If no historical resources are identified, then no further action shall be required beyond documentation of the resources on the appropriate California Department of Parks and Recreation site forms. If a historical resource is identified, the Historical Resources Assessment Report shall assess the potential impacts from the Project following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines.

### **Significance After Mitigation**

Implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-1 would reduce the Project's impacts on historical resources to a less than significant level.

#### **3.4.4.2 Threshold 2: Archaeological Resources**

##### **Impact Analysis**

Impacts on archaeological resources typically occur during construction activities, which could potentially damage or destroy known or unknown archaeological resources. One recorded archaeological site is in the EVSP Area. This resource was identified as a historic refuse deposit in a secondary deposit, which was determined to not be a significant resource.

As part of the Cultural Resources Technical Report (Appendix D), sensitivity for the presence of resources was developed. Archaeological sensitivity of buried deposits is based on landform age in relation to human occupation, topographic relief, and proximity to water (Meyer et al. 2010). If a landform predates human occupation of a region, the archaeological sensitivity for that region would be low. Additionally, if a landform was altered during the historic and/or modern eras (e.g., by development, erosion, cut and fill), the archaeological sensitivity for that region would be low. However, if a landform postdates human occupation of a region, the archaeological sensitivity for that region would be higher if the landscape would support habitation and be a depositional environment (e.g., topographic relief and proximity to water).

Archaeological resources may be difficult to detect before construction activities because they are generally below the ground surface. Most archaeological sites have some surface expression, and many have been found within inches of the ground surface. Therefore, the potential to affect important archaeological sites exists if a development activity requires even minimal grading or excavation. Previously developed and excavated areas, such as the EVSP Area, are generally considered to have a low potential for archaeological resources because the soil containing the archaeological resources has been disturbed or removed. However, under certain circumstances, further evaluation is necessary when previously excavated and/or graded project sites are in areas of known archaeological sensitivity (e.g., recorded sites, designated sites) or are identified as Traditional Cultural Properties. In addition, building demolition and surface clearance from

redevelopment activities, which may occur in the EVSP Area, could result in impacts to archaeological resources if present.

The EVSP would not propose specific construction or ground-disturbing activities, such as grading or excavation. However, it can be assumed that future development consistent with the goals and policies of the EVSP would have the potential to result in ground disturbance. The EVSP Area contains a low sensitivity level for the presence of archaeological resources due to prior development and lack of known resources. However, unknown buried archaeological resources may still be present. Therefore, the Project would have the potential to result in impacts to unknown archaeological resources.

### **Significance of Impact**

The Project would have the potential to impact unknown archaeological resources. Impacts would be potentially significant.

### **Mitigation Measures**

Implementation of Mitigation Measures CUL-2, CUL-3, CUL-4, CUL-5, CUL-6, CUL-7, CUL-8, and CUL-9 would reduce significant impacts to archaeological resources.

**CUL-2: Archaeological Evaluation Program.** Before the issuance of a grading permit, future discretionary projects in the EVSP Area shall be reviewed by the City of Escondido Planning Department to determine if a Cultural Resources Study is required. Site-specific archaeological surveys shall be conducted for the following types of projects: (1) projects in areas that have not been previously developed, or (2) projects that may impact built environment resources that meet the age threshold for eligibility.

For projects requiring a Cultural Resources Study, the work shall be conducted by a City of Escondido-approved qualified archaeologist to determine the likelihood of the project site to contain archaeological resources by reviewing site photographs and existing historical information and conducting a site visit. A Native American monitor shall be on site during site-specific archaeological surveys. Before field reconnaissance, background research, including a records search at the South Coastal Information Center, shall be required. A record search from a nearby property may be used if the previous search was conducted within the last two years. In addition, a review of the Sacred Lands File maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission shall also be conducted.

If potential archaeological resources are identified through background research and field surveys, those resources shall be avoided, or significance evaluations shall be required for the potential archaeological resources identified. Potential resources

include new resources identified as a result of a survey, previously recorded resources that have not been evaluated and are relocated during a survey, and previously recorded sites not relocated during the survey if there is a likelihood that the resources still exist. Significance evaluations shall not be required if the resources have been evaluated for California Environmental Quality Act significance within the last five years and if there has been no change in the conditions that contributed to the determination of significance or eligibility.

An archaeological testing program shall be required for archaeological sites in need of resource significance evaluation. Archaeological testing programs include evaluating the horizontal and vertical dimensions of a site, chronological placement, site function, artifact/ecofact density and variability, presence and absence of subsurface features, and research potential. Tribal representatives and/or Native American monitors shall be involved in making recommendations regarding the significance of prehistoric archaeological sites during this phase of the process. The testing program may require re-evaluation of the Project, which could result in a combination of project redesign to preserve significant resources and mitigation in the form of data recovery and monitoring (as recommended by the qualified archaeologist and Tribal representatives and/or Native American monitors).

If significant archaeological resources are identified within the project footprint, the site may be eligible for designation on one or more registers. If no significant resources are found, and site conditions are such that there is no potential for further discoveries, then no further action shall be required. Resources found to be non-significant as a result of a survey and/or assessment shall require no further work beyond documentation of the resources on the appropriate California Department of Parks and Recreation site forms and inclusion of results in the survey and/or assessment report. If no significant resources are found, but results of the initial evaluation and testing phase indicate that there is still a potential for resources to be present in portions of the property that could not be tested, then mitigation monitoring shall be required.

Avoiding and preserving the resources through project redesign is the preferred mitigation for archaeological resources. If avoidance is not possible, the City of Escondido shall consult with all applicable parties, including Native American Tribes if prehistoric, in an effort to determine measures to mitigate any potential impacts to the resource in accordance with California Public Resources Code section 21083.2 and the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines section 15126.4. A project archaeologist who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for Archaeology shall employ measures that include documentation of the resource.

For archaeological resources for which preservation is not an option, a research design for a data recovery program shall be prepared. The data recovery program shall be based on a written research design and would be subject to the provisions as outlined in California Public Resources Code section 21083.2.

- CUL-3: Qualified Archaeologist and Native American Monitoring.** Prior to issuance of a grading permit, the Applicant shall provide written verification to the City of Escondido that a qualified archaeologist and a Native American monitor associated with a Tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project location have been retained to implement a monitoring program for all subsurface investigations, including geotechnical testing and other ground-disturbing activities, whenever an archaeological site or a Native American Traditional Cultural Property within the project footprint would be impacted. The archaeologist shall be responsible for coordinating with the Native American monitor. This verification shall be presented to the City of Escondido in a letter from the project archaeologist that confirms the selected Native American monitor is associated with a traditionally and culturally affiliated Tribe. The City of Escondido, prior to any pre-construction meeting, shall approve all people involved in the monitoring program.
- CUL-4: Attend Pre-Grading Meeting.** The qualified archaeologist and a Native American monitor shall attend a pre-grading meeting with the grading contractors to explain and coordinate the requirements of the monitoring program. During the initial grubbing, site grading, excavation, or disturbance of the ground surface, the qualified archaeologist and the Native American monitor shall be on site full time. The frequency of inspections shall depend on the rate of excavation, the materials excavated, and any discoveries of Tribal Cultural Resources as defined in California Public Resources Code section 21074. Archaeological and Native American monitoring shall be discontinued when the depth of grading and soil conditions no longer retain the potential to contain cultural deposits. The qualified archaeologist, in consultation with the Native American monitor, shall be responsible for determining the duration and frequency of monitoring.
- CUL-5: Temporarily Halt Ground Disturbance Operation.** In the event that previously unidentified archaeological and/or Tribal Cultural Resources are discovered, the qualified archaeologist and the Native American monitor shall have the authority to temporarily divert or temporarily halt ground disturbance operation in the area of discovery to allow for the evaluation of potentially significant cultural resources. Isolates and clearly non-significant deposits shall be minimally documented in the field and collected so the monitored grading can proceed.



- CUL-6: Notify the City of Escondido of Archaeological and/or Tribal Cultural Resource Discovery.** If a potentially significant archaeological and/or Tribal Cultural Resource is discovered, the qualified archaeologist shall notify the City of Escondido of said discovery. The qualified archaeologist, in consultation with the City of Escondido, the traditionally and culturally affiliated Tribe, and the Native American monitor, shall determine the significance of the discovered resource. A recommendation for the Tribal Cultural Resource's treatment and disposition shall be made by the qualified archaeologist, in consultation with the traditionally and culturally affiliated Tribe and the Native American monitor, and be submitted to the City of Escondido for review and approval.
- CUL-7: Avoidance and/or Preservation of Discovery.** The avoidance and/or preservation of the significant Tribal Cultural Resource and/or unique archaeological resource must first be considered and evaluated as required by the California Environmental Quality Act. Where any significant Tribal Cultural Resources and/or unique archaeological resources have been discovered and avoidance and/or preservation measures are deemed to be infeasible by the City of Escondido, a research design and data recovery program to mitigate impacts shall be prepared by the qualified archaeologist (using professional archaeological methods), in consultation with the traditionally and culturally affiliated Tribe and the Native American monitor, and shall be subject to approval by the City of Escondido. The archaeological monitor, in consultation with the Native American monitor, shall determine the amount of material to be recovered for an adequate artifact sample for analysis. Before construction activities are allowed to resume in the affected area, the research design and data recovery program activities must be concluded to the satisfaction of the City of Escondido.
- CUL-8: Collection and Treatment of Resources.** If the qualified archaeologist elects to collect any Tribal Cultural Resources, the Native American monitor must be present during any testing or cataloging of those resources. Moreover, if the qualified archaeologist does not collect the cultural resources that are unearthed during the ground-disturbing activities, the Native American monitor may, at their discretion, collect said resources and provide them to the traditionally and culturally affiliated Tribe for respectful and dignified treatment in accordance with the Tribe's cultural and spiritual traditions. Any Tribal Cultural Resources collected by the qualified archaeologist shall be repatriated to the traditionally and culturally affiliated Tribe. Should the traditionally and culturally affiliated Tribe or other traditionally and culturally affiliated Tribe decline the collection, the collection shall be curated at the San Diego Archaeological Center. All other resources determined not to be Tribal Cultural Resources by the qualified archaeologist, in consultation with the Native American monitor, shall be curated at the San Diego Archaeological Center.

**CUL-9: Monitoring and/or Evaluation Report.** Prior to the release of the grading bond, a monitoring report and/or evaluation report, if appropriate, which describes the results, analysis, and conclusion of the archaeological monitoring program and any data recovery program on the project site, shall be submitted by the qualified archaeologist to the City of Escondido. The Native American monitor shall be responsible for providing any notes or comments to the qualified archaeologist in a timely manner to be submitted with the report. The report shall include California Department of Parks and Recreation Primary and Archaeological Site Forms for any newly discovered resources.

### **Significance After Mitigation**

Implementation of Mitigation Measures CUL-2, CUL-3, CUL-4, CUL-5, CUL-6, CUL-7, CUL-8, and CUL-9 would reduce the Project's impacts on archaeological resources to a less than significant level.

#### **3.4.4.3 Threshold 3: Human Remains**

##### **Impact Analysis**

The EVSP would not specifically propose construction or ground-disturbing activities, such as grading or excavation. However, future development consistent with the goals and policies of the EVSP would have the potential to result in ground disturbance. The potential for encountering unknown prehistoric human remains in the EVSP Area during construction grading and excavation is low due to prior development and lack of known resources. However, the potential for encountering human remains in general is possible; therefore, implementation of the EVSP may result in potential impacts to unknown human remains.

##### **Significance of Impact**

The Project would have the potential to impact unknown human remains. Impacts would be potentially significant.

##### **Mitigation Measures**

Implementation of Mitigation Measures CUL-2, CUL-3, CUL-4, CUL-5, CUL-6, CUL-7, CUL-8, CUL-9, and CUL-10 would reduce impacts to a less than significant level.

**CUL-10: Identification and Treatment of Human Remains.** If Native American human remains are discovered within a project footprint, the City of Escondido shall work with the most likely descendants identified by the Native American Heritage Commission as provided in California Public Resources Code section 5097.98. The applicant may develop an agreement for treating or disposing of, with appropriate dignity, the human remains and any items of cultural patrimony associated with Native American burials with the appropriate Native Americans as identified by the Native American Heritage

Commission. Action implementing such an agreement is exempt from the general prohibition on disinterring, disturbing, or removing human remains from any location other than a dedicated cemetery (California Health and Safety Code section 7050.5):

- In the event of the accidental discovery or recognition of any human remains in any location other than a dedicated cemetery, the following steps shall be taken:
  - All construction activity shall cease within 100 feet of the discovery until the county coroner is contacted and has completed their study.
  - The county coroner shall be contacted to determine whether an investigation of the cause of death is required.
  - If the county coroner determines that the remains are Native American, they shall contact the Native American Heritage Commission within 24 hours.
  - The Native American Heritage Commission shall identify the person or people it believes to be the most likely descendant from the deceased Native American.
  - The landowner shall discuss and confer with the most likely descendant regarding all reasonable options for treatment of human remains and any associated grave goods as provided in California Public Resources Code section 5097.98.
- As part of the objectives, criteria, and procedures required by California Public Resources Code section 21082, the City of Escondido shall make provisions for historical or unique archaeological resources accidentally discovered during construction. These provisions shall include an immediate evaluation of the find by a qualified archaeologist. If the archaeologist determines the find to be a significant historical or archaeological resource, contingency funding and a time allotment sufficient to allow for implementation of avoidance measures or appropriate mitigation shall be necessary. Work may continue on other parts of the project site while resource mitigation takes place.

### **Significance After Mitigation**

Implementation of Mitigation Measures CUL-2, CUL-3, CUL-4, CUL-5, CUL-6, CUL-7, CUL-8, CUL-9, and CUL-10 would reduce the Project's impacts on human remains to a less than significant level.

#### **3.4.4.4 Threshold 4: Tribal Cultural Resources**

##### **Impact Analysis**

As part of the Cultural Resources Technical Report (Appendix D), records searches were initiated from the NAHC and South Coastal Information Center for the EVSP Area. Based on the results of the record searches, no known TCRs have been identified in the EVSP Area. The City sent information request letters to Native American Tribal contacts provided by the NAHC. Although

no known TCRs have been reported, Native American Tribes were historically distributed across the region, and there is a possibility that unknown TCRs exist in the EVSP Area.

On January 4, 2021, the City sent outreach letters pursuant to AB 52 and SB 18 to Native American Tribal contacts provided by the NAHC. The Tribal contacts include Barona Band of Mission Indians, Campo Band of Diegueño Mission Indians, Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians, Inaja Band of Diegueño Mission Indians, Jamul Indian Village of California, Kwaaymii Laguna Band of Mission Indians, La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians, La Posta Band of Diegueño Mission Indians, Manzanita Band of the Kumeyaay Nation, Mesa Grande Band of Mission Indians, Pala Band of Mission Indians, Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians, Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians (Rincon Band), San Luis Rey Band of Luiseño Indians, San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians, Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians, Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation, and Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians. Two Tribes (Rincon Band and San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians) requested consultation and the City met with both Tribes. Consultation is ongoing and will continue through project processing.

On January 22, 2021, a response was received from the Rincon Band stating that the project location is within the Traditional Use Area (TUA) of the Luiseño people and within the Band's specific Area of Historic Interest (AHI). The Rincon Band recommends that a Cultural Resources Study that includes an archaeological record search and complete intensive survey be conducted, a professional Native American monitor from the Rincon Band be present during the survey, and the City work with the Rincon Band on the development of mitigation measures that would allow for avoidance and protection of cultural resources. Subsequent discussions were had with City staff and the Rincon Band in regard to mitigation measures. On March 3, 2021, the Rincon Band provided suggested revisions on the project mitigation measures.

On February 25, 2021, a letter was received from the San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians advising that the Project is not within the boundaries of the recognized San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians Reservation but is within the boundaries of the territory that the Band considers its TUA. In addition, the San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians requests formal government-to-government consultation so that the Band has a role in developing the mitigation measures established to protect these sites and to mitigate any adverse impacts. In addition, they request that a Native American monitor from the Band be present during all ground-disturbing activities. At the time of publication of the Draft PEIR, consultation with both tribes is still in-progress. Consultation is required to be concluded prior to consideration of the Final PEIR.

The EVSP would not specifically propose construction or ground-disturbing activities, such as grading or excavation. However, it can be assumed that future development consistent with the goals and policies of the EVSP would have the potential to result in ground disturbance. Given

that there is a possibility that unknown TCRs exist in the EVSP Area, future development under the EVSP would have the potential to impact unknown TCRs.

### **Significance of Impact**

The Project would have the potential to impact unknown TCRs. Impacts would be potentially significant.

### **Mitigation Measures**

Implementation of Mitigation Measures CUL-2, CUL-3, CUL-4, CUL-5, CUL-6, CUL-7, CUL-8, CUL-9, CUL-10, and CUL-11 would reduce significant impacts to TCRs.

**CUL-11: Tribal Cultural Resources Evaluation.** For any project with the potential to result in adverse impacts to Tribal Cultural Resources, the City of Escondido shall avoid and/or minimize impacts. Coordination and collaboration regarding the resources shall be completed with Tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project location institutions, such as the South Coastal Information Center and the Native American Heritage Commission, including consultation as outlined in Senate Bill 18 and Assembly Bill 52. The resources shall be treated with culturally appropriate dignity, taking into account the Tribal cultural values and meaning of the resources, including but not limited to the following:

- Protecting the cultural character and integrity of the resources
- Protecting the traditional use of the resources
- Protecting the confidentiality of the resources

If possible, the City of Escondido shall avoid and preserve the resources in place, including but not limited to planning and construction to avoid the resources and to protect the resources' cultural and natural context.

Greenspace, parks, or other open space shall use appropriate planning to incorporate the resources with culturally appropriate protection and management criteria. Permanent conservation easements or other interests in real property shall be created with culturally appropriate management criteria for the purposes of preserving or using the resources or places.

### **Significance After Mitigation**

Implementation of Mitigation Measures CUL-2, CUL-3, CUL-4, CUL-5, CUL-6, CUL-7, CUL-8, CUL-9, CUL-10, and CUL-11 would reduce the Project's impacts on TCRs to a less than significant level.

### **3.4.5 Cumulative Impacts and Mitigation**

The geographic scope of cumulative impact analysis for cultural resources varies depending on the type of resource with potential to be impacted. Geographic scope can be the entire area within which the resource has the potential to occur. For the purpose of this PEIR, the geographic scope for the cumulative analysis of cultural resources and TCRs is the San Diego region, including both incorporated and unincorporated areas of the County.

According to CEQA, the importance of cultural resources comes from the research value and the information they contain. Therefore, the issue that must be explored in a cumulative analysis is the cumulative loss of this information. For sites considered less than significant, the information is preserved through recordation, test excavations, and preservation of their artifacts. Significant sites that are avoided by project design or placed in open space easements avoid impacts to cultural resources and preserve the data. Significant sites that are not avoided by project design or placed within open space easements preserve the information through recordation, test excavations, and data recovery programs that would be presented in reports and filed with the City and the South Coastal Information Center.

The following sections address various potential cumulative impacts relating to cultural resources and TCRs that could result from implementation of the Project.

#### **3.4.5.1 Cumulative Threshold 1: Historical Resources**

Cumulative projects in the San Diego region would have the potential to result in a cumulative impact associated with the loss of historical resources through the physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of a resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of a historical resource would be materially impaired. Projects occurring within the geographic scope of this analysis would have the potential to result in adverse impacts to historical resources from development activities, including development of land uses as designated in surrounding jurisdictions' General Plans. These projects are subject to and required to comply with federal, state, and local regulations. However, even with regulations in place, individual historical resources would still have the potential to be impacted or degraded from demolition, destruction, alteration, or structural relocation as a result of new private or public development or redevelopment associated with cumulative projects. Therefore, the cumulative destruction of significant historical resources from construction and development planned within the region would be considered a cumulatively significant impact. Additionally, past projects involving development and construction have already impacted historical resources within the region.

Implementation of the Project would have the potential to result in substantial adverse changes to the significance of historical resources due to demolition, destruction, alteration, or structural relocation as a result of new development or redevelopment. Implementation of the mitigation measure identified in Section 3.4.4.1 would reduce the Project's impacts on historical resources to

a less than significant level. Therefore, the Project would not contribute considerably to a significant cumulative impact related to historical resources.

### **3.4.5.2 Cumulative Threshold 2: Archaeological Resources**

Cumulative projects located in the San Diego region would have the potential to result in a cumulative impact associated with the loss of archaeological resources through development activities that could cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource. Any cumulative projects that involve ground-disturbing activities, including but not limited to the development of land uses as designated under surrounding jurisdictions' General Plans, would have the potential to result in significant impacts to archaeological resources. These projects would be regulated by applicable federal, state, and local regulations; however, the loss of archaeological resources on a regional level may not be adequately mitigated through the data recovery and collection methods specified in these regulations because their value may also lie in cultural mores and religious beliefs of applicable groups. Therefore, the cumulative destruction of significant archaeological resources from planned construction and development projects within the region would be cumulatively significant. Additionally, past projects involving development and construction have already impacted archaeological resources in the region.

Implementation of the Project would have the potential to result in a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource within the EVSP Area, including the destruction or disturbance of an important archaeological site or any portion of an important archaeological site that contains or has the potential to contain information important to history or prehistory.

Therefore, the Project, in combination with the identified cumulative projects, would have the potential to result in a significant cumulative impact associated with archaeological resources. Implementation of the mitigation measures identified in Section 3.4.4.2 would reduce the Project's impacts on archaeological resources to a less than significant level. Therefore, the Project would not contribute considerably to a significant cumulative impact related to archaeological resources.

### **3.4.5.3 Cumulative Threshold 3: Human Remains**

Cumulative projects in the San Diego region would have the potential to result in impacts associated with human remains due to grading, excavation, or other ground-disturbing activities. Projects that may result in significant impacts due to ground-disturbing activities include the development of land uses as designated under surrounding jurisdictions' General Plans. Cumulative projects would be required to comply with NAGPRA, California Public Resources Code sections 5097.9–5097.991, California NAGPRA, and California Health and Safety Code section 7050.5 if human remains are encountered during project development. However, on a regional level, the disturbance of human remains that are also considered archaeological resources may not be adequately mitigated through methods specified in these regulations because their value may also lie in cultural mores and religion beliefs of applicable groups. Therefore, the

cumulative disturbance of human remains by construction and development in the region would be considered a cumulatively significant impact. Additionally, past projects involving development and construction have already impacted human remains in the region.

Implementation of the Project would have the potential to disturb unknown human remains, including those outside designated cemeteries, through ground-disturbing activities associated with the development of land uses consistent with the EVSP. However, compliance with existing regulations and the mitigation measures identified in Section 3.4.4.3 would reduce these impacts to a less than significant level. Therefore, the Project would not contribute considerably to a significant cumulative impact related to human remains.

#### **3.4.5.4 Cumulative Threshold 4: Tribal Cultural Resources**

Cumulative projects in the San Diego region would have the potential to result in a cumulative impact associated with the loss of TCRs through development activities that could cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a TCR. Any cumulative projects that involve ground-disturbing activities, including but not limited to the development of land uses as designated under surrounding jurisdictions' General Plans, would have the potential to result in significant impacts to TCRs. These projects would be regulated by applicable federal, state, and local regulations; however, the loss of TCRs may not be adequately mitigated through the requirements of these regulations because their value may also lie in cultural mores and religious beliefs of applicable groups. Therefore, the cumulative destruction of TCRs from planned construction and development projects in the region would be cumulatively significant. Additionally, past projects involving development and construction have already impacted TCRs in the region.

Implementation of the Project would have the potential to result in a substantial adverse change in the significance of a TCR, including the destruction or disturbance of an unknown TCR. However, implementation of the mitigation measure identified in Section 3.4.4.4 would reduce impacts on TCRs to a less than significant level. Therefore, the Project would not have a cumulatively considerable contribution to a significant cumulative impact related to TCRs.

#### **3.4.6 Conclusion**

The EVSP Area contains Levels 1, 2, and 3 (red, orange, and yellow, respectively) of historical resource sensitivity, indicating that the area is likely to contain historical resources. Future development in the EVSP Area would have the potential to impact sensitive areas for built environment resources (Levels 1–3). Therefore, the Project would have the potential to result in a significant impact to historical resources. Implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-1 would mitigate impacts to a less than significant level. In addition, the Project would not contribute to cumulatively significant impacts to historic resources.



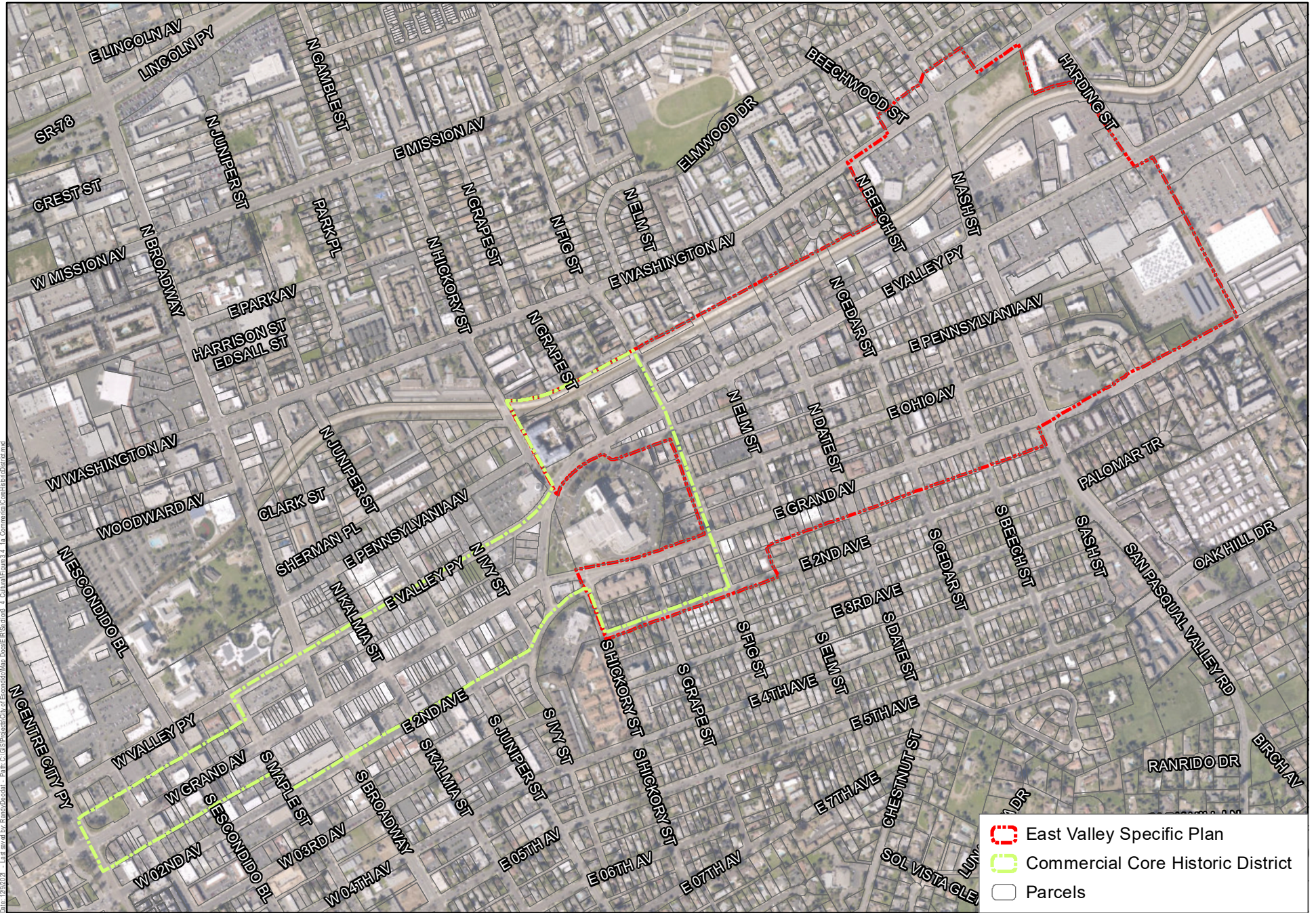
Future development consistent with the goals and policies of the EVSP would have the potential to result in ground disturbance that could impact unknown archaeological resources. Implementation of Mitigation Measures CUL-2, CUL-3, CUL-4, CUL-5, CUL-6, CUL-7, CUL-8, and CUL-9 would reduce impacts to a less than significant level. In addition, the Project would not contribute to cumulatively significant impacts to archaeological resources.

Future development consistent with the goals and policies of the EVSP would have the potential to disturb unknown human remains, which would result in a potentially significant impact. Compliance with California Health and Safety Code sections 7050.5 and 7052 and California Public Resources Code section 5097 would provide an opportunity to avoid or minimize the disturbance of human remains and to appropriately treat any remains that are discovered as specified under Mitigation Measure CUL-10. Implementation Mitigation Measures CUL-2, CUL-3, CUL-4, CUL-5, CUL-6, CUL-7, CUL-8, CUL-9, and CUL-10 would reduce the impacts to a less than significant level. In addition, the Project would not contribute to cumulatively significant impacts to human remains.

Future development consistent with the goals and policies of the EVSP would have the potential to result in ground disturbance. Given that there is a possibility that unknown TCRs exist within the EVSP Area, future development under the EVSP would have the potential to impact unknown TCRs. Implementation of Mitigation Measures CUL-2, CUL-3, CUL-4, CUL-5, CUL-6, CUL-7, CUL-8, CUL-9, CUL-10, and CUL-11 would reduce impacts to a less than significant level. In addition, the Project would not contribute to cumulative significant impacts to TCRs.

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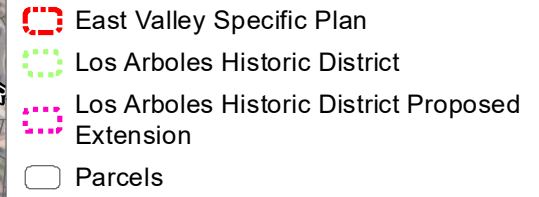
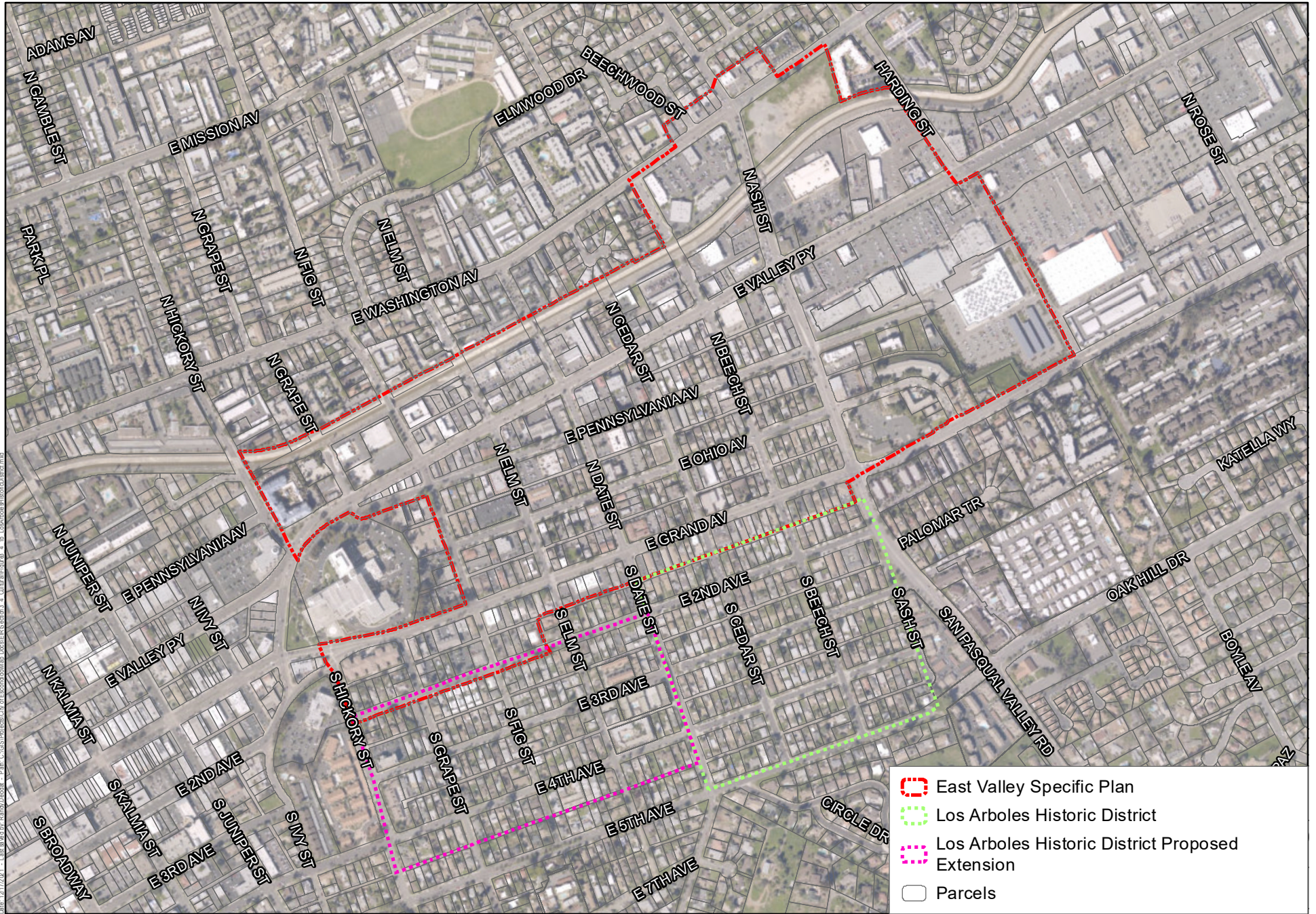


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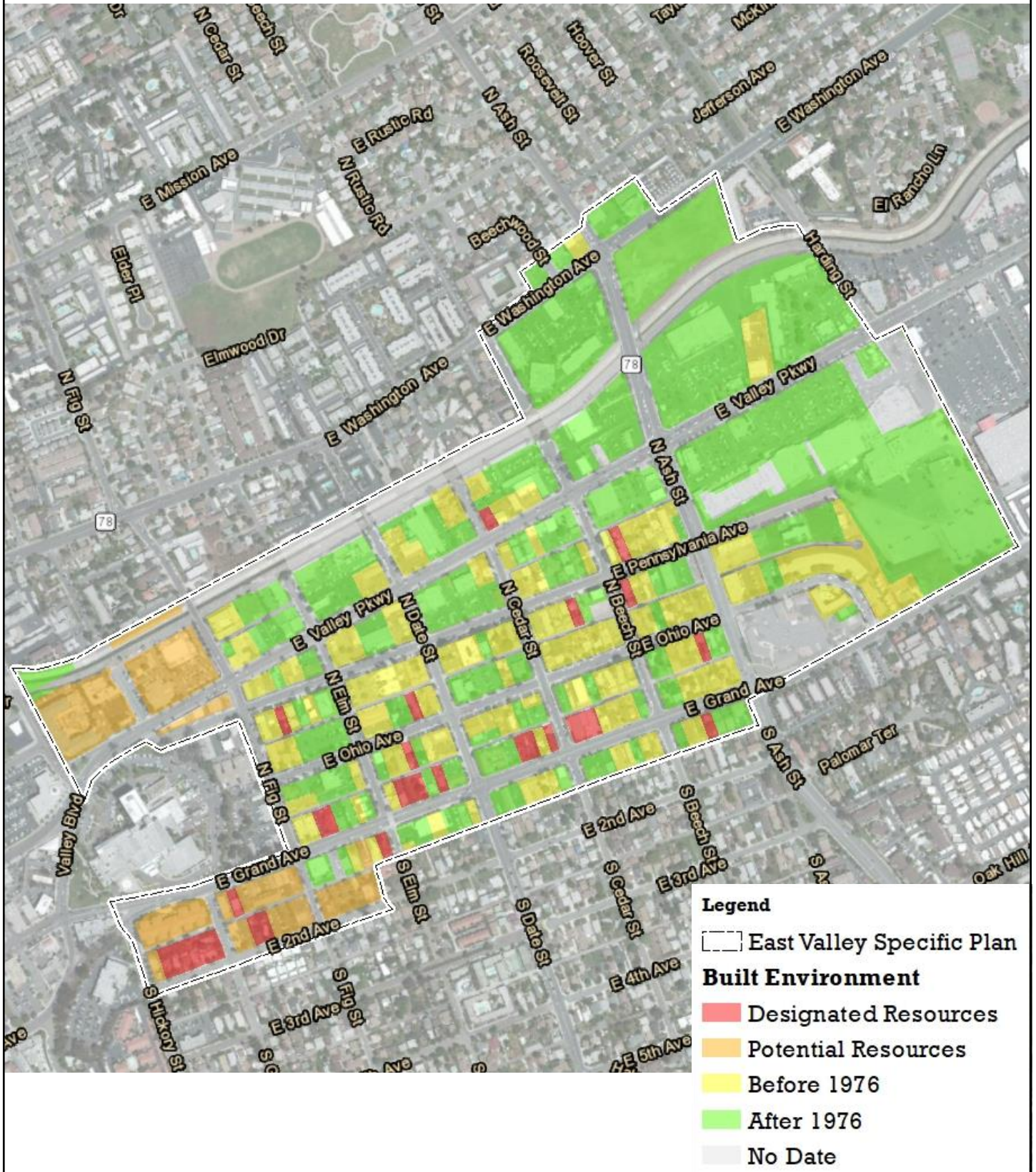




Source: SanGIS Imagery 2017.



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Source: ASM Affiliates 2021.

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## 3.5 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

This section evaluates the potential for impacts to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions resulting from implementation of the EVSP. The analysis in this section is based on the GHG Emissions Technical Memorandum prepared by Harris & Associates (2023) (Appendix E) for the Project.

### 3.5.1 Existing Conditions

This section describes the existing conditions for the Project as they relate to GHG emissions.

#### 3.5.1.1 Global Climate Change Overview

Climate change refers to any substantial change in measures of climate (such as temperature, precipitation, or wind) lasting for decades or longer. Earth's climate has changed many times during the planet's history, including events ranging from ice ages to long periods of warmth. Historically, natural factors, such as volcanic eruptions, changes in Earth's orbit, and the amount of energy released from the sun, have affected Earth's climate. Some GHGs, such as water vapor, occur naturally and are emitted to the atmosphere through natural processes, while others are emitted through human activities. Beginning in the late 18th century, human activities associated with the Industrial Revolution changed the composition of the atmosphere and, therefore, very likely influenced Earth's climate. For over the past 200 years, the burning of fossil fuels, such as coal and oil, and deforestation have caused concentrations of heat-trapping GHG to increase substantially in the atmosphere (City of Escondido 2012a).

The accumulation of GHGs in the atmosphere regulates Earth's temperature. Without the natural heat-trapping effects of GHGs, Earth's temperature would be approximately 86 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) cooler (Riebeek 2010). However, it is believed that emissions from human activities, such as electricity production and vehicle use, have elevated the concentration of GHGs in the atmosphere beyond the level of naturally occurring concentrations.

The Global Carbon Project (2022) released an update of the global carbon budget for the year 2019. The atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) concentration in 2019 was 410 parts per million (ppm), 48% above the concentration at the start of the Industrial Revolution (about 280 ppm in 1750). Global GHG emissions experienced an unprecedented drop in 2020 with preliminary data suggesting a rebound in 2021. The preliminary data shows that global fossil fuel CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) emissions in 2021 rebounded approximately 4.8% compared to 2020 to 36.4 billion MT CO<sub>2</sub>, returning to nearly 2019 emission levels of 36.7 billion MT CO<sub>2</sub> (Friedlingstein et al. 2022). The annual mean growth rate of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> has shown a steady increase. The highest growth rates since 1960 occurred in 1987, 1998, and 2015–2016, even reflecting a strong El Niño, which weakens the land sink effect (Jackson et al. 2021).

### 3.5.1.2 Greenhouse Gases

GHGs are present in the atmosphere naturally, released by natural sources, or formed from secondary reactions taking place in the atmosphere. The following gases are widely seen as the principal contributors to human-induced global climate change:<sup>1</sup>

- CO<sub>2</sub>
- Methane (CH<sub>4</sub>)
- Nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O)
- Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs)
- Perfluorocarbons (PFCs)
- Sulfur hexafluoride (SF<sub>6</sub>)

Over the last 200 years, human activities have caused substantial quantities of GHGs to be released into the atmosphere. These extra emissions increase GHG concentrations in the atmosphere and enhance the natural greenhouse effect, which scientists believe can cause global warming. While GHGs produced by human activities include naturally occurring GHGs (e.g., CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, and N<sub>2</sub>O), some gases (e.g., HFCs, PFCs, and SF<sub>6</sub>) are completely new to the atmosphere. Certain other gases (e.g., water vapor) are short lived in the atmosphere compared to these GHGs, which remain in the atmosphere for significant periods of time and contribute to climate change in the long term. Water vapor is generally excluded from the list of GHGs because it is short lived in the atmosphere and its atmospheric concentrations are largely determined by natural processes (e.g., oceanic evaporation). For the purposes of this PEIR, the term “GHGs” refers collectively to the six gases identified in the bulleted list provided above. The following discussion summarizes the characteristics of the six primary GHGs.

#### Carbon Dioxide

In the atmosphere, carbon generally exists in its oxidized form as CO<sub>2</sub>. Natural sources of CO<sub>2</sub> include the respiration (breathing) of humans, animals, and plants; volcanic outgassing; decomposition of organic matter; and evaporation from the oceans. Human-caused sources of CO<sub>2</sub> include the combustion of fossil fuels and wood, waste incineration, mineral production, and deforestation. Earth maintains a natural carbon balance, and when concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub> are upset, the system gradually returns to its natural state through natural processes. Natural changes to the carbon cycle work slowly, especially compared to the rapid rate at which humans are adding CO<sub>2</sub> to the atmosphere. Natural removal processes (e.g., photosynthesis by land- and ocean-dwelling plant species) cannot keep pace with this extra input of human-made CO<sub>2</sub>, and consequently, the gas is building up in the atmosphere. The concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere has risen approximately 30% since the late 1800s.

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<sup>1</sup> The GHGs listed are consistent with the definition in AB 32 (California Government Code section 38505), as discussed in this section.

## Methane

CH<sub>4</sub> is produced when organic matter decomposes in environments lacking sufficient oxygen. Natural sources of CH<sub>4</sub> include fires, geologic processes, and bacteria that produce CH<sub>4</sub> in a variety of settings (most notably wetlands). Anthropogenic sources include rice cultivation, livestock, landfills and waste treatment, biomass burning, and fossil fuel combustion (e.g., the burning of coal, oil, and natural gas). As with CO<sub>2</sub>, the major removal process of atmospheric CH<sub>4</sub> (a chemical breakdown in the atmosphere) cannot keep pace with source emissions, and CH<sub>4</sub> concentrations in the atmosphere are increasing.

## Nitrous Oxide

N<sub>2</sub>O is produced naturally by a variety of biological sources, particularly microbial action in soils and water. Tropical soils and oceans account for the majority of natural source emissions. N<sub>2</sub>O is also a product of the reaction that occurs between nitrogen and oxygen during fuel combustion. Both mobile and stationary combustion sources emit N<sub>2</sub>O. The quantity of N<sub>2</sub>O emitted varies according to the type of fuel, technology, and pollution control device used, as well as maintenance and operating practices. Agricultural soil management and fossil fuel combustion are the primary sources of human-generated N<sub>2</sub>O emissions in the state.

## Hydrofluorocarbons, Perfluorocarbons, and Sulfur Hexafluoride

HFCs are primarily used as substitutes for O<sub>3</sub>-depleting substances regulated under the Montreal Protocol.<sup>2</sup> PFCs and SF<sub>6</sub> are emitted from various industrial processes, including aluminum smelting, semiconductor manufacturing, electric power transmission and distribution, and magnesium casting. No aluminum or magnesium production occurs in the State of California; however, rapid growth in the semiconductor industry, which is active in the state, has led to greater use of PFCs. The Project would not include any components known to emit these three GHGs; therefore, these substances are not discussed further in this analysis.

## Global Warming Potential

The GHGs described previously vary considerably in terms of global warming potential (GWP), which is a concept developed to compare the ability of each GHG to trap heat in the atmosphere relative to another GHG. GWP is based on several factors, including the relative effectiveness of a GHG in absorbing infrared radiation and the length of time that the GHG remains in the atmosphere (referred to as “atmospheric lifetime”). The GWP of each GHG is measured relative to CO<sub>2</sub>, the most abundant GHG. The definition of GWP for a particular GHG is the ratio of heat trapped by one unit mass of the GHG to the ratio of heat trapped by one unit mass of CO<sub>2</sub> over a

<sup>2</sup> The Montreal Protocol is an international treaty that was approved on January 1, 1989, and was designated to protect the O<sub>3</sub> layer by phasing out the production of several groups of halogenated hydrocarbons that are believed to be responsible for O<sub>3</sub> depletion and are also potent GHGs.

specified time period. GHG emissions are typically measured in terms of metric tons<sup>3</sup> (MT) of CO<sub>2</sub>e. For example, N<sub>2</sub>O is 265 times more potent at contributing to global warming than CO<sub>2</sub>. Table 3.5-1, Global Warming Potential for Selected Greenhouse Gases, identifies the GWP for each relevant GHG.

**Table 3.5-1. Global Warming Potential for Selected Greenhouse Gases**

| Pollutant        | Atmospheric Lifetime (Years) | GWP (100-Year) <sup>2</sup> |
|------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| CO <sub>2</sub>  | ~100 <sup>1</sup>            | 1                           |
| CH <sub>4</sub>  | 12                           | 28                          |
| N <sub>2</sub> O | 121                          | 265                         |

**Source:** CAPCOA 2020. Consistent with CalEEMod, Version 2020.4.0.

**Notes:** CH<sub>4</sub> = methane; CO<sub>2</sub> = carbon dioxide; GWP = global warming potential; N<sub>2</sub>O = nitrous oxide

<sup>1</sup> CO<sub>2</sub> has a variable atmospheric lifetime and cannot be readily approximated as a single number.

<sup>2</sup> The warming effects over a 100-year period relative to other GHGs.

### 3.5.1.3 Emissions and Inventories

#### Global Emissions

Worldwide anthropogenic GHG emissions in 2010 were approximately 49,000 million metric tons (MMT) of CO<sub>2</sub>e, including ongoing emissions from industrial and agricultural sources and emissions from land use changes (e.g., deforestation, biomass decay). CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from fossil fuel use and industrial processes account for 65% of the total emissions of 49,000 MMT CO<sub>2</sub>e (which include land use changes), and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions account for 77% of total GHG emissions. CH<sub>4</sub> emissions account for 16% of total GHG emissions, and N<sub>2</sub>O emissions account for 6% of total GHG emissions (IPCC 2014).

#### United States Emissions

In 2019, the United States emitted approximately 6.6 billion MT CO<sub>2</sub>e. Total U.S. emissions increased by 1.8% from 1990 to 2019, and emissions decreased from 2018 to 2019 by 1.7%. A contributor to the decrease in total GHG emissions between 2018 and 2019 was a reduction in total energy use. The decrease in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions over time was a result of multiple factors, including substitution from coal to natural gas and other non-fossil energy sources in the electric power sector.

#### State of California Emissions

CARB is responsible for developing the state GHG Emission Inventory. This inventory estimates the amount of GHGs emitted to and removed from the atmosphere by human activities in the state and supports the AB 32 Climate Change Program. CARB's current GHG Emission Inventory covers the years 1990–2018 and is based on fuel use, equipment activity, industrial processes, and other relevant data (e.g., housing, landfill activity, and agricultural lands).

<sup>3</sup> A metric ton is equivalent to approximately 1.1 tons.

According to CARB emission inventory estimates, the state emitted approximately 425 MMT CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions in 2017. This is a decrease of five MMT CO<sub>2</sub>e from 2016 and a 14% decrease since 2004. Since the peak level in 2004, California’s GHG emissions have generally followed a decreasing trend. CARB estimates that transportation was the source of approximately 40% of the state’s GHG emissions in 2017, followed by industrial sources at 21% and electricity generation at 15%. The largest emissions category within the transportation sector is On-Road Transportation, which consists of passenger vehicles (cars, motorcycles, and light-duty trucks) and heavy-duty vehicles. The remaining sources of GHG emissions were residential and commercial activities at 10%, agriculture at 8%, high-GWP gases at 5%, and recycling and waste at 2%.

### City of Escondido

Preparation of the Escondido CAP included a community GHG emissions inventory to serve as the foundation for strategies and measures outlined in the CAP. Citywide activities in 2012 generated approximately 943,000 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e, summarized by source in Table 3.5-2, Global Warming Potential for Selected Greenhouse Gases. Table 3.5-2 also includes the City’s calculated emissions projections for 2020, including forecasted emissions assuming compliance with state legislative actions (789,000 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2020). The City’s projected emissions in 2020 were calculated to be below the City’s target of 4% below 2012 levels by 2020 (907,000 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e), consistent with state emissions reduction targets, outlined in Section 3.5.2, Regulatory Framework.

**Table 3.5-2. Global Warming Potential for Selected Greenhouse Gases**

| Emissions Category      | 2012 (MT CO <sub>2</sub> e) | Legislatively Adjusted 2020 (MT CO <sub>2</sub> e) <sup>1</sup> |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| On-Road Transportation  | 498,000                     | 430,000   |
| Electricity             | 256,000                     | 163,000   |
| Natural Gas             | 118,000                     | 123,000   |
| Off-Road Transportation | 24,000                      | 26,000  |
| Solid Waste             | 30,000                      | 30,000  |
| Water                   | 11,000                      | 11,000  |
| Wastewater              | 6,000                       | 6,000   |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>943,000</b>              | <b>789,000</b>  |

**Source:** City of Escondido 2021.

**Note:** MT CO<sub>2</sub>e = metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent

<sup>1</sup> The legislative actions assumed in this scenario include federal and state vehicle efficiency standards, California Renewables Portfolio Standards (RPS), California energy efficiency programs, and California solar policies and programs.

### 3.5.2 Regulatory Framework

This section describes the federal, state, and local regulatory framework adopted to address GHG emissions.

### 3.5.2.1 Federal

#### U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

The USEPA is responsible for implementing federal policy to address global climate change. In 2009, the USEPA issued a Final Rule for mandatory reporting of GHG emissions, which applies to fossil fuel and industrial gas suppliers, direct GHG emitters, and manufacturers of heavy-duty and off-road vehicles and requires annual reporting of emissions. This rule does not regulate the emission of GHGs; it only requires the monitoring and reporting of GHGs for those sources above certain thresholds.

#### Safer Affordable Fuel-Efficient Vehicles Part One: National Program

The Safer Affordable Fuel-Efficient (SAFE) Rule, adopted by the USEPA in September 2019, revokes California’s authority to set its own GHG emissions standards and set zero-emission vehicle mandates in California. The SAFE Rule affects California’s federally approved on-road mobile source emissions inventory model (Emission Factor (EMFAC)), which reflects California-specific driving and environmental conditions, fleet mix, and the impact of California’s unique mobile source regulations, such as the Low-Emission Vehicle (LEV) program, including the LEV II and LEV III standards; California inspection and maintenance programs; and California’s in-use diesel fleet rules.

### 3.5.2.2 State

#### Assembly Bill 32 and Senate Bill 32, California Global Warming Solutions Act

AB 32 requires CARB to reduce statewide GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. As part of this legislation, CARB was required to prepare a “Scoping Plan” that demonstrates how the state will achieve this goal. The first Scoping Plan was adopted in 2011 and describes local governments as “essential partners” in meeting the statewide goal, recommending a GHG reduction level 15% below 2005–2008 levels (depending on when a full emissions inventory is available) by 2020.

CARB released the 2017 Scoping Plan Update on January 20, 2017. The 2017 Scoping Plan Update provides strategies for achieving the 2030 target established by Executive Order (EO) B-30-15 and codified in SB 32 (40% below 1990 levels by 2030). The 2017 Scoping Plan Update recommends local plan-level GHG emissions reduction goals. CARB recommends that local governments aim to achieve emissions of no more than six MT CO<sub>2e</sub> per capita by 2030 and no more than two MT CO<sub>2e</sub> per capita by 2050.

#### Assembly Bill 341, Commercial Recycling

AB 341 sets a statewide goal of 75% recycling, composting, or source reduction of solid waste by the year 2020. As required by AB 341, the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) adopted the Mandatory Commercial Recycling Regulation on January 17,

2012. The regulation was approved by the Office of Administrative Law on May 7, 2012. It became effective immediately and clarified the responsibilities in implementing mandatory commercial recycling. The Mandatory Commercial Recycling Regulation focuses on increased commercial waste diversion as a method to reduce GHG emissions. The regulation is designed to achieve a five MMT CO<sub>2</sub> reduction in GHG emissions, which equates to roughly an additional two to three MT CO<sub>2</sub> of currently disposed commercial solid waste being recycled by 2020 and thereafter.

### **Assembly Bill 1279, California Climate Crisis Act**

AB 1279, the California Climate Crisis Act, enacted in September 2022, updates the goals of AB 32. The bill established a statewide goal to achieve net-zero GHG emissions by 2045 and achieve and maintain net-negative GHG emissions thereafter. Additionally, the bill established a specific target for statewide anthropogenic GHG emissions to be reduced to at least 85% below the 1990 levels by 2045.

### **Assembly Bill 1493, Clean Car Standards**

Also known as “Pavley I,” AB 1493 standards were the nation’s first GHG standards for automobiles. AB 1493 requires CARB to adopt vehicle standards that lower GHG emissions from new light-duty automobiles to the maximum extent feasible. In January 2012, CARB adopted the Advanced Clean Cars Program to achieve additional GHG emission reductions for passenger vehicles for model years 2017–2025. The program includes LEV regulations and zero-emission vehicle regulations. Together, the two standards increased average fuel economy to roughly 43 miles per gallon in 2020 (and more for years beyond 2020). However, the SAFE Vehicles Part One: National Program (SAFE Rule), adopted by the USEPA in September 2019 and detailed above, affects California’s federally approved on-road mobile source emissions standards. CARB prepared off-model adjustment factors for both on-road mobile source emissions inventory model (EMFAC) 2014 and EMFAC 2017 to account for the impacts of the SAFE Rule (CARB 2022).

The 1975 Warren-Alquist Act established the California Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission, now known as the California Energy Commission (CEC). The act established state policy to reduce wasteful, uneconomical, and unnecessary uses of energy by employing a range of measures. The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) regulates privately owned utilities in the energy, rail, telecommunications, and water fields.

### **Assembly Bill 1007, State Alternative Fuels Plan**

AB 1007 (Chapter 371, Statutes of 2005) required CEC to prepare a state plan to increase the use of alternative fuels in California. CEC prepared the State Alternative Fuels Plan (SAF Plan) in partnership with CARB and in consultation with other state, federal, and local agencies. The SAF Plan presents strategies and actions California must take to increase the use of alternative nonpetroleum fuels in a manner that minimizes the costs to California and maximizes the economic

benefits of in-state production. The SAF Plan assessed various alternative fuels and developed fuel portfolios to meet California's goals to reduce petroleum consumption, increase alternative fuel use, reduce GHG emissions, and increase in-state production of biofuels without causing a significant degradation of public health and environmental quality.

### **California Code of Regulations Title 24, Part 6**

California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 6 (California's Energy Efficiency Standards for Residential and Nonresidential Buildings), was established in 1978 to reduce California's energy consumption. The standards are updated periodically to allow consideration and possible incorporation of new energy efficiency technologies and methods. Although the standards were not originally intended to reduce GHG emissions, electricity production by fossil fuels and natural gas use result in GHG emissions, and energy-efficient buildings require less electricity and natural gas. Therefore, increased energy efficiency results in decreased GHG emissions.

The CEC adopted its 2008 Standards on April 23, 2008, in response to AB 32. The 2008 Standards were adopted to (1) provide California with an adequate, reasonably priced, and environmentally sound supply of energy; (2) pursue California energy policy, which states that energy efficiency is the resource of first choice for meeting California's energy needs; (3) meet the West Coast Governors' Global Warming Initiative commitment to include aggressive energy efficiency measures into updates of state building codes every three years; and (4) meet the requirements of EO B-18-12 and those in the Green Building Initiative to improve the energy efficiency of nonresidential buildings through aggressive standards. The latest update of the California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 6, which went into effect on January 1, 2020, will significantly increase the energy efficiency of new residential buildings.

### **CALGreen Building Code**

California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 11 (California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen)), was adopted in 2010 and went into effect on January 1, 2011. Further updates to CALGreen went into effect on January 1, 2017, and January 1, 2020. CALGreen is the first statewide mandatory green building code and significantly raises the minimum environmental standards for construction of new buildings in California. The mandatory provisions in CALGreen reduce the use of volatile organic compound-emitting materials, strengthen water conservation, and require construction waste recycling.

### **Executive Order B-30-15**

On April 29, 2015, Governor Jerry Brown announced through EO B-30-15 the following GHG emissions target:

- By 2030, California shall reduce GHG emissions to 40% below 1990 levels.



The emissions reduction target of 40% below 1990 levels by 2030 is an interim-year goal to make it possible to reach the ultimate goal of reducing emissions 80% under 1990 levels by 2050. The order directs CARB to provide a plan with specific regulations to reduce statewide sources of GHG emissions. EO B-30-15 does not include a specific guideline for local governments.

### **Executive Order N-79-20**

EO N-79-20, signed by Governor Gavin Newsom on September 23, 2020, directs the state to require that, by 2035, all new cars and passenger trucks sold in California be zero-emission vehicles to reduce transportation GHG emissions, the primary source of emissions in the state. Following the order, CARB will develop regulations to mandate that 100% of in-state sales of new passenger cars and trucks are zero emission by 2035 and that all operations of medium- and heavy-duty vehicles shall be 100% zero emission by 2045 where feasible.

### **Executive Order S-06-06**

EO S-06-06, signed on April 25, 2006, by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, establishes targets for the use and production of biofuels and biopower, and directs state agencies to work together to advance biomass programs in California while providing environmental protection and mitigation. The order establishes the following targets to increase the production and use of bioenergy, including ethanol and biodiesel fuels made from renewable resources: produce a minimum of 20% of its biofuels within California by 2010, 40% by 2020, and 75% by 2050. The order also calls for the state to meet a target for use of biomass electricity. The 2011 Bioenergy Action Plan identifies those barriers and recommends actions to address them so that the state can meet its clean energy, waste reduction, and climate protection goals. The 2012 Bioenergy Action Plan updates the 2011 plan and provides a more detailed action plan to achieve the following goals:

- Increase environmentally and economically sustainable energy production from organic waste;
- Encourage development of diverse bioenergy technologies that increase local electricity generation, combined heat and power facilities, renewable natural gas, and renewable liquid fuels for transportation and fuel cell applications;
- Create jobs and stimulate economic development, especially in rural regions of the state; and
- Reduce fire danger, improve air and water quality, and reduce waste.

As of 2016, 2.7% of the total electricity system power in California was derived from biomass.

### **Executive Order S-01-07, Low Carbon Fuel Standard**

In 2007, Governor Schwarzenegger signed EO S-01-07, which mandates (1) that a statewide goal be established to reduce the carbon intensity of California's transportation fuels by at least 10% by 2020, and (2) that a low carbon fuel standard (LCFS) for transportation fuels be established in

California. CARB developed the LCFS regulation pursuant to the state’s authority under AB 32 and the federal Clean Air Act and adopted it in 2009.

### **Executive Order S-3-05**

On June 1, 2005, Governor Schwarzenegger announced, through EO S-3-05, the following GHG emissions targets:

- By 2010, California shall reduce GHG emissions to 2000 levels.
- By 2020, California shall reduce GHG emissions to 1990 levels.
- By 2050, California shall reduce GHG emissions to 80% below 1990 levels.

EO S-3-05 also laid out state agencies’ responsibilities for implementation and reporting on progress toward these targets.

### **Senate Bill 97**

SB 97, enacted in 2007, amends the CEQA statute to clearly establish that GHG emissions and the effects of GHG emissions are appropriate subjects for CEQA analysis. The legislation directed the California Governor’s Office of Planning and Research to develop draft CEQA Guidelines “for the mitigation of GHG emissions or the effects of GHG emissions” and directed the resources agency to certify and adopt the CEQA Guidelines. CEQA Guidelines section 15183.5, Tiering and Streamlining the Analysis of GHG Emissions, was added as part of the CEQA Guidelines amendments that became effective in 2010 and describes the criteria needed in a GHG reduction plan that would allow for tiering and streamlining of CEQA analysis for development projects.

### **Senate Bill 350, California Renewables Portfolio Standards Program**

The California RPS program was established in 2002 under SB 1078 and accelerated in 2006 under SB 107 by requiring that 20% of electricity retail sales be served by renewable energy sources by 2010. Subsequent recommendations in California energy policy reports advocated a goal of 33% by 2020, and on November 17, 2008, Governor Schwarzenegger signed EO S-14-08, requiring electricity retailers to serve 33% of their load with renewable energy by 2020. In April 2011, SB X1-2 codified EO S-14-08, setting the new RPS targets at 20% by the end of 2013, 25% by the end of 2016, and 33% by the end of 2020 for electricity retailers. Most recently, Governor Brown signed SB 350 in October 2015, which extended the RPS target by requiring retail sellers to procure 50% of their electricity from renewable energy resources by 2030.

### **Senate Bill 375, Sustainable Communities Strategy**

SB 375 was adopted in 2008 and provided for a new planning process that coordinates land use planning, Regional Transportation Plans, and funding priorities to help California meet the GHG reduction goals established in AB 32. SB 375 required Regional Transportation Plans, developed by Metropolitan Planning Organizations, to incorporate a Sustainable Communities Strategy in their

Regional Transportation Plans. The goal of the Sustainable Communities Strategy is to reduce regional VMT through land use planning and consequent transportation patterns. SB 375 also included provisions for streamlined CEQA review for some infill projects, such as transit-oriented development.

### **3.5.2.3 Local**

#### **City of Escondido Climate Action Plan**

The City adopted an updated CAP in March 2021 (City of Escondido 2021). The Escondido CAP provides an update to the inventories, projections, and GHG reduction measures identified in the 2013 Escondido CAP. The Escondido CAP establishes an implementation plan for the City to achieve target Citywide GHG reductions of 4% below 2012 levels by 2020, 42% below 2012 levels by 2030, and 52% below 2012 levels by 2035. The Escondido CAP states that the City will meet its 2020 emissions reduction target from the 2012 baseline under business-as-usual conditions, based on existing activities and trends. However, to meet the City's 2030 and 2035 reduction targets, additional actions beyond those implemented at the state and federal level are required. To meet the City's 2030 and 2035 targets, the Escondido CAP identifies strategies and measures to reduce GHG emissions Citywide from a variety of emissions categories. These categories include increased alternative transportation, reduced VMT, increased energy and water efficiency, increased renewable energy generation, reduced solid waste disposal, and increased carbon sequestration and land conservation.

#### **City of Escondido General Plan**

The Escondido General Plan includes various goals and policies designed to help result in a reduction in GHG emissions. Climate change and GHG reduction policies are addressed in multiple chapters of the Escondido General Plan.

The goals and policies for reduction of GHG emissions in the Escondido General Plan are as follows (City of Escondido 2012a).

#### ***Land Use and Community Form Element***

- **Community Character (Goal 1):** A community composed of distinct residential neighborhoods, business districts, and employment centers, whose urban form reflects the natural environmental setting.
  - **Community Character Policy 1.8:** Require development projects to locate and design buildings, construct energy and water efficient infrastructure, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, enhance community livability and economic vitality, and implement other practices contributing to sustainable resources.
  - **Community Character Policy 1.9:** Promote development in downtown, at transit stations, and other key districts to accommodate a mix of land uses and

configure uses to promote walkability, bicycling, and transit uses, reducing the need for the automobile.

- **Neighborhood Maintenance and Preservation (Goal 4):** Residential neighborhoods that are well-maintained and enduring, and continue to be great places to live for multiple generations.
  - **Neighborhood Maintenance and Preservation Policy 4.3:** Integrate pedestrian-friendly features, promote walkability, and work with residents to enhance existing neighborhood character and aesthetics.
- **Mixed Use Overlay Zones (Goal 7):** Districts containing a mix of uses enabling residents to live close to their jobs, shopping, entertainment, and recreation, reducing the need to use the automobile and promoting walking and healthy lifestyles.
  - **Mixed Use Overlay Policy 7.1:** Designate areas for the development of mixed-use projects in a pedestrian-friendly environment integrating housing with retail, office, and service uses (childcare, health, etc.) consistent with the General Plan’s vision and long-term growth needs.

#### ***Mobility and Infrastructure Element***

- **Regional Transportation Planning (Goal 1):** An accessible, safe, convenient, and integrated multi-modal network that connects all users and moves goods and people within the community and region efficiently.
- **Pedestrian Network Policy 3.2:** Develop and manage pedestrian facilities to maintain an acceptable Level of Service as defined in the Pedestrian Master Plan.
- **Pedestrian Network Policy 3.3:** Maintain a pedestrian environment that is accessible to all and that is safe, attractive, and encourages walking.
- **Bicycle Network Policy 4.2:** Develop and manage bicycle facilities to maintain an acceptable Level of Service as defined in the Bicycle Master Plan.
- **Bicycle Network Policy 4.3:** Promote bicycling as a common mode of transportation and recreation to help reduce traffic congestion and improve public health.
- **Water System (Goal 2):** Adequate and sustainable infrastructure and water supply to serve a community that values and conserves water.
  - **Water System Policy 12.12:** Require new development to incorporate water conservation techniques into building and site design incorporating such elements as water efficient fixtures (e.g., low flow shower heads); drought-tolerant landscape, permeable hardscapes, and on-site stormwater capture and re-use facilities.
- **Wastewater System (Goal 3):** Provision of adequate and sustainable wastewater infrastructure to serve residents, businesses and property.

- **Wastewater System Policy 13.11:** Explore alternative wastewater technologies and best practices that reduce the amount of wastewater requiring treatment. Require new development to implement appropriate and feasible systems.
- **Storm Drainage (Goal 4):** Provision of adequate and sustainable infra-structure that is environmentally sensitive to serve residents, businesses, and property.
  - **Storm Drainage Policy 14.4:** Require new development to create a mechanism to finance and fund ongoing maintenance of stormwater facilities.
  - **Storm Drainage Policy 14.5:** Require new development to prepare drainage studies and improvement plans that demonstrate no net increase in stormwater runoff and compliance with adopted stormwater plans.
- **Energy (Goal 6):** An increased use of renewable energy sources, and improved energy conservation and efficiency.
  - **Energy Policy 16.4:** Encourage site and building design that reduces exterior heat gain and heat island effects (tree planting, reflective paving materials, covered parking, cool roofs, etc.).
  - **Energy Policy 16.5:** Require, to the extent feasible, building orientations and landscaping that use natural lighting to reduce energy demands.

#### ***Resource Conservation Element***

- **Air Quality and Climate Protection (Goal 7):** Improved air quality in the city and the region to maintain the community’s health and reduce green-house gas emissions that contribute to climate change.
  - **Air Quality and Climate Protection Policy 7.3:** Require that new development projects incorporate feasible measures that reduce construction and operational emissions.

### **3.5.3 Thresholds of Significance**

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Project would have a significant impact on GHG emissions if it would:

- **Threshold 1:** Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment.
- **Threshold 2:** Conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases.

The Escondido CAP is a qualified GHG emissions reduction plan adopted in accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15183.5. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines sections 15064(h)(3), 15130(d), and 15183(b), a project’s incremental contribution to a cumulative GHG emissions effect may be

determined not to be cumulatively considerable if it complies with the requirements of a CAP. Projects that are consistent with a General Plan and implement applicable CAP GHG reduction measures may incorporate by reference a CAP's cumulative GHG analysis. Conversely, projects that are consistent with a General Plan but do not implement CAP GHG reduction measures, as well as General Plan Amendments and annexations that increase emissions beyond CAP projections, would require a project-level GHG analysis to determine if a project would result in significant GHG emissions. Because the Escondido CAP is an adopted, qualified GHG reduction plan, consistency with the CAP is the applicable threshold for determining the significance of the Project's potential GHG emissions.

### **3.5.4 Impacts and Mitigation**

The following sections address various potential impacts relating to GHG emissions that could result from implementation of the Project.

#### **3.5.4.1 Threshold 1: Generation of Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

##### **Impact Analysis**

Calculated GHG emissions from implementation of the Project are reported below, followed by a comparison of the Project to the Escondido CAP to determine the significance of projected emissions.

##### ***Project Emissions Inventory***

Future development consistent with the Project would have the potential to result in GHG emissions from construction and operation, as detailed below.

##### **Construction**

Project construction emissions were estimated using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod), version 2020.4.0. The Project is a land use plan; it would not propose any specific construction projects, and the details of future construction under the Project are currently unknown. Therefore, annual construction emissions were estimated based on assumptions provided in the certified 2012 General Plan Update, Downtown Specific Plan Update, and CAP PEIR (City of Escondido 2012b). It was assumed that an equal amount of development would occur each year between the 2020 baseline and 2035 buildout year and that approximately 75% of existing development in the EVSP Area would be demolished over the same period, which is higher than what was assumed in the Escondido General Plan Update, Downtown Specific Plan Update, and CAP. This is because the existing area is largely built out, and redevelopment would be necessary to accommodate the planned growth. Detailed assumptions and modeling datasheets are provided in Appendix E. Estimated annual construction emissions are provided in Table 3.5-3, Estimated Project-Related Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

**Table 3.5-3. Estimated Project-Related Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

| Emission Source   | Emissions (MT CO <sub>2</sub> e) |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <b>Annual Construction Emissions</b>                    |                                  |
| Demolition  | 51                               |
| Site Preparation  | 18                               |
| Grading   | 84                               |
| Building Construction                                   | 572                              |
| Paving  | 21                               |
| Architectural Coating                                   | 68                               |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>814</b>                       |
| <b>Operation Emissions</b>                              |                                  |
| Area  | 565                              |
| Electricity   | 11,877                           |
| Natural Gas   | 3,811                            |
| Mobile  | 35,690                           |
| Waste   | 4,466                            |
| Water   | 3,662                            |
| <b>Total Annual Operation Emissions</b>                 | <b>60,071</b>                    |
| <b>Total Annual Existing Emissions</b>                  | <b>38,727</b>                    |
| <b>Net Increase in GHG Emissions from EVSP Buildout</b> | <b>21,344</b>                    |

**Source:** Appendix E (output data provided in Appendix E).

**Notes:** GHG = greenhouse gas; EVSP = East Valley Specific Plan; MT CO<sub>2</sub>e = metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent

**Operation**

During operation, buildout under the EVSP would result in area and indirect emissions sources from electricity and natural gas consumption, water and wastewater transport, and solid waste generation. GHG emissions from electricity consumed on site by the Project would be generated off site by fuel combustion at the electricity provider. GHG emissions from water and wastewater transport would also be indirect emissions resulting from the energy required to transport water from its source, and the energy required to treat wastewater and transport it to its treated discharge point. Future development would also generate mobile source emissions from motor vehicle trips. The various operational GHG emissions associated with the land uses proposed by the Project are shown in Table 3.5-3. Estimated GHG emissions from the existing land use mix in the EVSP are also provided in Table 3.5-3 to show the estimated net increase in emissions from existing conditions.

Annual operational emissions from existing and buildout conditions are based on CalEEMod default utility usage for the existing and proposed land use types and VMT data from the Transportation Analysis (Appendix G). The change in Citywide retail VMT attributable to the Project is modeled for project retail buildout. The project-generated retail VMT was proportionately reduced to represent VMT from existing retail development. According to the Transportation Analysis (Appendix G), the Project is anticipated to accommodate local serving

retail projects, which would result in reduced VMT compared to typical retail development. Detailed assumptions and modeling datasheets are provided in Appendix E.

As shown in Table 3.5-3, estimated buildout of the EVSP would result in a net increase in GHG emissions compared to existing conditions. However, development in the EVSP Area was planned in the Escondido General Plan, which provides the basis for growth forecasts in the Escondido CAP. As a designated Target Area, the EVSP Area was identified in the Escondido General Plan Land Use and Community Form Element as an area to promote development (and redevelopment), enhance job growth, and increase housing options to accommodate the City's share of projected regional growth. As stated in the Escondido General Plan Land Use and Community Form Element, "area plans," in concert with zoning, define and guide future development in the target areas. The EVSP would provide the necessary area plan and zoning changes to specifically implement the Escondido General Plan vision for the East Valley Parkway Target Area. The vision for the Escondido General Plan Land Use and Community Form Element includes increased mixed-use development, improved recreational spaces, and implementation of smart growth principles. Specific land use designations include Office, General Commercial, and Mixed-Use Overlay that would accommodate a minimum of 30 units per acre. Consistent with this vision, the EVSP would designate the EVSP Area for General Commercial, Mixed-Use, Open Space, and Urban Residential development. The EVSP would not increase the planned overall development capacity of the City. Therefore, the EVSP would be consistent with the Escondido General Plan.

The Project is a land use plan and would not propose specific development projects. The EVSP would include sustainability goals specific to future development (Sustainable and Equitable Development Goal 1, Site and Building Design Goal 2, and Mobility Goals 1–3) that include access to clean energy, increased green spaces, and encourage multimodal transportation. Individual future projects would be required to demonstrate consistency with the EVSP and the Escondido CAP as part of the project approval process. Consistency with the CAP is demonstrated at the project level through completion of the CAP Consistency Checklist. The checklist evaluates if a project adequately implements GHG reduction measures from the Escondido CAP and determines if development demonstrates consistency with the CAP's assumptions for implementation. Projects that are consistent with the Escondido CAP, as determined through the use of the CAP Consistency Checklist, may rely on the Escondido CAP for the cumulative impact analysis of GHG emissions. Projects that are not consistent with the Escondido CAP must prepare a comprehensive project-specific analysis of GHG emissions, including quantification of existing and projected GHG emissions, incorporation of the measures in the CAP Consistency Checklist to the extent applicable, and demonstration of consistency with an applicable VMT threshold.

Therefore, because the Project would be consistent with the growth assumptions in the Escondido General Plan and would not increase the planned development capacity of the City, and because the City has adopted a qualified CAP with consistency requirements in place for future



development under the Project, implementation of the Project would not result in significant GHG emissions. Additionally, the CAP demonstrates how the City would achieve its fair share of emissions reductions to meet statewide emissions reduction targets. Through CAP consistency, the Project would be consistent with statewide reduction goals established in AB 32 and SB 32.

### **Significance of Impact**

The Project would be consistent with the growth assumptions of the CAP, and future development would be required to demonstrate CAP consistency. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

### **Mitigation Measures**

No mitigation measures are required.

### **Significance After Mitigation**

Not applicable.

#### **3.5.4.2 Threshold 2: Applicable Plan**

### **Impact Analysis**

The applicable plan adopted to reduce GHG emissions is the Escondido CAP. The Escondido CAP demonstrates the City's consistency with statewide emissions reduction targets. As detailed under Threshold 1, the Project would be consistent with the growth assumptions of the CAP, and future development would be required to demonstrate CAP consistency. Therefore, implementation of the Project would be consistent with the City's CAP, and impacts would be less than significant.

### **Significance of Impact**

The Project would be consistent with the applicable plan adopted to reduce GHG emissions. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

### **Mitigation Measures**

No mitigation measures are required.

### **Significance After Mitigation**

Not applicable.

#### **3.5.5 Cumulative Impacts and Mitigation**

The following sections address various potential cumulative impacts relating to GHG that could result from implementation of the Project.

### **3.5.5.1 Cumulative Threshold 1: Generation of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Cumulative Threshold 2: Applicable Plan**

The geographic scope of consideration for GHG emissions is on a global scale because such emissions contribute, on a cumulative basis, to global climate change. Given the nature of environmental consequences from GHGs and global climate change, CEQA requires that lead agencies evaluate the cumulative impacts of GHGs, even relatively small additions, on a global basis. By nature, GHG evaluations are a cumulative study. As described Section 3.5.4, Impacts and Mitigation, implementation of the Project would be consistent with the growth assumptions of the Escondido CAP, and future development would be required to demonstrate CAP consistency. Therefore, development under the Project would implement its fair share of GHG emissions reductions, and the Project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution of GHG emissions.

### **3.5.6 Conclusion**

Implementation of the Project would have the potential to result in a net increase in GHG emissions. However, the City has an adopted, qualified CAP in place, which would serve as the City's applicable plan to achieve the City's GHG emissions reduction targets. The Escondido CAP includes a required CAP Consistency Checklist for future development to demonstrate consistency with the Escondido CAP. Steps in the checklist include land use consistency with the Escondido General Plan and screening out certain types of projects expected to emit fewer than 500 MT of GHG emissions per year. Consistency measures include electric vehicle charging stations, transportation demand management, bicycle infrastructure, and landscape water consumption with the goal of reducing GHG emissions. The Project would be consistent with the growth assumptions of the Escondido CAP, and future development consistent with the EVSP would be required to demonstrate consistency with the CAP. Therefore, implementation of the Project would not result in significant GHG emissions, and no mitigation measures are required.

## 3.6 Noise

This section evaluates the potential for impacts to noise and vibration resulting from implementation of the EVSP. The analysis in this section is based on the Noise Technical Memorandum prepared by Harris & Associates (2023) (Appendix F) for the Project. This evaluation includes an assessment of the direct, indirect, short-term, long-term, and cumulative noise and vibration effects of the Project.

### 3.6.1 Existing Conditions

This section describes the existing conditions for the Project as they relate to noise.

#### 3.6.1.1 Fundamentals of Environmental Noise

##### Noise and Vibration Terminology

Noise is generally defined as unwanted or objectionable sound. The effects of noise on people can include general annoyance, interference with speech communication, sleep disturbance, and in the extreme cases, hearing impairment. The unit of measurement used to describe a noise level is the decibel (dB); decibels are measured on a logarithmic scale that quantifies sound intensity in a manner similar to the Richter scale used for earthquake magnitudes. Thus, a doubling of the energy of a noise source, such as doubling of traffic volume, would increase the noise level by three dB; a halving of the energy would result in a three dB decrease.

The human ear is not equally sensitive to all frequencies within the sound spectrum. Therefore, a method called “A weighting” is used to filter noise frequencies that are not audible to the human ear. The A scale approximates the frequency response of the average young ear when listening to most ordinary everyday sounds. When people make relative judgments of the loudness or annoyance of a sound, their judgments correlate well with the A-scale levels of those sounds. Therefore, the “A-weighted” noise scale is used for measurements and standards involving the human perception of noise. In this section of this PEIR, all noise levels are A-weighted and “dBA” is understood to identify the A-weighted dB. Table 3.6-1, Typical A-Weighted Noise Levels, provides typical noise levels associated with common activities.

Caltrans defines noise as sound that is loud, unpleasant, unexpected, or undesired. Further, for the purposes of noise analysis, noise only exists if a source, path, and receiver are present. Sound pressure waves must be produced by a source and transmitted through a medium, such as air. The sound must be perceived by, registered by, or affect a receptor, such as an ear or noise monitoring device (Caltrans 2013a).

Sound pressure levels are quantified using a logarithmic ratio of actual sound pressures to a reference pressure squared, called bels. A bel is typically divided into tenths, or decibels (dB). Sound pressure alone is not a reliable indicator of loudness because frequency (or pitch) also

affects how receptors respond to the sound. To account for the pitch of sounds and the corresponding sensitivity of human hearing to them, the raw sound pressure level is adjusted with a frequency-dependent A-weighting scale that is stated in units of decibels (dBA) (Caltrans 2013a). Typical A-weighted noise levels are listed in Table 3.6-1.

**Table 3.6-1. Typical A-Weighted Noise Levels**

| Common Outdoor Activities                    | Noise Level (dBA) | Common Indoor Activities                    |
|--|-------------------|---|
|  | — 110 —           | Rock band                                   |
| Jet flyover at 1,000 feet                    |                   |   |
|  | — 100 —           |   |
| Gas lawn mower at 3 feet                     |                   |   |
|  | — 90 —            |   |
| Diesel truck at 50 feet at 50 miles per hour |                   | Food blender at 3 feet                      |
|  | — 80 —            | Garbage disposal at 3 feet                  |
| Noisy urban area, daytime                    |                   |   |
| Gas lawn mower, 100 feet                     | — 70 —            | Vacuum cleaner at 10 feet                   |
| Commercial area                              |                   | Normal speech at 3 feet                     |
| Heavy traffic at 300 feet                    | — 60 —            |   |
|  |                   | Large business office                       |
| Quiet urban daytime                          | — 50 —            | Dishwasher next room                        |
|  |                   |   |
| Quiet urban nighttime                        | — 40 —            | Theater, large conference room (background) |
| Quiet suburban nighttime                     |                   |   |
|  | — 30 —            | Library                                     |
| Quiet rural nighttime                        |                   | Bedroom at night                            |
|  | — 20 —            |   |
|  |                   | Broadcast/recording studio                  |
|  | — 10 —            |   |
|  |                   |   |
| Lowest threshold of human hearing            | — 0 —             | Lowest threshold of human hearing           |

**Source:** Caltrans 2013a.

**Note:** dBA = A-weighted decibel

## Noise Descriptors

A receptor's response to a given noise may vary depending on the sound level, duration of exposure, character of the noise sources, the time of day during which the noise is experienced, and the activity affected by the noise. Activities most affected by noise include rest, relaxation, recreation, study, and communications, such as quiet conversation or telephone calls. In consideration of these factors, different measures of noise exposure have been developed to quantify the extent of the effects from a variety of noise levels. For example, some measures

consider the 24-hour noise environment of a location by using a weighted average that penalizes noise levels during normal relaxation and sleep hours. Other measures consider an average noise level over a period of time that includes ambient noise and a steady-state noise source for a given period of time within the averaging period (Caltrans 2013a). The indices for measuring community noise levels that are used in this report are defined below:

**Leq**, the equivalent energy level, provides an average acoustical or sound energy content of noise, measured during a prescribed period, such as one minute, 15 minutes, one hour, or eight hours. The sound level may not be constant over the measured time period, but the average decibel sound level, given as dBA Leq, contains an equal amount of energy as the fluctuating sound level.

**CNEL**, the community noise equivalent level, is the average equivalent A-weighted sound level over a 24-hour period. This measurement applies weights to noise levels during evening and nighttime hours to compensate for the increased disturbance response of people at those times. CNEL is the equivalent sound level for a 24-hour period with a +five dBA weighting applied to all sound occurring between 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. and a +10 dBA weighting applied to all sound occurring between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m.

**Ldn**, the day-night noise level, is a 24-hour Leq, except that the nighttime hours (10 p.m. to 7 a.m.) are assessed a 10 dBA penalty. This penalty attempts to account for the fact that nighttime noise levels are potentially more disturbing than equal daytime noise levels.

The decibel level of a sound decreases (or attenuates) as the distance from the source of that sound increases. For a single point source, such as a piece of mechanical equipment, the sound level normally decreases by approximately six dBA for each doubling of distance from the source. Sound that originates from a linear, or “line” source such as vehicular traffic, attenuates by approximately three dBA per doubling of distance. Other contributing factors that affect sound reception include ground absorption, topography that provides a natural barrier, meteorological conditions, or the presence of human-made obstacles such as buildings and sound barriers (Caltrans 2013a).

### **Human Perception of Noise**

Reaction to a given sound varies depending on acoustical characteristics of the source and the environment of the receptor. The A-scale deemphasizes low-frequency sounds because humans are more sensitive to high-frequency sounds that are more likely to cause hearing damage. People tend to compare an intruding noise to existing background noise levels. If a new noise is considerably louder or noticeable above existing levels, it is generally considered objectionable. The activity that the receptor is engaged in also affects response. For example, the same noise source, such as constant freeway traffic, may be more objectionable to people sleeping than to

workers in a factory. A three dBA change is the smallest increment that is perceptible by most receivers, and a five dBA change in community noise level is clearly noticeable. Generally, one to two dBA changes are not detectable, except under controlled laboratory conditions. A sound that is 10 dBA greater than the reference sound is typically perceived as twice as loud (Caltrans 2013a).

### 3.6.1.2 Fundamentals of Environmental Vibration

Vibration is defined as dynamic excitation of an elastic system, such as the ground or a structure, which results in oscillatory movement of the system (Caltrans 2013b). Typical human-made causes of earthborne vibration include trains and construction activities such as blasting, pile-driving, and operation of heavy earthmoving equipment. The resulting waves transmitted through solid material are referred to as structureborne or groundborne vibration. Vibration energy spreads out as it travels through the ground, causing the vibration amplitude to decrease with distance away from the source. The vibration levels inside a building depend on the vibration energy that reaches the foundation and the characteristics of the structure that affect propagation of the vibration through it. A heavier building will typically experience lower vibration levels. The most common impact associated with vibration is annoyance resulting from the effects of vibration, such as building movement, rattling of windows, shaking of items on shelves or walls, and rumbling sounds. In more extreme cases, building damage may occur. Because the effects of vibration elicit a greater response than the vibration itself, vibration is typically only perceptible to people inside buildings (FTA 2018).

Vibration levels are typically expressed in terms of the peak particle velocity (PPV) and root mean square (rms) amplitude, both in inches per second (in/sec). PPV is most appropriate for evaluating building damage potential. Caltrans estimates that continuous vibration levels of less than 0.08 PPV and single-event vibration levels of less than 0.12 PPV do not result in damage to even the most fragile historic buildings (Caltrans 2013b). The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has identified a maximum PPV of 0.2 in/sec for fragile buildings and 0.12 in/sec for extremely fragile historic buildings (FTA 2018).

PPV does not account for human response to vibration. The rms amplitude is used to represent average vibration amplitude, which accounts for the time it takes for the human body to respond to vibration signals. The rms amplitude is also given in decibel notation, referenced as vibration decibels (VdB), which serves to compress the range of numbers required to describe vibration relative to human response. The rumbling sound caused by the vibration of room surfaces is called groundborne noise. Like airborne noise, groundborne noise is measured in dBA. The sound level accompanying vibration is generally 25 to 40 dBA lower than the vibration velocity level in VdB. Due to its low-frequency components, groundborne noise sounds louder than broadband noise with the same noise level. Typical vibration levels from various sources are shown in Table 3.6-2, Typical Levels of Groundborne Vibration. As shown in this table, the background vibration velocity level in residential areas is usually around 50 VdB, which is below the 65 VdB threshold of human perception (FTA 2018). The same human reaction corresponds to a given vibration velocity level and its resulting noise level;

therefore, for simplicity, this analysis refers only to a source's VdB to describe potential human response to groundborne vibration and noise.

**Table 3.6-2. Typical Levels of Groundborne Vibration**

| Vibration Level  |               |  |   |
|------------------|---------------|--|---|
| VdB <sup>1</sup> | In/sec RMS    | Typical Sources (50 feet from source)                                | Human/Structural Response   |
| 100              | 0.01          | Blasting from construction projects                                  | Threshold, minor cosmetic damage to fragile buildings                               |
| 90–100           | 0.003–0.01    | Bulldozers and other heavy tracked construction equipment            | Difficulty with tasks such as reading   |
| 80–90            | 0.001–0.003   | Commuter rail and rapid transit, upper range                         | Residential annoyance, infrequent events (e.g., commuter rail)                      |
| 70–80            | 0.0003–0.001  | Typical commuter rail, bus or truck over bump, typical rapid transit | Residential annoyance, frequent events (e.g., rapid transit)                        |
| 60–70            | 0.0001–0.0003 | Bus or truck, typical  | Limit for vibration-sensitive equipment. Approximate threshold for human perception |
| 50               | 0.00003       | Typical background vibration   | Not detectable  |

Source: FTA 2018.

Notes: rms = root mean square; VdB = vibration decibel

<sup>1</sup> RMS vibration velocity level in VdB relative to 10–6 in/sec.

The general human response to different groundborne vibration velocity levels is described in Table 3.6-3, Human Response to Different Levels of Groundborne Vibration.

**Table 3.6-3. Human Response to Different Levels of Groundborne Vibration**

| Vibration Velocity Level | Noise Level   |               | Human Reaction  |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|---|
|                          | Low Frequency | Mid Frequency |   |
| 65 VdB                   | 25 dBA        | 40 dBA        | Approximate threshold of perception for many people. Mid-frequency sound may disturb sleep.   |
| 75 VdB                   | 35 dBA        | 50 dBA        | Approximate dividing line between barely perceptible and distinctly perceptible. Many people find that transportation-related vibration at this level is annoying. Mid-frequency noise disturbs sleep and is considered annoying in more quiet areas. |
| 85 VdB                   | 45 dBA        | 60 dBA        | Vibration acceptable only if there are an infrequent number of events per day. Low-frequency noise disturbs sleep and mid-frequency noise can be annoying to daytime NSLUs, such as schools.  |

Source: FTA 2018.

Note: dBA = A-weighted decibel; NSLU = noise-sensitive land use; VdB = vibration decibel

### 3.6.1.3 Existing Noise Environment

#### Vehicle Noise

Vehicle noise is the main source of ambient noise in the City, including the EVSP Area. The noise contours modeled in the certified 2012 General Plan Update, Downtown Specific Plan Update, and CAP PEIR (City of Escondido 2012a) identify noise levels up to 70 dBA CNEL along Valley

Parkway in the EVSP Area and noise levels from 60 to 65 dBA CNEL on several EVSP Area roadways, including Washington Avenue, Grand Avenue, Ash Street/San Pasqual Valley Road, Date Street, and Fig Street. As described below and in Table 3.6-6, Escondido General Plan Community Protection Element Community Noise Exposure Levels (dBA CNEL), these noise levels are generally normally/conditionally compatible with noise-sensitive land uses (NSLUs).

Table 3.6-4, Existing Roadway Noise Levels, shows the existing noise levels generated by the roadways surrounding the EVSP Area. Existing noise levels were calculated using the methods described in the Section 3.6.4.1.

**Table 3.6-4. Existing Roadway Noise Levels**

| Roadway                 | Segment                             | Existing ADT | Noise Level at 50 Feet from Roadway Centerline (dBA CNEL) |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|---|
| Mission Avenue          | Broadway to Hickory Street          | 23,500       | 70.2  |
| Valley Parkway          | Hickory Street to Fig Street        | 23,680       | 68.8  |
|                         | Fig Street to Date Street           | 19,600       | 68.3  |
|                         | Date Street to Ash Street           | 25,360       | 69.4  |
| Hickory Street          | Washington Avenue to Valley Parkway | 4,810        | 58.2  |
| Fig Street              | Mission Avenue to Washington Avenue | 5,200        | 58.5  |
|                         | Washington Avenue to Valley Parkway | 7,950        | 60.3  |
| Date Street             | Valley Parkway to Grand Avenue      | 3,570        | 58.3  |
|                         | Grand Avenue to 2nd Avenue          | 9,800        | 64.5  |
| Ash Street              | Mission Avenue to Washington Avenue | 20,660       | 68.2  |
| San Pasqual Valley Road | Grand Avenue to 2nd Avenue          | 23,400       | 69.1  |

**Source:** Appendix F.

**Notes:** ADT = average daily traffic; CNEL = community noise equivalent level; dBA = A-weighted decibel

### **Airports**

The nearest airport to the EVSP Area is Ramona Municipal Airport, approximately 10.2 miles southeast of the EVSP Area. The next closest airport is McClellan-Palomar Airport approximately 11 miles west of the EVSP Area. According to the Ramona Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP) (SDALUC 2008) and the McClellan-Palomar ALUCP (SDALUC 2011), the EVSP Area is not within noise contours for either airport.

### **Operational Noise Sources**

The EVSP Area is mainly built up, and existing uses consist primarily of strip commercial, big-box retailers, and small medical and professional office uses. Surrounding the EVSP Area is the urbanized core consisting commercial and residential uses. Typical noise from these land uses includes heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) equipment, commercial truck deliveries at loading docks, and nuisance noise from parking lots.



### **Noise-Sensitive Land Uses**

NSLUs include noise receptors (receivers) where an excessive amount of noise would interfere with normal activities. The Escondido General Plan Community Protection Element lists residential development, care facilities, schools, churches, transient lodging, hospitals, healthcare facilities, libraries, museums, cultural facilities, golf courses, and passive recreational sites as sensitive receptors. Community noise sources, defined as “common indoor and outdoor noise sources,” are also identified in the Escondido General Plan Community Protection Element. Commercial, general office, and industrial land uses are not considered NSLUs. Community noise sources of note include the City’s roadway network (including I-15 and SR-78), NCTD’s SPRINTER commuter rail service, two firing ranges, and helicopter flights to and from Palomar Medical Center Escondido (City of Escondido 2012b).

## **3.6.2 Regulatory Framework**

This section describes the federal, state, and local regulatory framework adopted to address noise.

### **3.6.2.1 Federal**

#### **Federal Aviation Administration Standards**

Enforced by the Federal Aviation Administration, Code of Federal Regulations, Title 14, Part 150, prescribes the procedures, standards, and methods governing the development, submission, and review of airport noise exposure maps and airport noise compatibility programs, including the process for evaluating and approving or disapproving those programs. Title 14 also identifies those land uses that are normally compatible with various levels of exposure to noise by individuals. The Federal Aviation Administration considers residential land uses to be compatible with exterior noise levels at or less than 65 dBA Ldn.

#### **Federal Transit Administration Standards**

Although the FTA standards are intended for federally funded mass transit projects, the impact assessment procedures and criteria included in the FTA Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual (FTA 2018) are routinely used for projects proposed by local jurisdictions. The manual includes criteria for assessing the impacts of groundborne vibration, presented in Table 3.6-5, Federal Transit Administration Groundborne Vibration Impact Criteria.

**Table 3.6-5. Federal Transit Administration Groundborne Vibration Impact Criteria**

| Land Use Category  | Impact Levels (VdB)          |                                |                                |
|--|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
|  | Frequent Events <sup>1</sup> | Occasional Events <sup>2</sup> | Infrequent Events <sup>3</sup> |
| Category 1: Buildings where vibration would interfere with interior operations | 65                           | 65                             | 65                             |
| Category 2: Residences and buildings where people normally sleep               | 72                           | 75                             | 80                             |
| Category 3: Institutional land uses with primarily daytime uses                | 75                           | 78                             | 83                             |

**Source:** FTA 2018.

**Notes:** VdB = vibration decibel

Vibration levels are measured in or near the vibration-sensitive use.

<sup>1</sup> "Frequent Events" are defined as more than 70 vibration events of the same source per day.

<sup>2</sup> "Occasional Events" are defined as between 30 and 70 vibration events of the same source per day.

<sup>3</sup> "Infrequent Events" are defined as fewer than 30 vibration events of the same source per day.

### 3.6.2.2 State

#### California Noise Control Act of 1973

Sections 46000 through 46080 of the California Health and Safety Code, known as the California Noise Control Act of 1973, find that excessive noise is a serious hazard to the public health and welfare and that exposure to certain levels of noise can result in physiological, psychological, and economic damage. The California Noise Control Act declares that the State of California has a responsibility to protect the health and welfare of its citizens by the control, prevention, and abatement of noise. It is the policy of the state to provide an environment for all Californians free from noise that jeopardizes their health or welfare. Section 46050.1 of the act mandates development guidelines for the preparation and content of General Plan Noise Elements.

### 3.6.2.3 Local

#### Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans

ALUCPs are plans that guide property owners and local jurisdictions in determining what types of proposed new land uses are appropriate around airports. They are intended to protect the safety of people, property and aircraft on the ground and in the air in the vicinity of an airport. ALUCPs are based on a defined area around an airport known as the Airport Influence Area. ALUCPs include policies that address noise compatibility issues associated with airports and their respective Airport Influence Areas. The San Diego County Regional Airport Authority adopted an amended ALUCP for the Ramona Airport in 2008.

#### City of Escondido General Plan

The existing Escondido General Plan Community Protection Element establishes noise and land use compatibility standards and outlines goals and policies to achieve these standards. New projects in the City are required to meet the noise exposure compatibility guidelines (reproduced

in Table 3.6-6) to determine the compatibility of land uses when evaluating proposed development projects. A land use in an area identified as “normally acceptable” indicates that standard construction methods attenuate exterior noise to an acceptable indoor noise level and that people can conduct outdoor activities with minimal noise interference. Land uses that fall into the “conditionally acceptable” noise environment should prepare an acoustical study that considers the type of noise source, the sensitivity of the noise receptor, and the degree to which the noise source has the potential to interfere with sleep, speech, or other activities characteristic of the land use. For land uses where the exterior noise level falls within the “conditionally unacceptable” range, new construction or development should generally be discouraged. If new construction or development does proceed, a detailed analysis of noise reduction requirements must be made with noise insulation features included in the design. For land uses where the exterior noise levels fall within the “clearly unacceptable” range, new construction generally should not be undertaken. Acceptability ranges for community land uses are provided in Table 3.6-6.

**Table 3.6-6. Escondido General Plan Community Protection Element  
Community Noise Exposure Levels (dBA CNEL)**

| Land Use Category  | Normally Acceptable | Conditionally Acceptable | Normally Unacceptable | Clearly Unacceptable |
|--|---------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Residential – single-family, duplex, mobile home           | 50–60               | 60–70                    | 70–75                 | 75–85                |
| Residential – multi-family, residential mixed use          | 50–65               | 60–70                    | 70–75                 | 75–85                |
| Transient lodging, motels, hotels                          | 50–65               | 60–70                    | 70–80                 | 80–85                |
| Schools, libraries, churches, hospitals, nursing homes     | 50–65               | 60–70                    | 70–80                 | 80–85                |
| Auditoriums, concert halls, amphitheaters                  | NA                  | 50–70                    | 65–85                 | NA                   |
| Sports arenas, outdoor spectator sports                    | NA                  | 50–75                    | 70–85                 | NA                   |
| Playgrounds, parks   | 50–70               | NA                       | 67–75                 | 73–85                |
| Golf courses, riding stables, water recreation, cemeteries | 50–75               | NA                       | 70–80                 | 80–85                |
| Office buildings, business commercial and professional     | 50–70               | 67–73                    | 75–85                 | NA                   |
| Industrial, manufacturing, utilities, agriculture          | 50–75               | 70–80                    | 80–85                 | NA                   |

**Source:** City of Escondido 2012b.

**Notes:** CNEL = community noise equivalent level; dBA = A-weighted decibel; NA = not applicable

When preparing acoustical studies pursuant to the Escondido General Plan, noise measurements in residential areas should generally be applied at 10 feet from the backyard property line (per Figure VI-13 of the Escondido General Plan Community Protection Element). The outdoor standard should not normally be applied to balconies or patios associated with residential uses. The Escondido General Plan Community Protection Element (Figure VI-13) states that noise impacts of projects on existing land uses should be evaluated in terms of potential for adverse community response based on a significant increase in existing noise levels. For example, if an area is currently below the maximum normally acceptable noise level, an increase in noise up to the maximum allowable level should not necessarily be allowed. Projects increasing noise levels by five dB or greater should be

considered as generating a significant impact and require mitigation to reduce noise levels. Goals and policies applicable to the Project and relevant to this section are listed below.

### ***Community Protection Element***

- **Noise (Goal 5):** Protection of the community from excessive noise exposure.
  - **Noise Policy 5.1:** Require development to meet acceptable exterior noise level standards as established in Figure VI-2 [of the Escondido General Plan (Table 3.6-6)], and use the future noise contour map (Figure VI-17 [of the Escondido General Plan]) as a guide for evaluating the compatibility of new noise sensitive uses with projected noise levels.
  - **Noise Policy 5.2:** Apply a CNEL of 60 dB or less for single family and 65 dB or less for multi-family as goals where outdoor use is a major consideration (back yards and single family housing developments, and recreation areas in multifamily housing developments) as discussed in Figure VI-13 [of the Escondido General Plan], and recognize that such levels may not necessarily be achievable in all residential areas.
  - **Noise Policy 5.3:** Require noise attenuation for outdoor spaces in all developments where projected incremental exterior noise levels exceed those shown in Figure VI-14 [of the General Plan (Table 3.6-7, Exterior Incremental Noise Impact Standards for Noise-Sensitive Land Uses (dBA))].
  - **Noise Policy 5.4:** Require noise attenuation for new noise-sensitive uses which include residential, daycare facilities, schools, churches, transient lodging, hotels, motels, hospitals, healthcare facilities, and libraries if the projected interior noise standard of 45 dBA CNEL is exceeded.
  - **Noise Policy 5.5:** Require construction projects and new development to ensure acceptable vibration levels at nearby noise-sensitive uses based on Federal Transit Administrator criteria.
  - **Noise Policy 5.6:** Require the preparation of noise studies, as deemed necessary by the Planning Department, to analyze potential noise impacts associated with new development which could significantly alter existing noise levels in accordance with provisions outlined in Figure VI-14 [of the Escondido General Plan (Table 3.6-7)].
  - **Noise Policy 5.7:** Encourage use of site and building design, noise barriers, and construction methods as outlined in Figure VI-15 [of the Escondido General Plan (Table 3.6-11, Escondido General Plan Community Protection Element Noise Reduction Strategies)] to minimize impacts on and from new development.
  - **Noise Policy 5.8:** Require that mixed use and multi-family residential developments demonstrate that the design of the structure will adequately

isolate noise between adjacent uses (orientation, window insulation, separation of common walls, floors, and ceilings, etc.).

- **Noise Policy 5.9:** Require new mixed use developments to locate loading areas, parking lots, driveways, trash enclosures, mechanical equipment, and other noise sources away from the residential portion of the development, when physically feasible. Use construction standards to reduce noise between uses.
- **Noise Policy 5.10:** Require development projects that are subject to discretionary approval to assess potential construction noise impacts on nearby sensitive uses and to minimize impacts on these uses, to the extent feasible.
- **Noise Policy 5.11:** Limit direct access from individual properties along Major Roads and Prime Arterials in residential areas in order to minimize gaps in noise barrier sound walls.
- **Noise Policy 5.12:** Limit “through truck traffic” to designated routes to minimize noise impacts to residential neighborhoods and other noise-sensitive uses.
- **Noise Policy 5.13:** Limit the hours of operation for parks and active recreation uses in residential areas to minimize disturbance to residents.

**Table 3.6-7. Exterior Incremental Noise Impact Standards for Noise-Sensitive Land Uses (dBA)**

| Residences and Buildings Where People Normally Sleep <sup>1</sup> |                           | Institutional Land Uses with Primarily Daytime and Evening Uses <sup>2</sup> |                           |
|---|---------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Existing CNEL   | Allowable Noise Increment | Existing Peak-Hour Leq   | Allowable Noise Increment |
| 45  | 8                         | 45   | 12                        |
| 50  | 5                         | 50   | 9                         |
| 55  | 3                         | 55   | 6                         |
| 60  | 2                         | 60   | 5                         |
| 65  | 1                         | 65   | 3                         |
| 70  | 1                         | 70   | 3                         |
| 75  | 0                         | 75   | 1                         |
| 80  | 0                         | 80   | 0                         |

**Source:** City of Escondido 2012b.

**Notes:** CNEL = community noise equivalent level; dBA = A-weighted decibel; Leq = equivalent continuous sound level

Noise levels are measured at the property line of the noise-sensitive land use.

<sup>1</sup> This category includes residences, hospitals, and hotels where a nighttime sensitivity to noise is assumed to be of utmost importance.

<sup>2</sup> This category includes schools, libraries, theaters, and churches where it is important to avoid interference with activities such as speech, meditation, and concentration on reading material.

### **City of Escondido Municipal Code, Chapter 17, Article 12, Noise Abatement and Control (Noise Ordinance)**

The Escondido Noise Ordinance establishes prohibitions for disturbing, excessive, or offensive noise and provides sound level limits to secure and promote the public health, comfort, safety, peace, and quiet for its residents. Table 3.6-8, City of Escondido Exterior Sound Limit Levels,

shows the allowable noise levels at any point on or beyond the boundaries of the property on which the sound is produced and corresponding times of day for each zoning designation. The noise standards apply to each property or portion of property substantially used for a particular type of land use reasonably similar to the land use types shown in Table 3.6-8. Where two or more dissimilar land uses occur on a single property, the more restrictive noise limits apply. Environmental noise is measured by the Leq for the hours as specified in Table 3.6-8. If the noise is continuous, the Leq for any hour will be represented by any lesser time period within that hour. If the noise is intermittent, the Leq for any hour may be represented by a time period typical of the operating cycle, but the measurement period must be 15 minutes or longer. If the measured ambient level exceeds the permissible noise level, the allowable noise exposure standard is the ambient noise level.

**Table 3.6-8. City of Escondido Exterior Sound Limit Levels**

| Zone or Land Use Designation           | Allowable Time    | Applicable Limit One-Hour Average Sound Level (A – weighted Decibels) |
|--|-------------------|---|
| Residential zones                      | 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. | 50  |
|  | 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. | 45  |
| Multi-residential zones                | 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. | 55  |
|  | 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. | 50  |
| Commercial zones                       | 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. | 60  |
|  | 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. | 55  |
| Light industrial/Industrial park zones | Anytime           | 70  |
| General Industrial zones               | Anytime           | 75  |

Source: City of Escondido 2021.

**Section 17-229(c) (Corrections to Exterior Noise Level Limits)**

Section 17-229(c), Corrections to Exterior Noise Level Limits, of the Escondido Noise Ordinance includes the following regulations:

- a) If the noise is continuous, the Leq for any hour will be represented by any lesser time period within that hour. Noise measurements of a few minutes only will thus suffice to define the noise level.
- b) If the noise is intermittent, the Leq for any hour may be represented by a time period typical of the operating cycle. Measurement should be made of a representative number of noisy/quiet periods. A measurement period of not less than 15 minutes is, however, strongly recommended when dealing with intermittent noise.
- c) In the event the alleged offensive noise, as judged by the enforcement officer, contains a steady, audible sound such as a whine, screech or hum, or contains a repetitive impulsive noise such as hammering or riveting, the standard limits set forth in Table 17-229 [Table 3.6-8, City of Escondido Exterior Sound Limit Levels] shall be reduced by 10 dB or to the ambient noise level when such noises are not occurring.

- d) If the measured ambient level exceeds that permissible in [Table 3.6-8], the allowable noise exposure standard shall be the ambient noise level. The ambient level shall be measured when the alleged noise violations source is not operating.
- e) The sound level limit at a location on a boundary between two land use classifications is the limit applicable to the receiving land use; provided, however, that the one-hour average sound level limit applicable to extractive industries including, but not limited to, borrow pits and mines, shall be 75 dB at the property line regardless of the zone where the extractive industry is actually located.

Noise restrictions are listed in Sections 17-230 through 17-241 of the Escondido Noise Ordinance, such as specific regulations pertaining to motor vehicles and burglar alarms. Additional sections of the Escondido Noise Ordinance applicable to this analysis are listed below.

***Section 17-234 (Construction Equipment)***

Except for emergency work, the following applies to all construction equipment operating in the City:

- a) It shall be unlawful for any person, including the City of Escondido, to operate construction equipment at any construction site, except on Monday through Friday during a week between the hours of 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. and on Saturdays between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., and provided that the operation of such construction equipment complies with the requirements of subsection (c) of this section.
- b) It shall be unlawful for any person, including the City of Escondido, to operate construction equipment at any construction site on Sundays and on days designated by the President, Governor or City Council as public holidays.
- c) No construction equipment or combination of equipment, regardless of age or date of acquisition, shall be operated so as to cause noise in excess of a one-hour average sound level limit of 75 dB at any time, unless a variance has been obtained in advance from the City Manager.

***Section 17-237 (Landscape Equipment)***

It shall be unlawful for any person, including the City, to use any motorized landscape equipment, including but not limited to power blowers and vacuums, which causes a disturbing, excessive, or offensive noise as defined under Section 17-227(k) of the Escondido Noise Ordinance. Disturbing, excessive, or offensive noise refers to any sound or noise exceeding the noise standards established in the Escondido Noise Ordinance.

**Section 17-238 (Grading)**

It shall be unlawful for any person, including the City, to do any authorized grading at any construction site, except on Monday through Friday between the hours of 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. and, provided a variance has been obtained in advance from the City Manager, on Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For the purpose of this section, “grading” shall include but not be limited to compacting, drilling, rock crushing or splitting, bulldozing, clearing, dredging, digging, filling, and blasting.

In addition, any equipment used for grading shall not be operated to cause noise in excess of a one-hour sound level limit of 75 dB at any time when measured at or within the property lines of any property that is developed and used in whole or in part for residential purposes, unless a variance has been obtained in advance from the City Manager.

**Section 17-240 (General Noise Regulations)**

Section 17-240 includes additional general noise regulations. This section states that it is unlawful for any person to make, continue, or cause to be made or continued, any disturbing, excessive, or offensive noise that causes discomfort or annoyance to reasonable people of normal sensitivity. Noises declared to be disturbing, excessive, and offensive include stereo equipment, animal noise, and loading and unloading of vehicles that disturbs neighboring receptors. This section also establishes the following requirements for pile-driving activities: No person shall operate between the hours of 6 p.m. and 7 a.m. on weekdays or on Saturdays, Sundays, or any legal holidays any pile driver, pneumatic hammer, derrick, or other similar appliance, the use of which is attended by loud or unusual noise, unless a variance has been obtained in advance from the City Manager.

**City of Escondido Municipal Code, Chapter 33, Article 47, Environmental Quality Regulations**

The EQRs implement CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines by applying the provisions and procedures contained in CEQA to development projects proposed in the City. Section (a)(2) pertains to noise impacts, specifically noise impacts related to the widening of Escondido General Plan Mobility and Infrastructure Element streets. According to this section, the following incremental noise increases are generally not considered significant:

- a) Short or long-term increases, regardless of the extent, that do not result in noise increases in excess of General Plan standards.
- b) Short or long-term increases that result in a three dBA or less incremental increase in noise beyond the General Plan’s noise standards.



### 3.6.3 Thresholds of Significance

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Project would have a significant impact on noise if it would:

- **Threshold 1:** Generate a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies.
- **Threshold 2:** Generate excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels.
- **Threshold 3:** For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or 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, expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels.

### 3.6.4 Impacts and Mitigation

The following sections address various potential impacts relating to noise that could result from implementation of the Project.

#### 3.6.4.1 Threshold 1: Exceedance of Noise Standards

##### Impact Analysis

Potential impacts related to excessive noise levels from construction and operation of future development proposed through implementation of the EVSP are discussed below.

##### ***Construction Noise***

Construction noise associated with future development within the EVSP Area would be temporary and vary depending on the nature of the activities being performed. Noise generated would primarily be associated with the operation of off-road equipment for on-site construction activities and construction vehicle traffic on area roadways. Construction noise typically occurs intermittently and varies depending on the nature or phase of construction (e.g., land clearing, grading, excavation, paving). The magnitude of the impact depends on the type of construction activity, equipment, duration of the construction phase, distance between the noise source and receiver, and intervening structures. As shown in Table 3.6-9, Typical Noise Levels for Construction Equipment, sound levels from typical construction equipment range from 74 to 85 dBA Leq at 50 feet from the source (FHWA 2008). Noise from construction equipment generally exhibits point source acoustical characteristics. As defined previously, a point source sound decays at a rate of six dBA per doubling of distance from the source.

**Table 3.6-9. Typical Noise Levels for Construction Equipment**

| Construction Equipment | Typical Noise Level at 50 Feet (dBA) |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Air Compressor         | 77.7                                 |
| Backhoe                | 77.6                                 |
| Concrete Mixer Truck   | 78.8                                 |
| Crane                  | 80.6                                 |
| Dozer                  | 81.7                                 |
| Dump Truck             | 76.5                                 |
| Excavator              | 80.7                                 |
| Generator              | 80.6                                 |
| Grader                 | 85                                   |
| Loader                 | 79.1                                 |
| Paver                  | 77.2                                 |
| Roller                 | 80                                   |
| Scraper                | 83.6                                 |
| Tractor                | 84                                   |
| Welder                 | 74                                   |

**Source:** FHWA 2008.

**Notes:** dBA = A-weighted decibel

No specific development is proposed at this time; thus, construction phasing and equipment parameters are not available for future development under the EVSP. However, typical construction activities that are anticipated to occur in association with the development of future land uses and infrastructure include demolition; grading and site preparation; utilities installation; surface improvements, including paving and landscaping; building construction; and external/internal building work. Construction of any off-site improvements could require vegetation clearing, underground utility installation, and paving. Standard equipment commonly used for construction projects include dozers, loaders, graders, backhoes, scrapers, and miscellaneous trucks. As stated previously, sound levels from typical construction equipment have the potential to reach 85 dBA Leq.

The Escondido Noise Ordinance establishes construction time of day restrictions and noise level limits. The ordinance limits construction activities to Monday through Friday between the hours of 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. and on Saturdays between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Additionally, no construction equipment or combination of equipment, regardless of age or date of acquisition, shall be operated to cause noise in excess of a one-hour average sound level limit of 75 dB at any time, unless a variance has been obtained in advance from the City Manager.

Construction from development of the land uses accommodated by the Project is subject to the Escondido Noise Ordinance limits, which restricts the hours of construction activity and includes a noise level limit to minimize disturbance from construction noise. Therefore, with City enforcement and compliance with the Escondido Noise Ordinance, construction noise impacts under the EVSP would be less than significant.

### ***Operational Noise***

Implementation of the EVSP would accommodate a range of land uses that have the potential to generate noise that may affect noise-sensitive receptors. These land uses include residential development, commercial and office development, mixed-use development, civic and public development, and parks.

### **Residential Development**

New residential development of up to approximately 5,500 dwelling units, primarily consisting of higher density multi-family residences, would be accommodated under the EVSP. Noise generated from residential uses is generally described as “nuisance noise.” Nuisance noise is defined as intermittent or temporary neighborhood noise from sources such as amplified music, barking dogs, and landscape maintenance equipment that may be disturbing to other residents. Nuisance noise impacts are more likely to occur in more densely developed areas where residences are closer together and where neighbors are more likely to hear a neighbor’s dog or music. The Escondido Noise Ordinance prohibits nuisance noise from exceeding the noise level limits at any given time. Compliance with the Escondido Noise Ordinance limits exposure to excessive nuisance noise. Additionally, nuisance noises are different from each other in kind, duration, and location. Therefore, because the overall effects are separate and, in most cases, do not affect the receptors at the same time, noise from residential development would not combine or exceed the Escondido Noise Ordinance limits. Therefore, nuisance noise in residential neighborhoods would not result in a significant impact.

### **Commercial and Office Development**

Commercial and office noise sources would be similar to existing conditions with implementation of the Project because these land uses currently exist in the City’s urbanized core. The future mix of retail and office uses is currently unknown, along with the specific noise-producing equipment associated with each use. The noise level generated by commercial uses on site would vary depending on the specific types of commercial uses that would occupy available space. Variables such as land use type, size of equipment, location and orientation of equipment, number and location of loading docks, and parking areas are currently unknown. Therefore, it is not possible to determine the level of noise impact of individual commercial uses at specific locations at this time. Thus, the analysis focuses on typical noise produced from commercial development, including HVAC equipment, commercial truck deliveries at loading docks, and parking lots.

The specifications and locations of the HVAC systems that would be installed at commercial or mixed-use buildings are unknown at this time. Therefore, for the purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that the HVAC systems of a mixed-use commercial and residential project would be typical of a community-serving retail and office building. Typical HVAC systems, if unshielded, have the potential to emit continuous noise levels of up to 60 dBA CNEL at a distance of 200 feet from the source (City of Escondido 2012b). Areas zoned for commercial and office uses are subject to an hourly noise level limit of 60 dBA during the day and 55 dBA at night as stated in the Escondido Noise Ordinance. Future commercial and office development with HVAC systems would be required to install acoustical shielding to meet the Escondido Noise Ordinance hourly noise level limit standards. HVAC shielding or enclosures can achieve reductions of at least 15 dBA at the source and reduce typical noise to within noise ordinance limits (Sonic-Shield 2021). Therefore, impacts would be less than significant due to compliance with the noise limits outlined in the Escondido Noise Ordinance.

In addition to HVAC systems, commercial land uses would also have the potential to generate noise from truck deliveries, such as engines idling and beeping from back up warning signals at commercial loading docks. Truck trips to the EVSP Area would involve deliveries of supplies and products to commercial uses. State law (13 CCR 2485) currently prohibits heavy-duty diesel delivery trucks from idling more than five minutes. Therefore, noise from idling would be limited to five minutes during truck deliveries. Beeping from trucks would not be continuous and would only occur while the truck is backing up. Given the intermittent and short duration of noise from individual truck deliveries, truck deliveries would not be a source of excessive ambient noise. Due to compliance with state law and the noise limits outlined in the Escondido Noise Ordinance, impacts would be less than significant.

Noise sources from parking lots would include car alarms, door slams, radios, and tire squeals. These sources typically range from approximately 51 to 66 dBA at a distance of 10 feet (Gordon Bricken & Associates 2012) and are generally short term and intermittent. Parking lots have the potential to generate noise levels that exceed the 60 dBA one-hour average sound level limit established in the Escondido Noise Ordinance, depending on the location of the source; however, noise sources from parking lots will be different from each other in kind, duration, and location. Additionally, the EVSP would include Design Guidelines that reduce large parking lots, which would reduce potential impacts to any one receptor. Therefore, the overall effects would be separate and, in most cases, would not affect noise-sensitive receptors at the same time, and noise generated from parking lots would be less than significant.

### **Mixed-Use Development**

The EVSP would include a new Mixed-Use land use designation, which consists of multi-family residential with commercial and/or office uses in a horizontal or vertical arrangement. Mixed-use is intended along major thoroughfares, proximate to shopping centers, entertainment, community facilities, and employment opportunities. As discussed previously, commercial development

adjacent to or within the same property as multi-family residences would be required to comply with the stricter hourly noise level limit for multi-family residential use. Noise sources within future mixed-use development would be similar to commercial and office development discussed previously and would include noise from HVAC systems, truck deliveries, and parking lots. Noise generated from deliveries and parking lot sources would be intermittent and not necessarily occur at the same time. Noise from HVAC equipment would be restricted by the noise level limits outlined in the Escondido Noise Ordinance. Restaurants and bars may include entertainment such as live or amplified music; however, similar to HVAC equipment, operation would be subject to the noise level limits at affected receptors outlined in the Escondido Noise Ordinance. Therefore, with required compliance with the Escondido Noise Ordinance, impacts would be less than significant.

### **Civic and Public Development**

The EVSP would accommodate approximately 123,000 square feet of community services or civic and public land uses, which include libraries, fire protection, police protection, schools, government facilities, and childcare facilities, and would include parking lot noise, children at play, landscape maintenance, school bells, and public address systems. Libraries and other civic uses are not typical noise sources except from associated parking lots. Schools and childcare facilities primarily include noise from parking lots, the bell system, and children at play during breaks. Similar to nuisance noises in residential neighborhoods and from commercial and office development, noise sources from these land uses would be intermittent and different from each other in kind, duration, and location so that the overall effects would be separate and, in most cases, would not affect the same noise-sensitive receptors at the same time. Therefore, in compliance with the Escondido Noise Ordinance, nuisance noise generated by civic and public land uses would be less than significant.

### **Parks**

The EVSP would allow up to 25 acres of parks in the Park Overlay Zone. This could include active and passive parks, such as pocket parks, neighborhood parks, linear parks, and public outdoor spaces. It would also include land to protect, maintain, and enhance the community's natural resources and include detention basins and creek corridors. Recreational activity participants using the parks would be expected to generate a range of noise levels typical of recreational activities. Active uses such as playgrounds and sports fields typically generate incidental recreational noise such as cheering for sports activities or children at play. Passive recreational activities such as walking, reading, and dining in open turf and picnic areas typically generate lower noise levels compared to active sports play. Similar to nuisance noises in residential neighborhoods from commercial and office development, noise sources from these land uses would be intermittent and different from each other in kind, duration, and location, so that the overall effects would be separate and, in most cases, would not affect the same noise-sensitive receptors at the same time. Future EVSP park and recreational uses may result in some nuisance noise but would be subject to the Escondido Noise Ordinance, which sets restrictions for disturbing, excessive, or offensive noises. Therefore, in compliance with

the Escondido Noise Ordinance and consistent with the conclusions of the certified 2012 General Plan Update, Downtown Specific Plan Update, and CAP PEIR (City of Escondido 2012a), nuisance noise generated by park and recreational land uses would be less than significant.

***Permanent Increases in Traffic Noise Levels from Project Operation***

The following analysis summarizes the results of the Noise Technical Memorandum (Appendix F) regarding the potential for the Project to permanently increase ambient noise levels as a result of increased traffic noise.

Implementation of the Project would result in a significant direct impact if it would result in an increase in vehicle noise levels that would exceed the incremental noise impact standards listed in Table 3.6-7 compared to noise levels without project implementation or result in the development of new sensitive receptors in areas exposed to noise levels in excess of the compatibility standards listed in Table 3.6-6.

The following includes an analysis of increases in vehicle noise that may result from project implementation, followed by analysis of the potential for new sensitive receptors to be exposed to incompatible noise levels.

**Permanent Increase in Vehicle Noise**

The potential for implementation of the Project to permanently increase ambient noise levels as a result of increased traffic was assessed using standard noise modeling equations adapted from the Federal Highway Administration noise prediction model. Model output is provided in Appendix F. The modeling calculations take into account the posted vehicle speed, median width, average daily trip volume, and estimated vehicle mix. Traffic volumes and roadway characteristics with buildout of the Project were obtained from Linscott, Law & Greenspan, Engineers (LLG) (Appendix G), and modeling conducted for the certified 2012 General Plan Update, Downtown Specific Plan Update, and CAP PEIR (City of Escondido 2012a). Noise levels were calculated at 50 feet from the centerline of each roadway segment. Generally, noise from heavily traveled roadways experience a decrease of approximately three dBA for every doubling of distance. The actual sound level at any receptor location depends on such factors as the source-to-receptor distance and the presence of intervening structures, barriers, vegetation, and topography; therefore, the result of the calculations is the worst-case scenario.

The 12 roadway segments included in the traffic analysis study area that would experience the greatest increase in vehicle trips as a result of project implementation (increase of 3,700 average daily trips or more) are modeled to represent the potential changes in traffic noise conditions. Therefore, consistent with the traffic analysis, the significance of project direct impacts on ambient noise levels is evaluated based on a comparison of future (2035) noise levels with and without project implementation. The analysis also assumes implementation of the roadway classifications in the Escondido General Plan Mobility and Infrastructure Element with or without project

implementation. For additional detail, refer to the Noise Technical Memorandum (Appendix F) and Transportation Analysis (Appendix G).

Table 3.6-10, Future (Year 2035) Traffic Noise Levels With and Without Project Implementation, provides existing noise levels and future increases in traffic with implementation of the Project on the 12 representative roadway segments. As shown in Table 3.6-10, implementation of the Project would result in a direct noise impact to two segments of Valley Parkway and one segment of Date Street.

Implementation of the Project would result in permanent increases in noise levels, including direct impacts on Valley Parkway and Date Street. Future development would be required to evaluate potential project impacts to ambient noise levels and implement noise attenuation to the extent feasible in compliance with Escondido General Plan Community Protection Element Noise Policies 5.3 and 5.6. As evaluated below, future noise levels with project implementation would generally be within the conditionally acceptable noise compatibility range for sensitive land uses, as identified in Table 3.6-6, that can be attenuated with standard building construction. However, consistent with the findings of the certified 2012 General Plan Update, Downtown Specific Plan Update, and CAP PEIR (City of Escondido 2012a), development associated with the Project contributes to future regional noise increases associated with roadway traffic. It is anticipated that Escondido General Plan standards and policies would not be sufficient to reduce impacts to a less than significant level because project-level attenuation, such as noise barriers, window or other building upgrades, or changes to roadway design or speed, may not be available in all cases. Implementation of General Plan policies reduce impacts related to permanent increases in noise level but not necessarily to a less than significant level. Therefore, implementation of the Project would result in direct impacts related to permanent increases in vehicle noise.

**Table 3.6-10. Future (Year 2035) Traffic Noise Levels With and Without Project Implementation**

| Roadway              | Segment                             | Future Noise Level (dBA CNEL) | Allowable Increase (dBA CNEL) | Future + Project (dBA CNEL) | Increase in Noise Level | Significant Impact? |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Mission Avenue       | Broadway to North Hickory Street    | 71                            | 1                             | 72                          | +1                      | No                  |
| Valley Parkway       | <b>Hickory Street to Fig Street</b> | <b>67</b>                     | <b>1</b>                      | <b>69</b>                   | <b>+2</b>               | <b>Yes</b>          |
|                      | <b>Fig Street to Date Street</b>    | <b>68</b>                     | <b>1</b>                      | <b>70</b>                   | <b>+2</b>               | <b>Yes</b>          |
|                      | Date Street to Ash Street           | 69                            | 1                             | 70                          | +1                      | No                  |
| North Hickory Street | Washington Avenue to Valley Parkway | 61                            | 2                             | 62                          | +1                      | No                  |
| Fig Street           | Mission Avenue to Washington Avenue | 64                            | 2                             | 66                          | +2                      | No                  |
|                      | Washington Avenue to Valley Parkway | 63                            | 2                             | 65                          | +2                      | No                  |

**Table 3.6-10. Future (Year 2035) Traffic Noise Levels With and Without Project Implementation**

| Roadway                 | Segment                             | Future Noise Level (dBA CNEL) | Allowable Increase (dBA CNEL) | Future + Project (dBA CNEL) | Increase in Noise Level | Significant Impact? |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Date Street             | Valley Parkway to Grand Avenue      | 61                            | 2                             | 65                          | +4                      | Yes                 |
|                         | Grand Avenue to East 2nd Avenue     | 66                            | 1                             | 67                          | +1                      | No                  |
| Ash Street              | Mission Avenue to Washington Avenue | 68                            | 1                             | 69                          | +1                      | No                  |
|                         | Washington Avenue to Valley Parkway | 69                            | 1                             | 70                          | +1                      | No                  |
| San Pasqual Valley Road | Grand Avenue to East 2nd Avenue     | 71                            | 1                             | 71                          | +0                      | No                  |

**Source:** Appendix F.

**Notes:** dBA = A-weighted decibel; CNEL = community noise equivalent level

#### Noise Incompatibilities with New Sensitive Receptors

In addition to the potential increase in vehicle noise as a result of future development, implementation of the Project would have the potential to result in the placement of new sensitive receptors in areas that would be exposed to vehicle noise levels in excess of the City's noise and land use compatibility standards. Development under the EVSP would increase residential density along the traffic analysis study area roadway segments. As shown in Table 3.6-10, vehicle noise would generally be within the conditionally acceptable noise level range of 60 to 70 dBA CNEL at 50 feet from roadway centerlines under existing and future conditions, with two exceptions: Mission Avenue and San Pasqual Valley Road. The portion of Mission Avenue that would exceed 70 dBA CNEL under future conditions is not in the EVSP Area, and the Project would not increase residential density on this segment. The segment of San Pasqual Valley Road from Grand Avenue to East 2nd Avenue is partially within the EVSP Area. However, this area is currently developed with residential uses and includes a Park Overlay Zone that will likely decrease residential density adjacent to this roadway segment. Conventional construction methods, such as walls, insulation, and window design consistent with current building codes, would generally be sufficient to reduce noise exposure to an acceptable level.

Development proposed under the EVSP would comply with Escondido General Plan Community Protection Element Noise Policies 5.1 and 5.4, provided in Section 3.6.2, Regulatory Framework, which require proposed new sensitive receptors to include a project site-specific evaluation of potential noise exposure and installation of noise attenuation if the new receptors will be in an area where interior noise levels may exceed 45 dBA CNEL. Escondido General Plan Community Protection Element Noise Policy 5.7 recommends that the noise reduction strategies identified in Table 3.6-11, Escondido General Plan Community Protection Element Noise Reduction



Strategies, be applied to future development of noise-sensitive receptors. Consistent with the findings of the certified 2012 General Plan Update, Downtown Specific Plan Update, and CAP PEIR, future development projects in the EVSP Area would be required to demonstrate that appropriate noise attenuation has been incorporated into project design to achieve noise compatibility. Future projects consistent with the EVSP would be subject to applicable Escondido General Plan noise requirements and generally be able to achieve noise compatibility levels through conventional construction methods. Therefore, implementation of the Project would not expose new sensitive receptors to noise levels in excess of the City's noise and land use compatibility standards. This impact would be less than significant.

**Table 3.6-11. Escondido General Plan Community Protection Element Noise Reduction Strategies**

| Category  | Strategies <sup>1</sup>   |
|---|---|
| Site planning responsive to topography            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase distances between noise sources and receivers</li> <li>• Place non-noise-sensitive uses, such as utility areas, parking lots, and maintenance facilities, between the noise source and the receiver</li> <li>• Use non-noise-sensitive structures, such as garages, to shield noise-sensitive areas</li> <li>• Orient buildings to shield outdoor spaces from a noise source</li> </ul> |
| Architecture responsive to noise-sensitive spaces | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orient bedrooms away from noise sources</li> <li>• Limit openings and penetrations on portions of buildings impacted by noise</li> </ul>   |
| Barriers responsive to reduce noise levels        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the line of sight is interrupted between the noise source and receptor when constructing noise walls</li> <li>• Apply noise insulation to walls, roofs, doors, windows, and other penetrations</li> </ul>  |

**Source:** City of Escondido 2012b.

**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> The strategies provide suggestions for attenuation that may be incorporated into the Project to the extent required to achieve an interior noise level of 45 dBA CNEL. Individual strategies are not required to be implemented. For example, placing non-noise-sensitive uses between noise source and receivers would generally conflict with EVSP policies that prioritize building entrances along sidewalks. Therefore, this strategy would generally not be selected, and other available strategies would be utilized to achieve required noise reductions.

## Significance of Impact

### ***Construction and Operational Noise***

Temporary impacts due to construction activities and operation of land uses accommodated by the EVSP would be less than significant with compliance with the Escondido Noise Ordinance.

### ***Permanent Increases in Traffic Noise Levels from Project Operation***

Implementation of the Project would not result in a significant impact related to construction of new sensitive receptors that may be exposed to incompatible noise levels because Escondido General Plan noise requirements and conventional construction methods would reduce impacts to a compatible level. No mitigation measures are required for this potential impact.

However, implementation of the Project would result in direct impacts related to permanent increases in vehicle noise on two segments of Valley Parkway and one segment of Date Street.

## Mitigation Measures

Implementation of the Project would result in a direct noise impact to two segments of Valley Parkway and one segment of Date Street. The certified 2012 General Plan Update, Downtown Specific Plan Update, and CAP PEIR considered mitigation measures that would fully reduce impacts to below a level of significance, including construction of noise barriers and implementation of a Citywide moratorium on building permits for projects that would result in a potentially significant increase in regional roadway noise for which no feasible mitigation is available. However, the City determined that these measures are infeasible. Noise barriers would potentially require installation of noise walls on private property, in a designated right-of-way (ROW), or otherwise outside the City's jurisdiction, which may not be allowed by a property owner or the jurisdiction in which the sound barrier would be located. The feasibility of noise walls is also restricted by access requirements for driveways, cross streets, underground utilities, other noise sources in the area, and safety considerations. Finally, construction of a noise barrier would potentially wall off existing neighborhoods or individual residences from the surrounding community, which could result in adverse impacts to aesthetics, land use, and public safety. For example, the impacted segments of Valley Parkway and Date Street include existing driveways and cross streets on both sides of the roadways that would reduce noise wall effectiveness. Additionally, noise walls on these segments would block existing residential and commercial entrances from street view, which could result in potential aesthetic and/or public safety impacts by reducing visibility and accessibility. A building permit moratorium along the Valley Parkway and Date Street segments would impede the City's ability to implement the EVSP because it would prohibit future development in areas identified for increased residential growth. It would also conflict with the Housing Element Update by limiting the City's ability to meet the housing needs of existing and future residents.

For the reasons listed above, mitigation measures are infeasible for the Project.

## Significance After Mitigation

Consistent with the determination made by the certified 2012 General Plan Update, Downtown Specific Plan Update, and CAP PEIR (City of Escondido 2012a), no feasible mitigation measures are available for impacts related to increases in roadway noise as a result of anticipated growth under the EVSP. Therefore, impacts from the Project related to increases in ambient vehicle noise levels would be significant and unavoidable.

### 3.6.4.2 Threshold 2: Excessive Groundborne Vibration or Noise

#### Impact Analysis

Groundborne vibration that would potentially occur through implementation of the EVSP would result from construction equipment and through exposure of new sensitive receptors to the existing

rail line. Other land uses accommodated under the EVSP, including proposed residential, commercial, mixed-use, community services, and park uses, are not land uses that typically generate groundborne vibration and, therefore, are not addressed below.

### **Construction**

Construction vibration is subject to the infrequent event criteria because operation of vibration-generating equipment is anticipated to be intermittent throughout the day in the vicinity of an individual receptor. Vibration-sensitive land uses include manufacturing uses, hospitals, and research operations (FTA 2018).

The FTA thresholds are the applicable significance thresholds for groundborne vibration. The thresholds for infrequent events, defined as fewer than 30 vibration events of the same kind per day, are applicable to construction and mining operations. The infrequent event thresholds are 65 VdB at vibration-sensitive land uses and 80 VdB at residences and buildings where people normally sleep. The threshold for occasional events, defined as between 30 and 70 vibration events of the same kind per day, are applicable to operation of the SPRINTER railroad. The occasional event thresholds for groundborne noise are 75 VdB for buildings where people sleep and 78 VdB during the day for sensitive land uses. The FTA damage thresholds indicate that, for buildings not extremely sensitive to vibration, a damage threshold of between 0.2 in/sec to 0.5 in/sec applies depending on the type of building.

Table 3.6-12, Vibration Source Levels for Construction Equipment, identifies various vibration velocity levels for typical construction equipment, consistent with the certified 2012 General Plan Update, Downtown Specific Plan Update, and CAP PEIR (City of Escondido 2012a).

**Table 3.6-12. Vibration Source Levels for Construction Equipment**

| Construction Equipment            | At 25 feet      |              | At 100 feet     |              |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
|                                   | Approximate VdB | PPV (in/sec) | Approximate VdB | PPV (in/sec) |
| Large Bulldozer                   | 87              | 0.089        | 69              | 0.011        |
| Loaded Trucks                     | 86              | 0.076        | 68              | 0.010        |
| Jackhammer                        | 79              | 0.035        | 61              | 0.004        |
| Small Bulldozer                   | 58              | 0.003        | 40              | 0            |
| Caisson Drilling                  | 87              | 0.089        | 69              | 0.011        |
| Roller                            | 94              | 0.210        | 76              | 0.026        |
| Pile Driver (impact, upper range) | 112             | 1.518        | 94              | 0.190        |
| Pile Driver (sonic, upper range)  | 105             | 0.734        | 87              | 0.011        |

**Source:** City of Escondido 2012a.

**Notes:** PPV = peak particle velocity; VdB = vibration decibel

The noise analysis for the certified 2012 General Plan Update, Downtown Specific Plan Update, and CAP PEIR (City of Escondido 2012a) identified screening distances for potential vibration impacts based on the typical vibration levels in Table 3.6-12. Based on Table 3.6-12, the certified 2012 General Plan Update, Downtown Specific Plan Update, and CAP PEIR determined that vibration levels from general construction activities have the potential to exceed 80 VdB at distances up to 75 feet from construction equipment, and pile-driving activities have the potential to exceed 80 VdB at distances up to 300 feet from the source. Additionally, vibration levels could produce sleep-disturbing groundborne noise levels of 40 dBA at distances up to 230 feet away from general construction activities and up to 900 feet away from pile-driving activities. The certified 2012 General Plan Update, Downtown Specific Plan Update, and CAP PEIR (City of Escondido 2012a) determined screening distances for structural damage to existing buildings due to construction vibration associated with pile-driving because pile-driving can produce PPV values of up to 1.5 in/sec at 25 feet.

Construction of future uses consistent with the EVSP would take place during the day as required by the Escondido Noise Ordinance. Sections 17-234, 17-238, and 17-240 of the Escondido Noise Ordinance limit operation of construction equipment to the hours of 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday. Grading activities on Saturday may not begin until 10 a.m. and must end by 5 p.m. Construction is prohibited on Sundays. Therefore, vibration-related construction activities are only permitted during the day, and the threshold for sleep disturbance is not applicable.

However, vibration-sensitive land uses are found throughout the EVSP Area. Residences may be occupied during daytime construction, and construction may result in a nuisance to daily activities. Based on the information presented in Table 3.6-12, vibration levels from general construction activities have the potential to exceed 65 VdB at distances up to 230 feet from construction equipment, and pile-driving activities have the potential to exceed 65 VdB at distances up to 900 feet from the source. Vibration levels from normal construction activities would not exceed groundborne noise levels of 60 dBA more than 30 feet from the construction equipment and would not result in significant off-site impacts. However, pile-driving activities would have the potential to exceed groundborne noise levels of 60 dBA at distances up to 200 feet from the source. Future construction activities would be expected to occur throughout the EVSP Area. Additionally, the Project would encourage compact development and redevelopment of underutilized land in proximity to existing development. Therefore, impacts to vibration-sensitive land uses during construction would be potentially significant.

Historic buildings may also be susceptible to damage from excessive vibration impacts resulting from construction activities such as pile-driving. Structural damage to existing buildings due to construction vibration would potentially occur if pile-driving was required within proximity to the building because pile-driving can produce PPV values of up to 1.5 in/sec at 25 feet. As discussed in

Section 3.4, Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources, historic resources are throughout the EVSP Area and may be within proximity to construction. Therefore, impacts to historic structures susceptible to damage from vibration would be potentially significant during construction activities.

### **Railroad Line**

The NCTD SPRINTER rail line is a prominent railroad that traverses the City. Groundborne vibration levels of 85 VdB can result in noise levels up to 60 dBA, which can result in a disturbance to quiet daytime activities in vibration-sensitive land uses, such as schools. NCTD SPRINTER operations can generate vibration levels of 85 VdB at 50 feet from the source. A distance of 50 feet from the railroad track would generally be within the railroad ROW. Additionally, due to distance from the rail line, receptors in the EVSP would not be within 50 feet of the SPRINTER rail line, and impacts related to groundborne vibration from the SPRINTER would be less than significant.

### **Significance of Impact**

Future development consistent with the EVSP would have the potential to impact vibration-sensitive land uses and historic buildings during construction activities.

### **Mitigation Measures**

Implementation of Mitigation Measure NOI-1 would reduce temporary vibration impacts from future construction activities.

**NOI-1: Construction Vibration Best Management Practices.** All general construction activities that take place within 100 feet of a building with the potential to be damaged by excessive vibration, or general construction within 200 feet, or pile-driving, blasting, or other high-impact construction equipment within 900 feet of a daytime noise-sensitive land use (public and private educational facilities, churches, libraries, museums, cultural facilities, golf courses, and passive recreational parks) shall do one of the following: (1) retain a qualified acoustician to demonstrate that vibration will not exceed the applicable Federal Transit Administration threshold (65 vibration decibel for vibration-sensitive land uses of 80 vibration decibel for other daytime land uses), or (2) implement the following construction best management practices recommended by the Federal Railroad Administration in the High Speed Ground Transportation Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment. The best management practices shall be included in project construction documents, including the grading plan and construction contract. Practices shall include the following:

1. Sequence of operations:
  - i. Phase demolition, earthmoving, and ground-impacting operations to occur in different time periods.

2. Alternative construction methods:
  - i. Avoid impact pile-driving where possible in vibration-sensitive areas. Drilled piles or the use of a sonic or vibratory pile driver causes lower vibration levels where the geological conditions permit their use.
  - ii. Select demolition methods not involving impact, where possible. For example, using pressure bursting for concrete demolition results in lower vibration levels than impact demolition by pavement breakers, and milling generates lower vibration levels than excavation using clam shell or chisel drops.
  - iii. Avoid vibratory rollers and packers near sensitive receptors.

### **Significance After Mitigation**

Implementation of Mitigation Measure NOI-1 would reduce groundborne vibration impacts from construction by requiring lower impact construction methods when feasible. However, consistent with the conclusion of the certified 2012 General Plan Update, Downtown Specific Plan Update, and CAP PEIR (City of Escondido 2012a), it cannot be demonstrated at this time that these best management practices would reduce all construction-related vibration impacts to a less than significant level. Therefore, impacts from groundborne vibration during construction of future projects consistent with the EVSP would be significant and unavoidable.

#### **3.6.4.3 Threshold 3: Aircraft Noise**

##### **Impact Analysis**

There are no private or public airstrips within the vicinity of the Project. The closest airport to the EVSP Area is the Ramona Municipal Airport, approximately 10.2 miles southeast of the EVSP Area. According to the Ramona ALUCP (SDALUC 2008), the EVSP Area is not within any noise contours for the airport. In addition, helicopter flights to and from Palomar Medical Center Escondido located approximately 2.5 miles of the EVSP Area frequent the City. However, flights over the EVSP Area are infrequent. Therefore, the Project would not expose people residing or working in the EVSP Area to excessive noise levels. No impact would occur.

##### **Significance of Impact**

Implementation of the Project would not expose people residing or working in the EVSP Area to excessive noise levels from a private or public airstrip. No impact would occur.

##### **Mitigation Measures**

No mitigation measures are required.

## Significance After Mitigation

Not applicable.

### 3.6.5 Cumulative Impacts and Mitigation

The following sections address potential cumulative impacts relating to noise that could result from implementation of the Project.

#### 3.6.5.1 Cumulative Threshold 1: Exceedance of Noise Standards

A cumulative ambient noise impact would occur if development associated with cumulative regional land use projects resulted in an increase in ambient noise that exceeded the City's noise standards. Buildout of the Project, along with future City and regional growth, would result in increases in traffic that would cumulatively increase traffic noise. A significant cumulative impact would occur related to vehicle noise if cumulative growth resulted in future noise levels that exceeded the noise impact standards listed in Table 3.6-6 compared to existing conditions. The Project would result in a cumulatively considerable contribution if the Project's contribution exceeded the allowable noise increment. As shown in Table 3.6-13, Cumulative Vehicle Noise Impacts, regional growth would result in cumulative noise impacts to segments of Mission Avenue, Valley Parkway, North Hickory Street, Fig Street, Date Street, and San Pasqual Valley Road. Implementation of the Project would result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to the cumulative noise increase on Valley Parkway from Fig Street to Date Street and Date Street from Valley Parkway to Grand Avenue.

Similar to the Project, cumulative land development would have the potential to locate new NSLUs in areas that would result in their exposure to excessive noise levels. Cumulative projects would be required to comply with applicable noise regulations of the City or adjacent jurisdictions, which would reduce noise impacts to NSLU. Future projects consistent with the EVSP would comply with the Escondido Noise Ordinance, Escondido General Plan policies, and noise compatibility guidelines. Therefore, the Project, in combination with the cumulative projects, would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution associated with exposure of future receptors to excessive noise levels. However, the Project, in combination with other cumulative projects, would result in a cumulatively considerable increase in ambient vehicle noise levels.

**Table 3.6-13. Cumulative Vehicle Noise Impacts**

| Roadway                 | Segment                             | Existing Noise Level | Allowable Increase (dBA CNEL) | Future + Project Noise Level (dBA CNEL) | Increase in Noise Level From Existing | Cumulative Impact? | EVSP Contribution | Cumulatively Considerable? |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Mission Avenue          | Broadway to North Hickory Street    | 70                   | 1                             | 72                                      | +2                                    | Yes                | +1                | No                         |
| Valley Parkway          | Hickory Street to Fig Street        | 69                   | 1                             | 69                                      | 0                                     | No                 | 0                 | No                         |
|                         | Fig Street to Date Street           | 68                   | 1                             | 70                                      | +2                                    | Yes                | +2                | Yes                        |
|                         | Date Street to Ash Street           | 69                   | 1                             | 70                                      | +1                                    | No                 | +1                | No                         |
| North Hickory Street    | Washington Avenue to Valley Parkway | 58                   | 3                             | 62                                      | +4                                    | Yes                | +1                | No                         |
| Fig Street              | Mission Avenue to Washington Avenue | 59                   | 3                             | 66                                      | +7                                    | Yes                | +2                | No                         |
|                         | Washington Avenue to Valley Parkway | 60                   | 2                             | 65                                      | +5                                    | Yes                | +2                | No                         |
| Date Street             | Valley Parkway to Grand Avenue      | 58                   | 3                             | 65                                      | +7                                    | Yes                | +4                | Yes                        |
|                         | Grand Avenue to East 2nd Avenue     | 64                   | 1                             | 67                                      | +3                                    | Yes                | +1                | No                         |
| Ash Street              | Mission Avenue to Washington Avenue | 68                   | 1                             | 69                                      | +1                                    | No                 | +1                | No                         |
|                         | Washington Avenue to Valley Parkway | 69                   | 1                             | 70                                      | +1                                    | No                 | +1                | No                         |
| San Pasqual Valley Road | Grand Avenue to East 2nd Avenue     | 69                   | 1                             | 71                                      | +2                                    | Yes                | +0                | No                         |

**Notes:** CNEL = community noise equivalent level; dBA = A-weighted decibel; EVSP = East Valley Specific Plan



### **3.6.5.2 Cumulative Threshold 2: Excessive Groundborne Vibration or Noise**

A cumulative groundborne vibration impact would occur if one or more projects in the area would increase vibration to a level that would result in sleep disturbance or interfere with activities at vibration-sensitive land uses. Groundborne vibration impacts could result from construction operations. Since there are no specific plans or time scales for future construction projects, it is not possible to determine exact noise levels, locations, or time periods for construction. Construction activities such as pile-driving can result in significant vibration up to 900 feet from the source. Therefore, the potential exists for cumulative construction projects to result in combined construction impacts if occurring simultaneously. Similar to the Project, cumulative projects would be required to implement vibration management practices such as Mitigation Measure NOI-1; however, this mitigation measure may not reduce vibration levels to below significance criteria. The Project, in combination with other proposed cumulative projects, would result in a potentially significant cumulative groundborne vibration impact due to construction activities. The impact would be cumulatively considerable and unavoidable.

### **3.6.5.3 Cumulative Threshold 3: Aircraft Noise**

Noise related to airports is generally site specific and not cumulative in nature. The placement of a structure within the noise contours of a public airport or in proximity to a private airstrip would not affect airport noise related to the placement of another cumulative project. Additionally, development and construction proposed under the cumulative projects would be subject to regulations that require compliance with noise standards. The EVSP Area is not within any noise contours for any airport. Therefore, the Project, in combination with other cumulative projects, would not result in a cumulative impact related to public use airports.

## **3.6.6 Conclusion**

### **Exceedance of Noise Standards**

#### ***Operation and Construction Noise***

Temporary impacts due to construction activities and long-term operation of land uses accommodated by the EVSP would be less than significant with compliance with the Escondido Noise Ordinance.

#### ***Permanent Increase in Vehicle Noise Levels***

The EVSP has the potential to result in significant impacts associated with a permanent increase in ambient noise levels from vehicle traffic noise. As determined by the certified 2012 General Plan Update, Downtown Specific Plan Update, and CAP PEIR (City of Escondido 2012a), no feasible mitigation measures are available for impacts related to increases in roadway noise as a result of anticipated growth. Therefore, impacts from implementation of the Project related to increases in ambient noise levels would be significant and unavoidable.

***Noise Incompatibilities with New Sensitive Receptors***

Implementation of the Project would not result in a significant impact related to construction of new sensitive receptors that may be exposed to incompatible noise levels because existing Escondido General Plan requirements and conventional construction methods would reduce impacts to a compatible level.

**Excessive Groundborne Vibration or Noise**

The EVSP has the potential to result in significant impacts associated groundborne vibration during construction. Implementation of Mitigation Measure NOI-1 would reduce direct and cumulative groundborne vibration impacts from construction with the use of best management practices. However, details regarding future construction practices are currently unknown, and it cannot be guaranteed that these best management practices would reduce all construction-related vibration impacts to a less than significant level. Therefore, impacts from groundborne vibration during construction would be significant and unavoidable.

**Aircraft Noise**

Implementation of the Project would not expose people residing or working in the EVSP Area to excessive noise levels from a private or public airstrip. No impact would occur.

## 3.7 Transportation

This section evaluates the potential for impacts on transportation resulting from implementation of EVSP. The analysis in this section is based on the Transportation Analysis prepared by LLG (2023) (Appendix G).

### 3.7.1 Existing Conditions

This section describes the existing conditions for the Project as they relate to transportation.

#### 3.7.1.1 Transportation Study Area

The following study area as shown on Figure 3.7-1, Transportation Study Area, was developed based on the anticipated assignment of project traffic and locations that would carry the most project traffic. Intersections were selected based on coordination with City staff on which intersections are anticipated to carry the most project traffic and currently operating at or close to a deficient level.

#### Street Segments

##### *Mission Avenue*

1. Centre City Parkway to Escondido Boulevard
2. Escondido Boulevard to Broadway
3. Broadway to Hickory Street
4. Hickory Street to Fig Street
5. Fig Street to Ash Street
6. Ash Street to Harding Street
7. Harding Street to Rose Street
8. Rose Street to Midway Drive

##### *Washington Avenue*

9. Centre City Parkway to Escondido Boulevard
10. Escondido Boulevard to Broadway
11. Broadway to Juniper Street
12. Juniper Street to Hickory Street
13. Hickory Street to Fig Street
14. Fig Street to Ash Street
15. Ash Street to Harding Street
16. Harding Street to Rose Street
17. Rose Street to Midway Drive

**Valley Boulevard**

18. Valley Parkway to Grand Avenue

**Valley Parkway**

19. Centre City Parkway to Escondido Boulevard
20. Escondido Boulevard to Broadway
21. Broadway to Juniper Street
22. Juniper Street to Hickory Street
23. Hickory Street to Fig Street
24. Fig Street to Date Street
25. Date Street to Ash Street
26. Ash Street to Harding Street
27. Harding Street to Rose Street
28. Rose Street to Midway Drive

**Grand Avenue**

29. Centre City Parkway to Escondido Boulevard
30. Escondido Boulevard to Broadway
31. Broadway to Juniper Street
32. Juniper Street to Valley Boulevard
33. Valley Boulevard to Fig Street
34. Fig Street to Date Street
35. Date Street to Ash Street
36. Ash Street to Rose Street
37. Rose Street to Midway Drive

**2nd Avenue**

38. Centre City Parkway to Escondido Boulevard
39. Escondido Boulevard to Broadway
40. Broadway to Juniper Street
41. Juniper Street to Grand Avenue

**Centre City Parkway**

42. SR 78 to Mission Avenue
43. Mission Avenue to Washington Avenue
44. Washington Avenue to Valley Parkway
45. Valley Parkway to Grand Avenue
46. Grand Avenue to 2nd Avenue

**Escondido Boulevard**

- 47. Lincoln Avenue to Mission Avenue
- 48. Mission Avenue to Washington Avenue
- 49. Washington Avenue to Valley Parkway
- 50. Valley Parkway to Grand Avenue
- 51. Grand Avenue to 2nd Avenue

**Broadway**

- 52. Mission Avenue to Washington Avenue
- 53. Washington Avenue to Valley Parkway
- 54. Valley Parkway to Grand Avenue
- 55. Grand Avenue to 2nd Avenue

**Juniper Street**

- 56. Washington Avenue to Valley Parkway
- 57. Valley Parkway to Grand Avenue
- 58. Grand Avenue to 2nd Avenue

**Hickory Street**

- 59. Mission Avenue to Washington Avenue
- 60. Washington Avenue to Valley Parkway

**Fig Street**

- 61. Lincoln Avenue to Mission Avenue
- 62. Mission Avenue to Washington Avenue
- 63. Washington Avenue to Valley Parkway
- 64. Valley Parkway to Grand Avenue

**Date Street**

- 65. Valley Parkway to Grand Avenue
- 66. Grand Avenue to 2nd Avenue

**Ash Street/San Pasqual Valley Road**

- 67. Lincoln Avenue to Mission Avenue
- 68. Mission Avenue to Washington Avenue
- 69. Washington Avenue to Valley Parkway
- 70. Valley Parkway to Grand Avenue
- 71. Grand Avenue to 2nd Avenue

**Harding Street**

- 72. Mission Avenue to Washington Avenue
- 73. Washington Avenue to Valley Parkway

**Rose Street**

- 74. Lincoln Avenue to Mission Avenue
- 75. Mission Avenue to Washington Avenue
- 76. Washington Avenue to Valley Parkway
- 77. Valley Parkway to Grand Avenue

**Midway Drive**

- 78. Lincoln Avenue to Mission Avenue
- 79. Mission Avenue to Washington Avenue
- 80. Washington Avenue to Valley Parkway
- 81. Valley Parkway to Grand Avenue

**Intersections**

- 1. El Norte Parkway/Centre City Parkway
- 2. El Norte Parkway/Broadway
- 3. El Norte Parkway/Fig Street
- 4. Lincoln Avenue/Broadway
- 5. Lincoln Avenue/Fig Street
- 6. Lincoln Avenue/Ash Street
- 7. Lincoln Parkway/Broadway
- 8. Mission Avenue/Escondido Boulevard
- 9. Mission Avenue/Broadway
- 10. Mission Avenue/Hickory Street
- 11. Mission Avenue/Ash Street
- 12. Mission Avenue/Harding Street
- 13. Mission Avenue/Rose Street
- 14. Washington Avenue/Escondido Boulevard
- 15. Washington Avenue/Broadway
- 16. Washington Avenue/Juniper Street
- 17. Washington Avenue/Hickory Street
- 18. Washington Avenue/Fig Street
- 19. Washington Avenue/Ash Street
- 20. Washington Avenue/Harding Street
- 21. Washington Avenue/Rose Street
- 22. Valley Parkway/Hickory Street
- 23. Valley Parkway/Fig Street
- 24. Valley Parkway/Date Street
- 25. Valley Parkway/Ash Street
- 26. Valley Parkway/Harding Street
- 27. Valley Parkway/Rose Street

- 28. Grand Avenue/Valley Boulevard
- 29. Grand Avenue/Date Street
- 30. Grand Avenue/Ash Street
- 31. Grand Avenue/Rose Street

### 3.7.1.2 Existing Street Network

The City's street network serves as the backbone of the community's transportation system. Streets and highways contribute to the overall community in three ways. First, they connect neighborhoods with each other and to areas beyond. Second, they allow for the movement of commodities or freight and, therefore, provide economic benefit. Third, they are a focal point for activity and social events that help establish community identity.

The City's roadways are defined using a hierarchical classification system. The street network establishes types of roadways, ranging from high-capacity state and interstate highways to two-lane undivided roadways. Table 3.7-1, City of Escondido Roadway Classifications, defines the functional classifications in the City.

**Table 3.7-1. City of Escondido Roadway Classifications**

| Classification    | Description   |
|-------------------|---|
| Freeway           | Other freeways and expressways are characterized by directional travel lanes and limited on- and off-ramps. Typically, the travel lanes are directionally separated by a physical barrier, such as a median. The primary purpose is to maximize mobility; therefore, adjacent land uses are not directly served.  |
| Arterial          | Prime arterials are six-lane thoroughfares with raised landscaped medians. In some circumstances, eight lanes may be required. Access to prime arterials may vary depending on where the facility is located within the community but is typically limited to adjacent commercial properties at signal-controlled intersections. Traffic carrying capacities of 70,000 vehicles per day can be achieved depending on the degree of access control, peak-period traffic loadings, and lane configurations at the major intersections.  |
| Major Roads       | Major roads are four-lane roadways with painted or raised landscaped medians. Minimum spacing for intersections along major roads should be one-eighth mile (660 feet). Left-turn restrictions will generally be placed at minor unsignalized driveways. Bike lanes are incorporated into major road design standards; however, as a primary traffic carrier, curbside parking may not be appropriate along most of the more heavily traveled major road street segments within the community. Traffic carrying capacities of 50,000 vehicles per day can be achieved depending on the degree of access control and peak-period loadings.   |
| Collector Streets | Collector streets are four-lane roadways without medians (undivided) with minimum intersection spacing approximately one-sixteenth mile (330 feet). Direct access from private residential properties is not prohibited but should be avoided where possible. Collector street design standards accommodate bike lanes with no curbside parking upon build out of the City. However, many collector streets in the community currently include curbside parking with no bike lanes provided. This requires cyclists to share a travel lane with vehicles. In some locations, collector streets may include a limited median or be striped to provide a left-turn pocket. Traffic carrying capacities of approximately 34,200 vehicles per day can be achieved depending on the degree of access allowed and peak-period traffic loadings. |

**Table 3.7-1. City of Escondido Roadway Classifications**

| Classification          | Description   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Local Collector Streets | Local collector streets often provide access between neighborhoods and connection to larger streets in the circulation system. Local collectors are two-lane roadways that may include painted medians for left-turn movements depending on location within the community. Direct access from individual residential properties is permitted. The desirable intersection spacing for local collectors is approximately 330 feet. Minimum intersection/access spacing on all local collector roadways should be 200 feet. Local collectors provide for curbside parking and bike lanes. Parking should be restricted near intersection approaches where separate right-turn lanes are provided. Traffic carrying capacities of 15,000 vehicles per day can be achieved depending on the degree of access control and peak-period traffic loadings. |
| Local Streets           | Local streets are two-lane roadways without medians and not shown on the Circulation Plan but do provide a vital service by connecting subdivision and neighborhoods to the City's street system. Centerline striping is typically not provided, and curbside parking is allowed. Traffic carrying capacity is physically similar to a local collector; however, the qualitative limit of acceptable traffic volumes in a residential environment is substantially lower (less than 10,000 vehicles per day).   |

Source: City of Escondido 2012.

Following is a description of the existing street network in the EVSP Area and surrounding area.

**El Norte Parkway** is classified as a Major Road between Centre City Parkway and Rose Street in the Escondido General Plan Circulation Element. It is currently constructed as a four-lane divided road between Centre City Parkway and Broadway, a four-lane undivided road with a two-way left-turn lane between Broadway and Fig Street, and a four-lane divided road between Fig Street and Rose Street. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of the roadway. Bike lanes are provided between Centre City Parkway and Rose Street. The posted speed limit is 45 miles per hour (mph).

**Lincoln Avenue** is classified as a Prime Arterial between Lincoln Parkway and Fig Street and as a Collector Street between Fig Street and Midway Drive in the Escondido General Plan Circulation Element. It is currently constructed as a four-lane undivided road between Lincoln Parkway and Ash Street and a two-lane undivided road between Ash Street and Midway Drive. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of the roadway. Bike lanes are not provided. Curbside parking is permitted on both sides of the roadway between Ash Street and Midway Drive. The posted speed limit is 45 mph between Lincoln Parkway and Fig Street, 40 mph between Fig Street and Ash Street, and 35 mph between Ash Street and Midway Drive.

**Mission Avenue** is classified as a Major Road between Centre City Parkway and Ash Street as a Collector Street between Ash Street and Rose Street and as a Local Collector Street between Rose Street and Midway Drive in the Escondido General Plan Circulation Element. It is currently constructed as a four-lane undivided road with a two-way left-turn lane west of Fig Street. Between Fig Street and Buchanan Street, Mission Avenue is built as a two-lane undivided roadway with a two-way left-turn lane. East of this intersection, Mission Avenue is a two-lane undivided roadway. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of the roadway. Bike lanes are provided between Centre City Parkway and Fig Street. Shared bike lanes



are provided east of Ash Street. Curbside parking is permitted on both sides of the roadway east of Ash Street. The posted speed limits are 40 mph and 35 mph.

**Washington Avenue** is classified as a Collector Street in the Escondido General Plan Circulation Element. It is currently constructed as a four-lane undivided road with a two-way left-turn lane west of Juniper Street. Between Juniper Street and Date Street is built as a four-lane undivided roadway. Between Date Street and Ash Street is built as a four-lane undivided road with a two-way left-turn lane. East of this intersection, Washington Avenue is a four-lane undivided roadway. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of the roadway. Bike lanes are not provided. Curbside parking is permitted on both sides of the roadway east of Juniper Street. The posted speed limit is 35 mph.

**Valley Boulevard** is classified as a Collector Street in the Escondido General Plan Circulation Element. It is currently constructed as a three-lane undivided roadway (one southbound lane and two northbound lanes) between Valley Parkway and Grand Avenue. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of the roadway. Bike lanes are not provided. Curbside parking is permitted on both sides of the roadway between Grand Avenue and Hickory Street. No speed limit is posted.

**Valley Parkway** is classified as a Collector Street between Centre City Parkway and Hickory Street and as a Major Road between Hickory Street and Midway Drive in the Escondido General Plan Circulation Element. It is currently constructed as a five-lane one-way (westbound) roadway between Centre City Parkway and Escondido Boulevard, as a three-lane one-way (westbound) roadway between Escondido Boulevard and Hickory Street, as a four-lane undivided roadway between Hickory Street and Fig Street, and as a four-lane undivided road with a two-way left-turn lane between Fig Street and Midway Drive. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of the roadway. Bike lanes are provided between Centre City Parkway and Broadway. Curbside parking is permitted on both sides of the roadway. The posted speed limit is 35 mph.

**Grand Avenue** is classified as a Collector Street in the Escondido General Plan Circulation Element. It is currently constructed as a four-lane divided road west of Valley Boulevard. Between Valley Boulevard and Hickory Street, Grand Avenue is built as a two-lane undivided roadway. East of this intersection, Grand Avenue is three-lane undivided roadway, one westbound and two eastbound. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of the roadway. Bike lanes are not provided. The posted speed limit is 30 mph.

**2nd Avenue** is classified as a Collector Street in the Escondido General Plan Circulation Element. It is currently constructed as a three-lane one-way roadway. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of the roadway. Bike lanes are not provided. Curbside parking is permitted on both sides of the roadway. The posted speed limit is 30 mph.

**Centre City Parkway** is classified as a Major Road between SR 78 and Mission Avenue and as a Super Major Road between Mission Avenue and 2nd Avenue in the Escondido General Plan

Circulation Element. It is currently constructed as a four-lane divided roadway. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of the roadway between Valley Parkway and 2nd Avenue. Bike lanes are provided. Curbside parking is not permitted. No speed limit is posted.

**Escondido Boulevard** is classified as a Collector Street in the Escondido General Plan Circulation Element. It is currently constructed as a four-lane undivided road with a two-way left-turn lane. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of the roadway. Bike lanes are not provided. Curbside parking is not permitted. The posted speed limit is 35 mph.

**Broadway** is classified as a Major Road in the Escondido General Plan Circulation Element. It is currently constructed as a four-lane undivided road with a two-way left-turn lane between Lincoln Parkway to Grand Avenue and as a two-lane undivided road with a two-way left-turn lane between Grand Avenue and 2nd Avenue. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of the roadway. Bike lanes are provided between Clark Street and Valley Parkway. Curbside parking is permitted on both sides of the roadway. The posted speed limit is 35 mph.

**Juniper Street** is classified as a Collector Street in the Escondido General Plan Circulation Element. It is currently constructed as a two-lane undivided roadway between Washington Avenue and Valley Parkway and as a two-lane undivided roadway with a two-way left-turn lane between Valley Parkway and 2nd Avenue. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of the roadway. Bike lanes are not provided. Curbside parking is permitted on both sides of the roadway. The posted speed limit is 25 mph.

**N. Hickory Street** is classified as a Local Collector Street in the Escondido General Plan Circulation Element. It is currently constructed as a two-lane undivided roadway. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of the roadway. Bike lanes are not provided. Curbside parking is permitted on both sides of the roadway. The posted speed limit is 25 mph.

**Fig Street** is classified as a Collector Street in the Escondido General Plan Circulation Element. It is currently constructed as a two-lane undivided roadway with a two-way left-turn lane between Lincoln Avenue and Mission Avenue and as a two-lane undivided roadway between Mission Avenue and Grand Avenue. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of the roadway. Bike lanes are not provided. Curbside parking is permitted on both sides of the roadway. The posted speed limit is 25 mph.

**Date Street** is classified as a Collector Street in the Escondido General Plan Circulation Element. It is currently constructed as a two-lane undivided roadway between Valley Parkway and Grand Avenue and as a four-lane undivided roadway between Grand Avenue and 2nd Avenue. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of the roadway. Bike lanes are not provided. Curbside parking is permitted on both side of the roadway. The posted speed limit is 30 mph.

**N. Ash Street** is classified as a Major Road in the Escondido General Plan Circulation Element. It is currently constructed as a four-lane undivided roadway with a two-way left-turn lane between Lincoln Avenue and Mission Avenue and between Washington Avenue and 2nd Avenue and as a four-lane undivided roadway between Mission Avenue and Washington Avenue. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of the roadway. Bike lanes are provided between Lincoln Avenue and Mission Avenue. Curbside parking is not permitted. The posted speed limit is 35 mph.

**Harding Street** is classified as a Local Collector Street between Lincoln Avenue and Mission Avenue and as a Collector Street between Mission Avenue and Valley Parkway in the Escondido General Plan Circulation Element. It is currently constructed as a two-lane divided roadway between Lincoln Avenue and Washington Avenue and as a four-way undivided roadway with a two-way left-turn lane between Washington Avenue and Valley Parkway. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of the roadway. Bike lanes are not provided. Curbside parking is permitted on both sides of the roadway. The posted speed limit is 35 mph.

**Rose Street** is classified as a Collector Street in the Escondido General Plan Circulation Element. It is currently constructed as a two-lane undivided roadway between Lincoln Avenue and Jefferson Avenue and as a two-lane undivided roadway with a two-way left-turn lane between Jefferson Avenue and Grand Avenue. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of the roadway. Bike lanes are not provided. Curbside parking is permitted on both sides of the roadway. The posted speed limit is 30 mph.

**Midway Drive** is classified as a Collector Street in the Escondido General Plan Circulation Element. It is currently constructed as a two-lane undivided roadway between Lincoln Avenue and Lee Drive, as a two-lane undivided roadway with a two-way left-turn lane between Lee Drive and Valley Parkway, and as a four-lane undivided roadway with a two-way left-turn lane between Valley Parkway and Grand Avenue. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of the roadway. Bike lanes are not provided. Curbside parking is permitted on both sides of the roadway. The posted speed limit is 35 mph.

### 3.7.1.3 Existing Bicycle Network

Below is a brief description of each class of bike facility.

**Class I Bikeway** – Typically called a “bike path,” Class I bikeways are a minimum of eight feet wide, separated from the road by a minimum of five feet and are designated for two-way bike and pedestrian travel.

**Class II Bikeway** – Often referred to as a “bike lane,” a Class II bikeway, has a minimum width of five feet, although a six-foot width is preferred, and provides a striped and stenciled lane for one-way travel on a street or highway.

**Class III Bikeway** – Generally referred to as a “bike route,” a Class III bikeway provides for shared use with motor vehicle traffic and is identified only by signage.

**Class IV** – Refers to a cycle track, which are bikeways located in roadway ROW but separated from vehicle lanes by physical barriers, flexible posts, on-street parking curbs, or other objects. Cycle tracks provide for one-way or two-way bicycle travel and are exclusively for bicycle use.

The following are the existing bicycle facilities in the EVSP Area and surrounding street segments:

- The Escondido Creek Trail, which runs east–west along the Escondido Creek drainage canal, is a Class I facility.
- Class II facilities exist on El Norte Parkway between Centre City Parkway and Rose Street, Mission Avenue between Centre City Parkway and Fig Street, Centre City Parkway between SR 78 and 2nd Avenue, and Ash Street between Lincoln Avenue and Mission Avenue.
- Class III facilities exist on Mission Avenue between Harding Street and Midway Drive.
- Class IV facilities exist on Valley Parkway between Centre City Parkway and Broadway, and Broadway between Woodward Street and Valley Parkway.

#### **3.7.1.4 Existing Pedestrian Facilities**

Well-designed pedestrian networks can improve the safety of a neighborhood on both levels. An environment in which people are comfortable using the sidewalks helps build a healthy community, prevents crime by adding “eyes on the street,” and facilitates a lively atmosphere. Confirming that streets and intersections are accessible to all ages and ability levels, such as older adults, children, and people with disabilities, ensures safety, opportunities for physical activity, and a pleasant pedestrian experience for everyone. Pedestrian facilities in the EVSP Area include the Escondido Creek Trail and sidewalks along all public roadways as described in Section 3.7.1.2.

#### **3.7.1.5 Existing Transit Network**

The NCTD and the MTS provide bus service to the EVSP Area. Service is generally provided along major circulation corridors with a heavier concentration of bus routes in the downtown area. The NCTD provides three types of bus services in the EVSP Area, including local bus service, County transit service, and express bus service. Local bus service is generally provided at 30- to 60-minute intervals and provides local access in the City and surrounding communities. County transit service provides bus service along rural routes connecting the City to the unincorporated Valley Center community. MTS provides express bus service from Downtown Escondido to the City of San Diego and local bus service from the Del Lago Transit Station to the City of San Diego.

SANDAG, in cooperation with the City and the NCTD, also operates the Escondido rapid bus service that provides a “rapid bus” connection along Escondido Boulevard between the Escondido

Transit Center and Westfield North County. This service also connects to the SPRINTER passenger rail line at the Escondido Transit Center, existing bus services, and future I-15 bus rapid transit services.

The following bus routes service the EVSP Area:

- **Route 351 and 352** runs from the Escondido Transit Center to Midway Drive. The route runs along Grand Avenue, Midway Drive, and Washington Avenue. Weekday service begins at 4:05 a.m. with 30-minute headways throughout the day and ends at 10:54 p.m. Saturday and Sunday service begins at 6:59 a.m. with 30-minute headways throughout the day and ends at 9:44 p.m.
- **Route 354** runs from the Escondido Transit Center to Midway Drive. The route runs along Mission Avenue and Midway Drive. Weekday service begins at 5:31 a.m. with 30-minute headways throughout the day and ends at 8:26 p.m. Saturday and Sunday service begins at 8:32 a.m. with one-hour headways throughout the day and ends at 6:26 p.m.
- **Route 355 and 357** runs from the Escondido Transit Center to El Norte Parkway/Valley Parkway. The route runs along Valley Parkway, El Norte Parkway, and Broadway. Weekday service begins at 6:02 a.m. with one-hour headways throughout the day and ends at 8:41 p.m. Saturday and Sunday service begins at 6:32 a.m. with 2-hour headways throughout the day and ends at 8:07 p.m.
- **Route 388** runs from the Escondido Transit Center to Pala Casino. The route runs along Valley Parkway and Valley Center Road and passes Valley View Casino, Harrah's Rincon Casino, and Casino Pauma. Weekday service begins at 4:33 a.m. with one- to two-hour headways throughout the day and ends at 10:27 p.m. Saturday and Sunday service begins at 5:33 a.m. with one- to two-hour headways throughout the day and ends at 10:26 p.m.
- **The Escondido Transit Center** is one mile west of the EVSP Area at the northwestern corner of North Quince Street and West Valley Parkway. The Escondido Transit Center is a bus and train station in Downtown Escondido and serves as the current eastern terminus of the NCTD SPRINTER light-rail line. Multiple transit services via the NCTD BREEZE and MTS bus transit lines are provided.
- **The NCTD SPRINTER Light-Rail Line** runs to Oceanside. The SPRINTER runs every 30 minutes in each direction Monday through Friday from approximately 4 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday, Sunday, and holiday trains operate every 30 minutes between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. and hourly before 10 a.m. and after 6 p.m. The SPRINTER station is adjacent to the Escondido Transit Center, which is connected to the Project by the previously discussed bus routes.
- **Route 235** runs from the Escondido Transit Center to the Santa Fe Depot Transit Center in Downtown San Diego. The route runs along Broadway, SR-94, and I-15. Weekday

service begins at 4:43 a.m. with 15- to 30-minute headways throughout the day and ends at 11:51 p.m. Saturday and Sunday service begins at 4:43 a.m. with 30-minute headways throughout the day and ends at 11:21 p.m.

- **Route 280** run from the Escondido Transit Center to Grape Street and Pacific Highway in Downtown San Diego. The route runs along SR-163, Broadway, and Pacific Highway. Weekday service begins at 5 a.m. and ends at 9:03 a.m. and begins again at 3:03 p.m. and ends at 6:25 p.m. with 30- to 50-minute headways during these period. This route does not operate on the weekends.

### 3.7.1.6 Existing Vehicle Miles Traveled

VMT refers to the amount and distance of automobile travel attributable to a project. To calculate the VMT for the baseline, the SANDAG Series 13 Year 2050 Travel Demand Model was used. The model generates a land use-specific average trip length (Residential, Office, and Retail) and an average daily volume, which ultimately calculates the total VMT per capita, VMT per employee, and retail VMT. Table 3.7-2, Base Year Vehicle Miles Traveled Metrics, summarizes the regional average baseline VMT results provided by SANDAG using the Series 13 Year 2050 Travel Demand Model.

**Table 3.7-2. Base Year Vehicle Miles Traveled Metrics**

| VMT              | Regional (Year 2016 Baseline) |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| VMT per resident | 19.0                          |
| VMT per employee | 27.2                          |
| Total VMT        |                               |
| <b>Citywide</b>  | 6,004,710                     |

**Source:** Appendix G.

**Notes:** VMT = vehicle miles traveled

## 3.7.2 Regulatory Framework

This section describes the federal, state, and local regulatory framework adopted to address transportation.

### 3.7.2.1 Federal

#### Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, Section 450.220

Revised in April 1, 2005, Title 23, section 450.220, of the Code of Federal Regulations requires each state to carry out a continual, comprehensive, and intermodal statewide transportation planning process. This planning process must include the development of a Statewide Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program that facilitates the efficient, economic movement of people and goods in all areas of the state.

## Highway Capacity Manual

The Highway Capacity Manual, prepared by the federal Transportation Research Board, is the result of a collaborative, multiagency effort between the Transportation Research Board, Federal Highway Administration, and American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. The Highway Capacity Manual contains concepts, guidelines, and computational procedures for the capacity and quality of service of various highway facilities, including freeways, signalized and unsignalized intersections, rural highways, and the effects of transit, pedestrians, and bicycles on the performance of these systems. The procedures from the Highway Capacity Manual 2016 methodology were used at intersections where the Highway Capacity Manual is limited in its analysis capabilities.

### 3.7.2.2 State

#### Assembly Bill 1358 Complete Streets Act

The Complete Streets Act of 2007 ensures that transportation plans of California communities meet the needs of all users of the roadway, including pedestrians, bicyclists, users of public transit, motorists, children, older adults, and people with disabilities. AB 1358 requires the legislative body of a city or county, upon revision of the Circulation Element of their General Plan, to identify how the jurisdiction will provide for the routine accommodation of all users of the roadway, including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, individuals with disabilities, older adults, and users of public transportation. The bill also directs the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to amend guidelines for the development of General Plan Circulation Elements so that the construction and operation of local transportation facilities safely and conveniently accommodates everyone, regardless of their mode of travel.

#### California Department of Transportation Standards

Caltrans is responsible for planning, designing, building, operating, and maintaining California's transportation system. Caltrans sets standards, policies, and Strategic Plans that aim to (1) provide the safest transportation system for users and workers, (2) maximize transportation system performance and accessibility, (3) efficiently deliver quality transportation projects and services, (4) preserve and enhance California's resources and assets, and (5) promote quality service. Caltrans has the discretionary authority to issue special permits for the use of state highways for other than normal transportation purposes. Caltrans also reviews all requests from utility companies, developers, volunteers, nonprofit organizations, and others desiring to conduct various activities within the state highway ROW. The Caltrans Highway Design Manual, prepared by the Office of Geometric Design Standards (7th edition, updated 2020), establishes uniform policies and procedures to carry out the highway design functions of Caltrans. Caltrans also prepared a Guide for the Preparation of Traffic Impact Studies (Caltrans 2002) to provide consistency and uniformity in the identification of traffic impacts generated by local land use proposals.

### **Senate Bill 743**

On September 27, 2013, Governor Jerry Brown signed SB 743, which created a process to change the way transportation impacts are analyzed under CEQA. SB 743 requires the OPR to amend the CEQA Guidelines to provide an alternative to LOS for evaluating transportation impacts. Aside from changes to transportation analyses, SB 743 also includes several important changes to CEQA that apply to transit-oriented developments, including aesthetics and parking.

On December 2018, the California Natural Resources Agency certified and adopted the update to the CEQA Guidelines, implementing SB 743 (section 15064.3). Under OPR's revisions to the CEQA Guidelines, VMT exceeding an applicable threshold of significance may indicate a significant transportation impact. Under the VMT standard, projects within 0.25 mile of either an existing major transit stop or a stop along an existing high-quality transit corridor should generally be presumed to cause a less than significant transportation impact. Furthermore, under the CEQA Guidelines revisions, for projects other than roadway capacity projects, automobile delay, as described solely by LOS or similar measures of vehicular capacity or traffic congestion, should not be considered a significant effect on the environment. The revisions to the CEQA Guidelines allow a lead agency to elect to evaluate transportation impacts under the revised CEQA Guidelines at any time and made the revised CEQA Guidelines applicable statewide beginning July 1, 2020.

#### **3.7.2.3 Regional**

##### **Regional Transportation Plans and Programs**

SANDAG serves as the forum for decision-making on regional issues such as growth, transportation, land use, the economy, the environment, and criminal justice. SANDAG builds consensus, makes Strategic Plans, obtains and allocates resources, and provides information on a broad range of topics pertinent to the region's quality of life. SANDAG is governed by a Board of Directors composed of mayors, council members, and supervisors from each of the San Diego region's 19 local governments.

SANDAG has produced the following documents that identify transportation plans and policies in the San Diego area.

##### **San Diego Forward: The Regional Plan**

SANDAG adopted the San Diego Forward: The Regional Plan on December 10, 2021 (SANDAG 2021). This plan provides a long-term blueprint for the San Diego region that seeks to meet regulatory requirements, address traffic congestion, and create equal access to jobs, education, healthcare, and other community resources. The plan is the result of years of planning, data analysis, and community engagement to reimagine the San Diego region with a transformative transportation system, a sustainable pattern of growth and development, and innovative demand and management strategies.



### **2018 State Transportation Improvement Program**

The State Transportation Improvement Program is a biennial five-year program of state and federally funded transportation projects developed locally and approved by the California Transportation Commission. Every two years, the California Transportation Commission provides an estimate of revenues available to each metropolitan area for use in developing a program of projects based on local priorities. Upon approval by the California Transportation Commission, the State Transportation Improvement Program of projects is incorporated into the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP), which also includes other locally funded transportation projects.

### **2018 Regional Transportation Improvement Program**

The RTIP is a multi-year program of proposed major highway, arterial, transit, and non-motorized projects. Improvements to nearly all of the major highways in the San Diego region are included in the 2021 RTIP. The 2021 RTIP covers fiscal years 2021 to 2025. The 2021 RTIP, including an air quality conformity emissions analysis, was adopted on February 26, 2021.

#### **3.7.2.4 Local**

##### **Escondido Bicycle Master Plan**

The Escondido Bicycle Master Plan identifies existing circulation patterns for bicyclists, problem areas and safety concerns, and develops a master system to further the implementation of bikeways throughout Escondido. The Escondido Bicycle Master Plan includes Caltrans bikeway standards, conceptual designs for bicycle paths and trails, maps of existing and proposed bicycle facilities, a phasing plan for improvements, funding sources, and an implementation plan. The plan identifies a bicycle facility network, both on the road (Class II and III) and off-road (Class I). Upon full implementation, the plan will create a comprehensive network of bike lanes, routes, and paths. The Escondido Bicycle Master Plan was adopted in October 2012.

##### **Escondido General Plan**

###### ***Mobility and Infrastructure Element***

The Escondido General Plan is a set of long-term goals and policies that decision makers will use to guide growth and development and address the community's goals. The plan is divided into various elements that include the Land Use and Community Form Element, Mobility and Infrastructure Element, Housing Element, Community Health and Services Element, Community Protection Element, Resource Conservation Element, Growth Management Element, Economic Prosperity Element, and any additional topics of local significance. Each of these elements details policies and programs to achieve the established goals.

The Mobility and Infrastructure Element’s purpose is to identify the types, locations, and extent of existing and proposed transportation and utility facilities, and to establish goals and guiding policies for implementing improvements necessary to serve existing and future residents (City of Escondido 2012). The relevant goals and policies are as follows:

- **Mobility and Infrastructure Goal 1:** An accessible, safe, convenient, and integrated multimodal network that connects all users and moves goods and people within the community and region efficiently.
  - **Regional Transportation Planning Policy 1.1:** Cooperate with the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), North County Transit District (NCTD), adjacent communities and other appropriate agencies to prepare, adopt, and implement a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The RTP shall define mobility improvements and programs to support local and regional growth, and promote reduction of single-occupancy vehicle travel and increased use of alternative modes of transportation.
  - **Regional Transportation Planning Policy 1.2:** Collaborate with SANDAG and NCTD for the efficient allocation of funding resources for transit and transportation improvements and operations.
  - **Regional Transportation Planning Policy 1.3:** Coordinate local traffic management efforts to be compatible and provide connectivity with adopted circulation plans in the region and regional transportation planning efforts.
  - **Complete Streets Policy 2.1:** Ensure that the existing and future transportation system is interconnected and serves multiple modes of travel, such as walking, biking, transit, and driving for safe and convenient travel.
  - **Complete Streets Policy 2.2:** Provide a safe, efficient and accessible transportation network that meets the needs of users of all ages including seniors, children, disabled persons, and adults.
  - **Complete Streets Policy 2.3:** Promote integrated transportation and land use decisions that enhance human-scale smart growth development served by complete streets, which facilitate multimodal transportation opportunities.
  - **Complete Streets Policy 2.4:** Evaluate access, safety, and convenience of various transportation modes for every project involving the following eight user groups: pedestrians, children, disabled individuals, seniors, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, and goods and services.
  - **Complete Streets Policy 2.5:** Design streets in a manner that is sensitive to the local context and recognizes that the needs vary between mixed use, urban, suburban, and rural settings.
  - **Complete Streets Policy 2.6:** Ensure that the entire right-of-way is designed to accommodate appropriate modes of transportation.

- **Complete Streets Policy 2.7:** Remove barriers, where feasible, to allow people of all abilities to access the mobility infrastructure serving the community.
- **Complete Streets Policy 2.8:** Promote the provision of multimodal access to activity centers such as commercial centers and corridors, employment centers, transit stops/stations, schools, parks, recreation areas, and tourist attractions.
- **Complete Streets Policy 2.9:** Regularly review, update and collect adequate traffic impact fees and ensure the efficient allocation of state and regional funding sources for the development and maintenance of local transit and transportation improvements and operations.
- **Pedestrian Network Policy 3.1:** Prepare and regularly update a Pedestrian Master Plan that identifies and defines the following: level of service standards for pedestrian facilities; type and location of pedestrian-oriented streets and pathways; way-finding program, standards for sidewalk width, improvements, amenities, and street crossings; outline and timeframe of needed public improvements; and developer responsibilities.<sup>1</sup>
- **Pedestrian Network Policy 3.2:** Develop and manage pedestrian facilities to maintain an acceptable Level of Service as defined in the Pedestrian Master Plan.
- **Pedestrian Network Policy 3.3:** Maintain a pedestrian environment that is accessible to all and that is safe, attractive, and encourages walking.
- **Pedestrian Network Policy 3.4:** Preserve and enhance pedestrian connectivity within existing neighborhoods via the Escondido Creek trail, sidewalks, and trails, and require a pedestrian network in new developments that provides efficient and well-designed connections to adjacent land uses, commercial districts, schools, and parks.
- **Pedestrian Network Policy 3.5:** Promote walking and improve the pedestrian experience by requiring pedestrian facilities along all classified streets designated on the Circulation Plan; implementing streetscape improvements along pedestrian routes that incorporate such elements as shade trees, street furniture, and lighting; orienting development toward the street; employing traffic calming measures; and enforcing vehicle speeds on both residential and arterial streets.
- **Pedestrian Network Policy 3.6:** Enhance pedestrian visibility by enforcing parking restrictions at intersection approaches, improving street lighting, and identifying required clearances to minimize obstructions.
- **Pedestrian Network Policy 3.7:** Encourage and support the development of pedestrian-friendly mixed-use, commercial, transit-oriented, and multi-tenant

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<sup>1</sup> Regarding Pedestrian Network Policy 3.1 and Policy 3.2, the City is currently preparing a Comprehensive Active Transportation Strategy that will include master planning for pedestrian, bicycle, and other active modes.

office districts with active, accessible, connected, and unique public spaces that promote walking.

- **Pedestrian Network Policy 3.8:** Repair sidewalk and pedestrian paths in the public-right-of-way that impede pedestrian travel, and maintain the pedestrian network in a manner that facilitates accessibility and safety.
- **Pedestrian Network Policy 3.9:** Support “safe routes to schools” programming and partner with schools, non-profit organizations, and transit agencies with the goal of encouraging more children to walk and bike to school in a safe environment.
- **Bicycle Network Policy 4.1:** Maintain and implement a Bicycle Master Plan that enhances existing bicycle routes and facilities; defines gaps and needed improvements; prescribes an appropriate Level of Service; outlines standards for their design and safety; describes funding resources; and involves the community.
- **Bicycle Network Policy 4.2:** Develop and manage bicycle facilities to maintain an acceptable Level of Service as defined in the Bicycle Master Plan.
- **Bicycle Network Policy 4.3:** Promote bicycling as a common mode of transportation and recreation to help reduce traffic congestion and improve public health.
- **Bicycle Network Policy 4.4:** Develop bicycle routes and facilities that connect to transit stations, employment and commercial centers, schools, libraries, cultural centers, parks, the Escondido Creek trail, and other frequently visited destinations throughout the community and region where they do not already exist.
- **Bicycle Network Policy 4.5:** Coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions the development of bicycle routes that provide connectivity between the communities.
- **Bicycle Network Policy 4.6:** Incorporate bicycle parking facilities in public places such as transit stops, libraries, and parks where feasible.
- **Bicycle Network Policy 4.7:** Require larger new development projects (e.g., employment centers, educational institutions, and commercial centers) to provide connections to existing and proposed bicycle routes, as well as bicycle parking, personal lockers, showers, and other bicycle support facilities to encourage biking.
- **Bicycle Network Policy 4.8:** Support education programs for motorists and bicyclists regarding bicycling safety and the public health and environmental benefits of bicycling.
- **Transit System Policy 5.1:** Collaborate with the North County Transit District (NCTD) to facilitate effective, convenient, and efficient transit modes to meet the needs of residents and visitors including seniors, disabled persons, and transit-dependent persons.
- **Transit System Policy 5.2:** Cooperate with the North County Transit District (NCTD) to increase the use of transit by maintaining services within the city

that are timely and cost effective; establishing criteria for transit improvements (including grade separated rail crossings); locating routes and access points that are responsive to growth patterns; developing short and long-range service plans; and preserving the rights-of-way for commuter rail lines.

- **Transit System Policy 5.3:** Coordinate with the NCTD to establish transit stops in areas of concentrated activity such as near senior housing projects, medical facilities, major employment centers, and mixed use areas.
- **Transit System Policy 5.4:** Coordinate with the NCTD to accommodate transit centers and major stops with adequate bicycle and pedestrian access and secure bicycle storage where appropriate. Include facilities that are well designed, provide appropriate lighting and are safe, comfortable, and attractive.
- **Transit System Policy 5.7:** Provide connections to transit stations by identifying roadway, bikeway, and pedestrian way improvements to be constructed within ½ mile of every major transit station.
- **Transit System Policy 5.8:** Require that new developments incorporate transit-supporting facilities into the project design, where appropriate.
- **Transit System Policy 5.9:** Construct, when appropriate, transit facilities such as bus pullouts on Prime Arterials, Major Roads, and Collector streets.
- **Transit System Policy 5.10:** Provide safe and efficient multimodal access to and within transit stations, complying with ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act] standards.
- **Transit System Policy 5.11:** Evaluate the transportation needs of seniors, including paratransit service for seniors and disabled persons.
- **TDM Policy 6.1:** Develop and implement Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and complete street programs to reduce automobile travel demand that may include, but shall not be limited to: preparing site-specific peak-hour traffic-management plans; promoting ride-sharing and carpooling for residents and non-residents through preferential parking; providing park-and-ride facilities adjacent to the regional transit system; and supporting transit subsidies.
- **TDM Policy 6.2:** Encourage employers to offer programs, facilities, and incentives to their employees that would promote carpooling, transit use, and use of other alternative modes.
- **TDM Policy 6.3:** Establish a TDM program for city employees that promote carpooling, use of transit, and use of alternative modes of transportation.
- **Street Network Policy 7.1:** Plan, design, and regulate roadways in accordance with the street classification in the Circulation Element Diagram.
- **Street Network Policy 7.2:** Allow Specific Alignment Plans for unique situations when standard widening is not adequate for future needs or when special conditions/constraints exist which require a detailed implementation plan.

- **Street Network Policy 7.3:** Strive to maintain LOS C or better throughout the city except for within the urban core. Establish LOS D as the threshold for determining significant impacts and appropriate mitigation. Due to physical design characteristics, implementation of pedestrian-oriented ‘smart growth’ and Complete Streets design improvements, high density infill areas, environmental resource considerations, existing development, freeway interchange impacts, and incomplete system improvements, alternative levels of service may be appropriate for isolated areas as determined by the city.
- **Street Network Policy 7.4:** Provide adequate traffic safety measures on all new roadways and strive to provide adequate traffic safety measures on existing roadways (subject to fiscal and environmental considerations). These measures may include, but not be limited to, appropriate levels of maintenance, proper street design, traffic control devices (signs, signals, striping), street lighting, and coordination with the school districts and other agencies.
- **Street Network Policy 7.5:** Provide high priority to funding capital improvement projects that complete links to the circulation system, relieve existing congestion in the urban core as defined by the city, correct unsafe conditions on existing streets and/or improve the regional circulation system.
- **Street Network Policy 7.6:** Ensure that identified mobility system improvements are developed in a timely manner to meet the needs of the community.
- **Street Network Policy 7.7:** Require new development projects to analyze local traffic impacts, and construct and implement the improvements required for that development.
- **Street Network Policy 7.8:** Require new development projects to analyze traffic impacts on the regional transportation system, and pay a fair-share contribution to regional transportation improvements.
- **Street Network Policy 7.9:** Synchronize traffic signals where feasible and appropriate to facilitate the flow of through traffic, thus enhancing the movement of vehicles and goods through the city while reducing fuel consumption and air pollution.
- **Street Network Policy 7.10:** Implement street beautification programs to improve the visual quality and character of roadway corridors and provide a distinct identify for key gateways into the city.<sup>2</sup>
- **Street Network Policy 7.11:** Enhance the safety and efficiency of accessing the public street network from private properties by:
  - a) Controlling driveway access locations on Prime Arterials and Major Roads;

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<sup>2</sup> Regarding Street Network Policy 7.10, the City is currently preparing a Comprehensive Active Transportation Strategy that will include master planning for pedestrian, bicycle, and other active modes.

- b) Installing medians and access controls on Collector Roads and higher classifications;
  - c) Maintaining minimum distances from intersections for accessing Prime Arterials, Major Roads, and Collector streets;
  - d) Consolidating driveway access; and
  - e) Encouraging interconnected parking lots.
- **Traffic Calming Policy 9.1:** Reduce congestion in areas surrounding schools, parks, and other activity centers by applying effective traffic management solutions.
  - **Traffic Calming Policy 9.2:** Encourage the use of innovative methods for traffic control (such as roundabouts, curb extensions, and traffic circles) that add character and create opportunity for improved aesthetics while effectively managing traffic.
  - **Traffic Calming Policy 9.3:** Protect residential neighborhoods from cut-through traffic and other traffic-related issues by implementing appropriate traffic calming measures.

### Escondido Municipal Code

EMC Chapter 23 establishes street and sidewalk standards for areas in the City. This chapter defines standards for public dedication of ROWs, arrangement for relocation of public utility facilities within sidewalks or streets, and issuance of building permits for construction in setback areas and ROWs. Additionally, this chapter identifies standards for locating pumps, tanks, and fire hydrants within sidewalks, streets, or ROWs.

### 3.7.3 Thresholds of Significance

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project has a significant impact on transportation if it meets any of the following thresholds:

- **Threshold 1:** Conflicts with a program plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities.
- **Threshold 2:** Conflicts or is inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b) such that a land use project will induce substantial VMT.
- **Threshold 3:** Substantially increases hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment).
- **Threshold 4:** Results in inadequate emergency access.

### 3.7.4 Impacts and Mitigation

The following sections address various potential impacts relating to transportation that could result from implementation of the Project.

### 3.7.4.1 Threshold 1: Circulation System Performance

Pursuant to section 21099(b)(2) of the California Public Resources Code, “automobile delay, as described solely by LOS or similar measures of vehicular capacity or traffic congestion shall not be considered a significant impact on the environment.” The Transportation Analysis (Appendix G) includes traffic forecast volumes. However, impacts on the study area roadway network are not considered CEQA impacts pursuant to section 21099(b)(2). This issue focuses on whether the Project conflicts with an adopted program, plan, ordinance, or policy related to the transportation system. For the purposes of this analysis, a significant transportation impact could occur if the Project would conflict with other adopted transportation programs, plans, ordinances, or policies.

#### Impact Analysis

The development potential of the EVSP Area in Table 2-3, East Valley Specific Plan Development Potential by Land Use Type, in Chapter 2, Project Summary, estimates the potential growth by land use type through 2035. No new roadways are proposed; however, one roadway would be reclassified to accommodate increased traffic volumes and pedestrian and bicycle improvements: Centre City Parkway between El Norte Parkway and SR-78 to a six-lane super major. New development facilitated by the Project would increase traffic volumes in the EVSP Area. A Level of Service Analysis was prepared in the Transportation Analysis (Appendix G) to determine the future mobility needs of the EVSP Area. Based on this analysis, the Project has incorporated a Transportation Fair Share Contribution Program that the City has committed to in order to address the potential roadway deficiencies that may result under the Project (see Chapter 2.0, Project Description). For each location identified, the percentage of the EVSP buildout that could be built before the improvement is triggered has been calculated (Appendix G). When specific developments are proposed in the EVSP Area, the average daily trips generated would be determined and the development’s fair-share contribution to the overall improvements would be calculated.

Implementation of the EVSP would increase demand for public transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities, reducing vehicle trips and VMT. The EVSP includes policies that promote alternative modes of transportation, a safe and connective pedestrian and cyclist experience, and a transit-oriented community with safe, reliable, and timely transit options. Proposed EVSP policies are consistent with the Escondido General Plan Mobility and Infrastructure Element and include the following:

- **Policy M-2.1:** Construct public improvements commensurate with the proposed development, including but not limited to, bicycle facilities and amenities, enhanced sidewalks, street parkway landscaping, curb ramps, closures of curb cuts, lighting, benches and drainage improvements.
- **Policy M-2.2:** Require internal pedestrian connections between properties to minimize unnecessary vehicle miles traveled (“VMT”) and turning movements on roadways within the Plan Area.



- **Policy M-2.3:** Evaluate the feasibility and potential benefits of installing enhanced mid-block pedestrian crossings, with pedestrian hybrid beacons or signals, along East Valley Parkway between Cedar Street and Beech Street, and between Ash Street and Harding Street.
- **Policy M-2.4:** Require new development or redevelopment to install sidewalk amenities including lighting, signage, seating, and street trees wherever feasible.
- **Policy M-2.5:** Where feasible, development and redevelopment applicants should work with NCTD to enhance the safety and comfort of spaces designed for transit riders to wait for buses that include lighting, new shelters, benches, wayfinding and transit information in multiple languages, and other amenities including those that improve access and comfort for people with disabilities.
- **Policy M-2.7:** Development and redevelopment projects should provide wayfinding signage and improve accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists at key locations to and through East Valley Parkway.
- **Policy M-2.8:** Develop and enhance bicycle routes and facilities that connect to transit stations, employment and commercial centers, schools, libraries, cultural centers, parks, the Escondido Creek Trail, and other frequently visited destinations throughout the community and region where they do not already exist in accordance with the Comprehensive Active Transportation Plan.
- **Policy M-2.9:** Update the Escondido Bicycle Master Plan with a Comprehensive Active Transportation Plan and carry forward its efforts that ensure safe, adequate bike routes and encourage the replacement of vehicle trips with bicycle trips.
- **Policy M-2.10:** Increase availability of bicycle parking within proximity to commercial, office, residential development; as well as public places such as transit stops, libraries, parks, and the Escondido Creek Trail to make bicycling more appealing and convenient.
- **Policy M-2.11:** Require new larger development projects (e.g. commercial centers, educational institutions) to provide connections to existing and proposed bicycle routes, in addition to considering the addition of bicycle parking, personal lockers, and other bicycle support facilities, where feasible, to encourage bicycling.
- **Policy M-3.2:** Evaluate the feasibility and potential benefit of transit priority treatments (such as transit priority signals at intersections, queue jump lanes, and boarding islands or transit bulbs) on East Valley Parkway and decrease bus headways to improve overall transit travel times, and access to and from East Valley Parkway.
- **Policy M-3.3:** Work with NCTD to evaluate the feasibility and potential benefit of extended bus platforms that are extensions of the curb that provide more space for riders to wait, board, and exit the bus. These extended bus platforms improve bus route efficiency by reducing the time a bus spends pulling out of and back into traffic.

- **Policy M-3.4:** Focus pedestrian safety improvements to be in proximity to transit stops in accordance with the Comprehensive Active Transportation Strategy.
- **Policy M-3.5:** Work through NCTD to involve the community in identifying priority upgrades to transit stops to make them safer and more comfortable.

### **Significance of Impact**

Implementation of the Project with the incorporation of the Transportation Fair Share Contribution Program and EVSP policies would not result in a conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy. Impacts would be less than significant.

### **Mitigation Measures**

No mitigation measures are required.

### **Significance After Mitigation**

Not applicable.

#### **3.7.4.2 Threshold 2: Induction of Substantial Vehicle Miles Traveled**

Prior to any detailed project-specific VMT analysis, the OPR allows for the use of a “map-based screening” (screening map) to identify if a project will result in a less than significant impact. The SANDAG screening map, which has been developed for the VMT guidelines, was used for the Project. This map provides VMT per capita, VMT per employee, and retail VMT evaluation for locations throughout the City, and accounts for surrounding land uses, population density, and transportation infrastructure in accordance with OPR guidelines. These elements collectively shape mobility behavior and provide a strong indication of expected project VMT. In general, higher density and mix of land uses with access to mobility options are expected to generate lower VMT. The data represented on the screening map follows the OPR guidance and displays VMT efficient areas that are 85% or less of the SANDAG regional average. The data is also based on SANDAG Series 13 Year 2050 model.

### **Impact Analysis**

SANDAG Series 13 Year 2050 Travel Demand Model was used to calculate the VMT for the baseline and the Project. The Series 13 model generates a land use-specific average trip length (Residential, Office, and Retail) and an average daily volume, which ultimately calculates the total VMT per capita, VMT per employee, and retail VMT, both region-wide and for the Project.

Table 3.7-3, Vehicle Miles Traveled Model Results, summarizes the regional average baseline VMT results provided by SANDAG using the Series 13 model.

**Table 3.7-3. Vehicle Miles Traveled Model Results**

| VMT                | Regional<br>(Year 2016 Baseline)             | Project VMT                               | 85% of Regional<br>(Year 2016 Baseline) | Significant?        |
|--------------------|--|---|---|---------------------|
| <b>Residential</b> |  |   |   |                     |
| VMT per resident   | 19.0   | 5.8                                       | 16.5                                    | No                  |
| <b>Office</b>      |  |   |   |                     |
| VMT per employee   | 27.2   | 12.7                                      | 23.12                                   | No                  |
| <b>Total VMT</b>   | <b>Regional Baseline<br/>Without Project</b> | <b>Regional Baseline<br/>with Project</b> | <b>Delta</b>                            | <b>Significant?</b> |
| <b>Retail</b>      |  |   |   |                     |
| Citywide           | 5,759,217                                    | 6,004,710                                 | 245,493                                 | No                  |

**Source:** Appendix G.

**Notes:** VMT = vehicles miles traveled

As shown in Table 3.7-3, the project VMT per capita is 5.8 miles per resident, and the Project's average baseline VMT per employee is 12.7 miles per employee, which is lower than 85% of the regional average of 19 miles per resident and 27.2 miles per employee. Therefore, no significant VMT impact is calculated for Residential and Office uses.

Regarding retail VMT, as shown in Table 3.7-3, the "with Project" Citywide regional VMT for retail is calculated to be 6,004,710 miles. This is greater than the regional VMT for retail without the Project, which is calculated as 5,759,217 miles. However, since the Project provides local-serving retail with less than 50,000 square feet, the retail portion may also be presumed to have a less than significant impact because local-serving retail generally improves the convenience of shopping close to home and has the effect of reducing vehicle travel (Appendix G).

In addition, the EVSP includes a policy that promotes reducing overall VMT and promoting alternative modes of transportation as follows:

- **Policy M-1.4:** Establish and implement Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs to increase the number of people who use transit, walking, bicycling, and carpooling to access downtown. All new development shall be in compliance with the applicable transportation demand management (TDM) measures.

The EVSP provides specific TDM measures to reduce the overall number of VMT by providing better incentives and opportunities to choose alternative modes. The following EVSP TDM measures build off the Escondido General Plan TDM policies and are separated by public improvements and private development.

### ***Transportation Demand Management Measures for Public Improvements***

Public improvement projects carried out by the City shall strive to implement the following TDM strategies:

1. Develop and implement a Safe Routes to Transit Plan.
2. Participate in the City's commuter program that includes subsidized transit passes, preferred parking spots for car- or vanpool, bike racks, showers on-site, teleworking, and flexible work schedules.
3. Encourage employers to offer programs, facilities, and incentives to their employees that would promote carpooling, transit use, and use of other alternative modes. Provide businesses and business organizations, such as Chambers of Commerce, with information on SANDAG's iCommute program.
4. Provide information on commuting resources. Install a kiosk with information on commute alternatives and provide information on web sites and newsletters.
5. Participate in and promote annual regional events and campaigns that encourage commute alternatives to driving alone such as Bike to Work Month, Dump the Pump, Rideshare Week, and Walk and Bike to School Day.

### ***Transportation Demand Management Measures for Private Development***

Private development projects carried out by private developers shall strive to implement the following TDM strategies:

#### **Residential**

1. Provide bicycle parking as required by Table 5-3, Supplemental Parking Standards [in the EVSP].
2. Provide six-month transit passes to new residents.
3. Monitor transit use by new residents for the first six months of operation and present monitoring results to the City.

#### **Non-Residential**

1. Provide bicycle parking as required by Table 5-3, Supplemental Parking Standards [in the EVSP].
2. Provide "end-of-trip" facilities on site for bicycle commuters (i.e., bicycle parking spaces, showers, changing rooms, and lockers).
3. Provide informational material to employees for carpool and vanpool ride-matching services.
4. Develop alternate workplace, telecommuting, and/or alternate work schedule programs.

The EVSP TDM measures would be implemented to reduce VMT associated with new development and provide transportation choices for residents and visitors in the EVSP Area. Impacts would be less than significant.

### **Significance of Impact**

The Project does not conflict and is consistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3(b). Impacts would be less than significant.

### **Mitigation Measures**

No mitigation measures are required.

### **Significance After Mitigation**

Not applicable.

#### **3.7.4.3 Threshold 3: Hazardous Design Features**

##### **Impact Analysis**

Implementation of the EVSP would accommodate Residential, Mixed-Use Multi-Family Residential, and General Commercial land uses, similar to the current uses in the EVSP Area. Future development consistent with the EVSP is not anticipated to result in incompatible uses. The EVSP would focus on maintaining many of the existing uses. Future development and redevelopment would include the construction of driveways and private roadways to serve the proposed development. Traffic hazards might be created if adequate vehicle storage space is not provided at the entrances to a development so that waiting vehicles would extend into roadways, or if adequate site distance is not provided at driveway intersections.

No new roadways are proposed as part of the EVSP. However, implementation of the EVSP would include improvements to the public circulation network, including construction of enhanced sidewalks and bicycle facilities throughout the EVSP Area. Intersections or sidewalks are considered hazards if they are not equipped with proper safety features, such as setbacks or curbs, and are not ADA accessible.

Future development consistent with the EVSP would be subject to the City's Design Standards and Standard Drawings for roadway modifications, including enhanced sidewalks and bicycle facilities, and site access design. With adherence to these policies, implementation of the Project would not result in increasing hazards due to a design feature or incompatible uses. Impacts are less than significant.

### **Significance of Impact**

Implementation of the Project would not substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment). Impacts would be less than significant.

### **Mitigation Measures**

No mitigation measures are required.

### **Significance After Mitigation**

Not applicable.

#### **3.7.4.4 Threshold 4: Inadequate Emergency Access**

### **Impact Analysis**

Inadequate emergency access and egress can occur as a result of an incomplete or not fully interconnected roadway network, such as inadequate roadway widths, turning radii, dead-end or gated roads, one-way roads, single ingress and egress routes, or other factors. Implementation of the EVSP, including improvements to public roads, as well as future land use development, would have the potential to require lane or roadway closures during construction. Lane and roadway closures have the potential to limit emergency access to the development site and/or existing development adjacent to the lane or roadway closure. Future development construction activities are required to provide notification to the Escondido Fire Marshal.

Future development consistent with the EVSP might include new access driveways and internal roadway or alleyways to provide access to new development or redevelopment and would be required to provide driveway widths and clearances consistent with local and state requirements to accommodate emergency vehicles and ensure emergency access. In addition, any proposed roadway improvements would be designed and constructed to meet the requirements of the City Engineer and Escondido Fire Marshal. Therefore, future development would not result in inadequate emergency access. Impacts would be less than significant.

### **Significance of Impact**

The Project does not result in inadequate emergency access. Impacts would be less than significant.

### **Mitigation Measures**

No mitigation measures are required.

### **Significance After Mitigation**

Not applicable.

### **3.7.5 Cumulative Impacts and Mitigation**

The following sections address various potential cumulative impacts relating to transportation that could result from implementation of the Project.

#### **3.7.5.1 Cumulative Threshold 1: Circulation System Performance**

The geographic context for the analysis of cumulative impacts associated with conflicts with an adopted transportation program, plan, ordinance, or policy is the City. A significant cumulative impact would occur if future projects would combine to be inconsistent with an adopted program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the transportation system, including transit, roadways, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. The Project would be consistent with the Escondido General Plan Mobility and Infrastructure Element and would not conflict with any adopted policies or plans addressing pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities.

Similar to the Project, cumulative projects would have to demonstrate consistency with existing adopted plans or require mitigation measures to ensure consistency for project approvals to occur. Therefore, the Project, in combination with other cumulative projects, would not result in a significant cumulative impact due to conflicts with adopted policies.

#### **3.7.5.2 Threshold 2: Induction of Substantial Vehicle Miles Traveled**

The traffic forecast model used to analyze the Project reflects the changes to future growth patterns assumed as part of the EVSP. The VMT impact analysis relies on existing and future growth accommodated through implementation of the EVSP and accounts for the projected growth of the EVSP Area. Therefore, the analysis provided in Section 3.7.4.2 includes the analysis of both the direct project and cumulative impacts. The Project's average baseline VMT per employee is lower than 85% of the regional average. Therefore, no significant VMT impact is calculated for Residential and Office uses. In addition, since the Project would provide local-serving retail with less than 50,000 square feet, the retail portion may also be presumed to have a less than significant impact because local-serving retail generally improves the convenience of shopping close to home and has the effect of reducing vehicle travel. Cumulative Impacts would be less than significant.

#### **3.7.5.3 Cumulative Threshold 3: Hazardous Design Features**

Development of cumulative projects in the City could result in traffic hazards related to driveway clearance, adequate site distance, and dangerous intersections. Similar to the Project, cumulative development projects would be required to be consistent with the City's Design Standards and Standard Drawings for roadway improvements, including enhanced sidewalks and bicycle facilities, and site access design. Therefore, the Project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to a significant cumulative hazardous design features.

#### **3.7.5.4 Cumulative Threshold 4: Inadequate Emergency Access**

Development of cumulative projects could include the construction of new access driveways or internal roadways or alleyways that could result in inadequate emergency access. However, cumulative emergency access impacts would be limited to the immediate vicinity of the impact, such as multiple obstructions to emergency access along the same route to an emergency care facility. In addition, cumulative projects would be required to meet current state and applicable local standards, including the City Engineer's and Escondido Fire Marshal's requirements. Therefore, the Project would not contribute to a significant cumulative impact associated with inadequate emergency access.

#### **3.7.6 Conclusion**

Implementation of the EVSP would not conflict with Escondido General Plan Mobility and Infrastructure Element. Implementation of the Transportation Fair Share Contribution Program would improve the impacted roadway segments and intersection operations relative to their baseline results, which would ensure that the impact is less than significant.

Implementation of the EVSP would result in a VMT per resident and a VMT per employee below the 85% of the regional average, resulting in a less than significant VMT impact for Residential and Office land uses. In addition, the Citywide VMT for retail with the Project is calculated to be greater than the VMT for retail without the Project. However, since the Project would provide local-serving retail with less than 50,000 square feet, and because local-serving retail reduces VMT, impacts would be less than significant. In addition, the EVSP would provide specific public improvement and private development TDM measures to reduce the overall number of VMT by providing better incentives and opportunities to choose alternative modes. Direct and cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

The EVSP would have the potential to limit emergency access to the development site and/or existing development as a result of temporary lane or roadway closures. In addition, new access driveways and internal roadway or alleyways could be constructed to provide access to new development or redevelopment. Any proposed temporary lane closures or permanent roadway improvements would be designed and constructed to meet the requirements of the City Engineer and Escondido Fire Marshal. Direct and cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

Development consistent with the EVSP would have the potential to result in traffic hazards. Future development is subject to the City's Design Standards and Standard Drawings for roadway modifications, including enhanced sidewalks and bicycle facilities, and site access design. Direct and cumulative impacts would be less than significant.





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## Chapter 4 **Effects Found Not to Be Significant**

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### 4.1 **Introduction**

This chapter is broken into sections that analyze potential impacts resulting from implementation of the EVSP. Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines was used as the basis for this analysis. The analysis is based on relevant technical reports prepared for the Project and is focused on consistency with the goals established in the Escondido General Plan (City of Escondido 2012a).

The following sections address environmental issue areas that have been found to be less than significant without mitigation:

- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire

### 4.2 **Analysis of Effects Found Not to Be Significant**

#### 4.2.1 **Agriculture and Forestry Resources**

The following sections address various potential impacts relating to agriculture and forestry resources that could result from implementation of the Project.

##### 4.2.1.1 **Thresholds of Significance**

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project has a significant impact on agriculture and forestry services if it meets any of the following thresholds:

1. Converts 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.
2. Conflicts with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract.
3. Conflicts with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in California Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by

- California Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by California Government Code section 51104(g)).
4. Results in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.
  5. Involves other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

#### **4.2.1.2 Impact Analysis**

##### **Threshold 1: Conversion of Farmland to Non-Agricultural Use**

The EVSP Area is designated as Urban and Built Up Land, pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Department of Conservation (DOC 2022). The EVSP Area does not meet the criteria for Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. The EVSP Area is not in agricultural use. As indicated on the map of San Diego County Important Farmland developed by the California Department of Conservation for the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, the EVSP Area is on and surrounded by Urban and Built Up Land (DOC 2022). Urban and Built Up Land generally includes residential, commercial, industrial, institutional facilities, and other urban land uses. Therefore, the Project would not convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use, and no impact would occur.

##### **Threshold 2: Conflict with Zoning for Agricultural Use or Williamson Act Contract**

According to the California Department of Conservation's map of San Diego County Williamson Act contract lands, the EVSP Area is not on Williamson Act contract land (DOC 2022). The EVSP Area is currently zoned for commercial, residential, and industrial uses, which do not include zoning for agricultural use (City of Escondido 2012a). Therefore, the Project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract, and no impact would occur.

##### **Threshold 3: Conflict with Zoning or Rezoning of Forest Land, Timberland, or Timberland Zoned Timberland Production**

The EVSP Area does not contain any timber or forest resources and does not meet the criteria for forest land or timberland. The EVSP Area is in an urban area, surrounded by residential and commercial uses. Therefore, the Project would not conflict with existing zoning for forest land or timberland, and no impact would occur.

##### **Threshold 4: Loss of Forest Land or Conversion of Forest Land to Non-Forest Use**

Development associated with the EVSP would not result in the loss of forest land or the conversion of forest land to non-forest use because the EVSP Area does not contain forested land. Further, the EVSP Area is not zoned for forest land. Therefore, no impact would occur.

### **Threshold 5: Other Changes Resulting in Conversion of Farmland to Non-Agricultural Use or Conversion of Forest Land to Non-Forest Use**

As described previously, the Project would be within the urbanized area of the City. The site and immediate surroundings are not designated as or used for agricultural purposes. Development associated with the EVSP would not result in the conversion of Farmland or forest land to non-agricultural or non-forest use. Therefore, no impact would occur.

#### **4.2.1.3 Cumulative Impact Analysis**

The geographic context for the analysis of cumulative agricultural resource impacts encompasses the City. Development of cumulative projects could result in the permanent conversion of agricultural resources. The associated loss of agricultural production would be a significant impact. However, future housing development facilitated by the EVSP would be in areas with no classified Farmland. Therefore, no classified agricultural lands or forest land would be converted, and no conflict with agricultural zoning or with forest land or timberland zoning would occur as a result of implementation of the Project. Therefore, the Project's contribution would not be cumulatively considerable.

#### **4.2.2 Energy**

The following sections address various potential impacts relating to energy that could result from implementation of the Project.

##### **4.2.2.1 Thresholds of Significance**

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project has a significant impact on energy if it meets any of the following thresholds:

1. Results in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation.
2. Conflicts with or obstructs a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

##### **4.2.2.2 Impact Analysis**

#### **Threshold 1: Wasteful or Inefficient Energy Usage**

The Project is the adoption of the EVSP and would not specifically address any particular development projects; thus, impacts on energy resources are addressed based on projected buildout of the EVSP Area. Implementation of the Project has the potential to result in impacts on energy supply as a result of future development consistent with the EVSP.

#### ***Construction***

Construction of future development projects consistent with the EVSP would create temporary demands for energy from gas- or diesel-powered equipment, as well as alternative fuel and electricity. Energy would be required for operation of construction equipment and haul and

personal vehicle trips. The use of energy resources by these vehicles would fluctuate according to the phase of construction and would be temporary.

Limitations to idling of vehicles and equipment and requirements that equipment be properly maintained would result in fuel savings. California regulations (13 CCR 2449(d)(3), 2485) limit idling from both on-road and off-road diesel-powered equipment and are enforced by CARB. Additionally, personal vehicles and off-road equipment would be subject to increasingly stringent emissions standards established by CARB. In addition, all operation of construction equipment would cease upon completion of project construction. Construction of land uses consistent with the EVSP is not anticipated to require unusual construction practices that would result in excessive energy use.

Furthermore, future developments consistent with the EVSP would be required to comply with the current and future updates to the 2019 Building Energy Efficiency Standards and California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen), which would reduce energy demands and demonstrate consistency with energy-reducing CAP implementation measures. To meet the City's 2030 and 2035 targets, the Escondido CAP identifies strategies and measures to reduce GHG emissions Citywide from a variety of emissions categories. These categories include increased alternative transportation, reduced VMT, increased energy and water efficiency, increased renewable energy generation, reduced solid waste disposal, and increased carbon sequestration and land conservation. In addition, the EVSP would include the following policy to increase energy efficiency and reduce wasteful, inefficient use of energy resources:

- **SED-1.1:** Encourage the rehabilitation of existing uses by clarifying the approval processes to avoid excessive conditions that discourage rehabilitation.

Future construction is not anticipated to result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources. Impacts would be less than significant.

### ***Operation***

Operation of new development projects accommodated under the EVSP would create additional demands for fuel, electricity, and natural gas compared to existing conditions. Future developments constructed under the EVSP would be required to comply with the current and future updates to the 2019 Building Energy Efficiency Standards and CALGreen, which would reduce energy demands and demonstrate consistency with energy-reducing CAP implementation measures. Additionally, the EVSP would include the following policies to increase energy efficiency and reduce wasteful, inefficient use of energy resources:

- **SED-1.1:** Encourage the rehabilitation of existing uses by clarifying the approval processes to avoid excessive conditions that discourage rehabilitation.

- **SED-1.2:** Consider ways to improve equitable access to clean and sustainable energy. This could include the creation of a Clean Energy Equity Plan to support low-income residents and small organizations to purchase or obtain renewable energy. Also develop a program to engage with the Solar on Multi-Family Housing Program (“SOMAH”) to support local green job training.
- **SED-1.3:** Investigate the use of renewable distributed energy systems, which have environmental benefits, but use a distributed system and/or creative pricing to achieve equity benefits as well. Investing in renewable distributed systems and building insulation programs can reduce the differential impact of energy use on lower-income households.

Implementation of proposed policies under the EVSP in conjunction with regulatory requirements would ensure that energy demand associated with growth under the EVSP would be efficient and necessary. Therefore, energy impacts associated with construction and operation of land uses accommodated under the EVSP would be less than significant.

## **Threshold 2: Conflict with Renewable or Energy Efficiency Plan**

The Escondido General Plan and CAP are the applicable plans for energy efficiency in the City. Sustainability is a key community goal reflected throughout the Escondido General Plan. The City’s smart growth principles preserve and enhance single-family development patterns in established neighborhoods, maintain residential densities in outlying areas to accommodate growth, and guide additional employment and residential growth toward downtown and urbanized sectors along key transportation corridors.

A land use strategy of the Escondido General Plan is to promote mixed-use developments. Mixed-use development integrates employment, retail, entertainment, and community amenities in proximity to create vibrant urban areas. Successfully integrating residential, employment, entertainment, shopping, and services in a Mixed-Use Overlay is effective in reducing reliance on cars because residents are able to conveniently access facilities and services.

The purpose of the Escondido CAP is to establish an implementation plan for the City to achieve target Citywide GHG reductions of 4% below 2012 levels by 2020, 42% below 2012 levels by 2030, and 52% below 2012 levels by 2035. To meet the City’s 2030 and 2035 targets, the Escondido CAP identifies strategies and measures to reduce GHG emissions Citywide from a variety of emissions categories. These categories include increased alternative transportation, reduced VMT, increased energy and water efficiency, increased renewable energy generation, reduced solid waste disposal, and increased carbon sequestration and land conservation.

Individual future projects would be required to demonstrate consistency with the Escondido CAP as part of the project approval process. Consistency with the Escondido CAP is demonstrated at the project level through completion of the CAP Consistency Checklist. The first step in

determining Escondido CAP consistency is demonstrating consistency with the Escondido General Plan. Then, the CAP Consistency Checklist evaluates if a project adequately implements GHG reduction measures from the Escondido CAP, and determines if development demonstrates consistency with the Escondido CAP's assumptions for implementation. Projects that are not consistent with the CAP must prepare a comprehensive project-specific analysis of GHG emissions, including quantification of existing and projected GHG emissions, incorporation of the measures in the CAP Consistency Checklist to the extent applicable, and demonstration of consistency with an applicable VMT threshold.

Therefore, because the City has adopted a CAP with Escondido General Plan and energy reduction consistency requirements in place for future development consistent with the EVSP, implementation of the EVSP would not conflict with applicable energy efficiency plans. Impacts would be less than significant.

#### **4.2.2.3 Cumulative Impact Analysis**

The EVSP would support the growth considered in the Escondido General Plan. Similar to the Project and in compliance with CEQA, projects in the City are required to demonstrate that energy use required for construction and operation is not unnecessary, wasteful, or inefficient. New development projects would be required to comply with increasingly stringent statewide energy efficiency regulations, such as the Title 24 building standards, to encourage energy-efficient development and land use patterns that reduce VMT. Projects would be reviewed separately, and in the event that potential energy inefficiencies are identified for these projects, mitigation measures would be identified that would likely require that sustainability or energy efficiency features be incorporated into the Project.

In addition, although future development would result in the irreversible use of renewable and non-renewable energy resources during project and construction and operation, other future development projects would be expected to incorporate energy conservation features, comply with applicable regulations as stated in the Escondido General Plan and CAP, and incorporate mitigation measures as necessary. Accordingly, the Project's contribution to cumulative impacts related to energy would not be cumulatively considerable and, thus, are less than significant.

### **4.2.3 Geology and Soils**

The following sections address various potential impacts relating to geology and soils that could result from implementation of the Project.

#### **4.2.3.1 Thresholds of Significance**

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project has a significant impact on geology and soils if it meets any of the following thresholds:



1. Directly or indirectly causes potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:
  - a. 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.
  - b. Strong seismic ground shaking.
  - c. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction.
  - d. Landslides.
2. Results in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil.
3. Is located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially results in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse.
4. Is located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property.
5. Has soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater.
6. Directly or indirectly destroys a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature.

#### **4.2.3.2 Impact Analysis**

##### **Threshold 1: Exposure to Seismic-Related Hazards**

###### ***Rupture of a Known Earthquake Fault***

The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act identifies no active faults in Escondido. Consequently, the risk of surface rupture is low. The nearest fault to the EVSP is the Rose Canyon Fault, approximately 20 miles west under the Pacific Ocean. Due to the distance of the nearest fault and magnitude of past seismic activity, the Project would not expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects associated with the rupture of a known earthquake fault. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

###### ***Strong Seismic Shaking***

Ground shaking is responsible for the majority of damage from earthquakes and can damage or destroy buildings, structures, pipelines, and infrastructure. The intensity of shaking depends on the type of fault, distance to the epicenter, magnitude of the earthquake, and subsurface geology. The EVSP Area is likely to be subjected to strong ground motion from seismic activity similar to that of the rest of the County and Southern California due to the seismic activity of the region as a whole. Construction standards have been developed to ensure structures can withstand seismic

events, including structural engineering requirements that have been incorporated into Chapter 16 of the California Building Code (CBC), which lower the associated risks of seismic shaking. The CBC includes specific seismic hazards standards for construction within areas of high seismic activity and any aboveground structure is required to comply with the standards to anticipate and avoid the potential for adverse impacts from seismic ground shaking. Compliance with the Chapter 16 of the CBC reduces exposure of people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects from seismic ground shaking. Impacts would be less than significant.

### ***Seismic-Related Ground Failure, including Liquefaction***

Liquefaction occurs primarily in saturated, loose, fine- to medium-grained soils in areas where the groundwater table is generally 50 feet or fewer below the surface. When these sediments are shaken during an earthquake, a sudden increase in pore water pressure can cause the soils to lose strength and behave as a liquid. There may be the potential for liquefaction in areas with loose sandy soils, which are typically in alluvial river valleys/basins and floodplains, combined with a shallow groundwater table. According to the Escondido General Plan Community Protection Element, portions of the EVSP Area are within a liquefaction hazard area (City of Escondido 2012a, Figure VI-9). Future development would be subject to liquefaction and have the potential to expose people or structures to substantial adverse effects from liquefaction. Future development would be required to comply with all relevant state regulations and building standards, including structural design requirements identified in the CBC. Impacts would be less than significant.

### ***Landslides***

The risk associated with landslides is very low due to the absence of active faults and the flat topography near the EVSP Area. According to the Escondido General Plan, the EVSP Area is not in an area subject to a potential landslide (City of Escondido 2012a, Figure VI-9). Additionally, future development consistent with the EVSP would be designed in accordance with Chapter 16 of the CBC, which would minimize any potential risks associated with landslides. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

### **Threshold 2: Soil Erosion or Topsoil Loss**

Implementation of future development projects consistent with the EVSP would have the potential to expose topsoil to erosion from water or wind resulting from construction or operational activities. However, no specific development is proposed at this time. If a future project proposes to disturb more than one acre of soil, the state requires preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan that includes BMPs for erosion and sedimentation control. BMPs generally include an effective combination of erosion and sediment controls, which include barriers such as silt fences, hay bales, drain inlet protection, and gravel bags. Existing vegetation should be preserved as much as possible. Additionally, the Escondido Grading and Erosion Control Ordinance (EMC Chapter 33, Article 55) requires that all construction projects submit a site-

specific erosion and sediment control plan with each grading or building permit. Future development of housing units that is facilitated by adoption of the EVSP would be subject to these conditions for a construction permit; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

### **Threshold 3: Geologic Stability**

Impacts on seismic-related geologic hazards, including landslides and liquefaction, are discussed in Threshold 1, Exposure to Seismic-Related Hazards. The potential for slope instability, lateral spreading, and subsidence not related to seismic activity is discussed below.

Lateral spreading is a shallow, water-saturated landslide deformation. According to the County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, the entire County, including the EVSP Area, has had no known cases of lateral spreading resulting in damage to property or structures (County of San Diego 2017). Therefore, implementation of the Project would not expose people or structures to adverse effects associated with lateral spreading.

Subsidence refers to elevation changes, whether slow or sudden, of the land. Subsidence can cause a variety of problems, including broken utility lines, blocked drainage, or distorted property boundaries and survey lines. According to the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (County of San Diego 2017), the underlying geologic formations in the entire County, including the EVSP Area, are mostly granitic and have a very low potential of subsidence. Therefore, the Project is not anticipated to result in a potentially significant impact due to locating structures in areas at risk for subsidence, and impacts would be less than significant.

### **Threshold 4: Expansive Soils**

Certain types of clay soils expand when they are saturated and shrink when dried. These are called expansive soils and can pose a threat to the integrity of structures built on them without proper engineering. Expansion and contraction of soils in response to changes in moisture content can lead to differential and cyclical movements that can cause damage or distress to structures and equipment. Thus, they are less suitable for development than non-expansive soils.

Future development consistent with the EVSP would have the potential to be adversely impacted by expansive soils. Future development would be required to adhere to the structural and engineering standards in the CBC. Such standards require that all development adhere to strict guidelines for construction on soils that are within a high shrink-swell category as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, San Diego Soil Survey. Impacts resulting from ground-expansive soils would be avoided through compliance with existing codes and adherence with the recommendations of the project-specific geotechnical report, including engineered site preparation and adequate structural design. Any proposed construction would require the adoption of appropriate engineering design in conformance with the recommended geotechnical standards for construction. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

**Threshold 5: Septic Tanks or Alternative Wastewater Disposal Systems**

Future development associated with the EVSP would not involve the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal. The Escondido Water and Wastewater Division provides wastewater treatment facilities and services to the EVSP Area. Therefore, no impact related to soils incapable of supporting these uses would occur.

**Threshold 6: Paleontological Resources**

The City is underlain by several different geological formations. Some of these formations have a higher potential to produce subsurface fossil resources. Future development consistent with the EVSP could damage or destroy fossils in the underlying rock units. Destruction or alteration of paleontological resources may result in an irreversible loss of significant information that could be obtained from these non-renewable resources. The City contains moderate sensitivity fossil-bearing geologic formations. Ground-disturbing activities have the potential to damage or destroy paleontological resources that may be present below the ground surface. The Escondido Grading and Erosion Control Ordinance (EMC Chapter 33, Article 55) provides for the preservation of unique rock outcroppings. Future development projects would be required by the City to conduct a preliminary assessment by a professional paleontological resources consultant to determine if the characteristics of a unique paleontological resource or site are present. If a unique paleontological resource or site is determined to be present, and the potential for destruction of a unique paleontological resource or site exists, the preliminary assessment must make recommendations for mitigating potential impacts, such as monitoring during construction, or identify requirements for the proper documentation per state or federal guidelines of any significant resource proposed to be impacted. The City then requires these recommendations as conditions of project approval. Compliance with City policies and regulations would reduce impacts to less than significant.

**4.2.3.3 Cumulative Impact Analysis**

The anticipated impacts, in conjunction with cumulative development in the City, could result in impacts concerning geology, soils, and paleontological resources. Potential impacts would be site specific and require evaluation on a case-by-case basis at the project level when future development is proposed in accordance with the EVSP. Other cumulative projects would be required to implement site-specific recommendations to reduce risk from seismic hazards, erosion or loss of topsoil, unstable soils, and expansive soils to paleontological resources. Similarly, cumulative projects would be required to comply with the CBC, which provides minimum standards to protect property and public safety to mitigate the effects of seismic shaking and City policies and regulations for grading and erosion control and that protect unique paleontological resources. Therefore, cumulative geologic impacts would not be significant, and the Project's contribution would not be cumulatively considerable.

#### 4.2.4 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The following sections address various potential impacts relating to hazards and hazardous materials that could result from implementation of the Project.

##### 4.2.4.1 Thresholds of Significance

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project has a significant impact on hazards and hazardous materials if it meets any of the following thresholds:

1. Creates a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.
2. Creates 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.
3. Emits hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school.
4. Is located on a site that is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to California Government Code section 65962.5 and, as a result, creates a significant hazard to the public or the environment.
5. 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, results in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area.
6. Impairs implementation of or physically interferes with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.
7. Exposes people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires.

##### 4.2.4.2 Impact Analysis

###### Threshold 1: Transportation, Use, and Disposal of Hazardous Materials

Implementation of the EVSP would allow for the development of future residential, mixed-use, and commercial land uses that typically involve the use, storage, disposal, and transportation of hazardous materials. The specific types of commercial uses and, thus, the types of hazardous materials to be used are not yet known. However, the use of commercial-grade chemicals, cleaners, and solvents is anticipated from the proposed residential and retail/commercial uses and would be required to comply with existing regulations of several agencies. Regulations that would be required of those transporting, using, or disposing of hazardous materials include the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, which provides the “cradle to grave” regulation of hazardous wastes; Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, which regulates closed and abandoned hazardous waste sites; the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act, which governs hazardous materials transportation on U.S. roadways; International Fire Code,

which creates procedures and mechanisms to ensure the safe handling and storage of hazardous materials; Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations, which regulates the generation, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste; Title 27 of the California Code of Regulations, which regulates the treatment, storage, and disposal of solid wastes; and the County Consolidated Fire Code, which regulates hazardous materials and hazardous substance releases.

Required compliance with these federal, state, and local regulations would ensure that the Project's impacts related to transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials would be less than significant.

### **Threshold 2: Accidental Releases**

The use, storage, and transport of hazardous materials and hazardous wastes in compliance with the laws and regulations mentioned above would minimize the potential for releases of hazardous materials that could pose substantial hazards to the public or the environment and would entail prompt containment and cleanup of spills. Residential uses and some commercial uses use only small amounts of hazardous materials—such as cleansers, paints, fertilizers, and pesticides—and mostly or entirely for cleaning and maintenance purposes. Use of such small amounts of hazardous materials would not pose substantial hazards to the public or the environment through accidental releases. Businesses handling and reporting quantities of hazardous or extremely hazardous materials would maintain business plans including procedures in the event of a hazardous materials release, procedures for immediate notification of all appropriate agencies and personnel, identification of local emergency medical assistance, contact information for company emergency coordinators, a listing and location of emergency equipment at the business, an evacuation plan, and a training program for business personnel.

Existing buildings in the EVSP Area may contain hazardous building materials, including asbestos-containing materials and lead-based paints. Future development consistent with the EVSP may require demolition of existing structures that contain hazardous building materials that could result in the accidental release of hazardous materials into the environment. Compliance with existing federal, state, and local regulations would minimize the potential for the accidental release or upset of hazardous materials, ensuring public safety. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

### **Threshold 3: Hazards to Nearby Schools**

The Classical Academy High School located at 207 East Pennsylvania Avenue and Little Elms Preschool located at 117 North Elm Street are in the EVSP Area. Specific development is unknown at this time. However, future development consistent with the EVSP may result in hazardous emissions or the handling of hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. However, any new development that involves contaminated property would necessitate the cleanup and/or remediation of the property in accordance with applicable federal and state requirements and regulations. Current City, state, and federal requirements provide a high level of protection from new hazardous uses that may be sited near schools. Therefore,

impacts on existing or proposed schools due to the release of hazardous materials are less than significant with adherence to City, state, and federal requirements and regulations.

#### **Threshold 4: Hazardous Materials Sites**

According to the California Department of Toxic Substances Control Hazardous Waste and Substance Site List (Cortese) there are no known hazardous materials sites with the EVSP Area (DTSC 2022). Future development consistent with the EVSP may be on a site with historical agricultural operations as this area was historically zoned as an agricultural district in the 1930. However, compliance with applicable existing regulations and processes would not result in a significant hazard to the public or the environment from the location of future land uses for human habitation or occupation on existing hazardous materials sites. Therefore, the Project would have a less than significant impact associated with existing hazardous materials sites.

#### **Threshold 5: Hazards from Nearby Airports**

No public airports are in the EVSP Area or within two miles of the EVSP Area. The closest airport is the McClellan-Palomar Airport in Carlsbad approximately 12 miles west of the EVSP Area. The EVSP Area is not in the airport influence area for McClellan-Palomar Airport. Therefore, the Project would not result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the EVSP Area. Impacts would be less than significant.

#### **Threshold 6: Emergency Response or Evacuation Plans**

The EVSP would guide redevelopment of the underused residential and commercial land of low-intensity general retail, office, restaurants, and small-scale service businesses into a new neighborhood with a mix of residential, commercial, public, and open space uses. The Escondido General Plan includes an emergency evacuation route to aid in the orderly and rapid movement of people away from a threat or actual occurrence of a hazard (City of Escondido 2012a). East Valley Parkway is an identified evacuation route, and portions of this roadway are in the EVSP Area. Development along East Valley Parkway would be required to provide driveway widths and clearances consistent with local and state requirements to ensure emergency access. In addition, any proposed roadway improvements would be designed and constructed to meet the requirements of the City Engineer and Fire Marshal. Therefore, future development would not physically interfere with an adopted Emergency Response Plan or Emergency Evacuation Plan, and impacts would be less than significant.

#### **Threshold 7: Wildland Fires**

The EVSP Area is not within a federal, state, or local responsibility Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (CAL FIRE 2022). According to the Escondido General Plan (City of Escondido 2012a, Figure VI-6) the EVSP Area is within a moderate danger fire hazard zone. The EVSP Area is not adjacent to wildlands, has been previously developed, and is in the urbanized area.

Compliance with all applicable existing laws, regulations, and policies would reduce impacts associated with wildland fires. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

#### **4.2.4.3 Cumulative Impact Analysis**

Anticipated impacts concerning hazards and hazardous materials from future development facilitated by the Project, in conjunction with cumulative development in the City, may include future development in areas that are at risk of hazards. Each cumulative project would require separate discretionary approval and evaluation of CEQA, which would address potential adverse site-specific impacts and require mitigation measures as necessary in compliance with federal, state, and local requirements.

All potential impacts from future development facilitated by the Project concerning hazards and hazardous materials would be less than significant with compliance with existing laws, ordinances, and regulations and standards. As a result, cumulative impacts related to consistency with policies and regulations aimed at preventing and minimizing impacts from hazards and hazardous materials would be less than significant, as future development consistent with the EVSP would be required to comply with applicable plans and policies. Therefore, with compliance with applicable regulatory requirements, the Project's contribution to a cumulatively considerable impact related to hazards and hazardous materials would be less than significant.

#### **4.2.5 Hydrology and Water Quality**

The following sections address various potential impacts relating to hydrology and water quality that could result from implementation of the Project.

##### **4.2.5.1 Thresholds of Significance**

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project has a significant impact on hydrology and water quality if it meets any of the following thresholds:

1. Violates any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrades surface or groundwater quality.
2. Substantially decreases groundwater supplies or interferes substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin.
3. Substantially alters the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner that:
  - a. Results in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site.
  - b. Substantially increases the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that results in flooding on or off site.



- c. Creates or contributes runoff water that exceeds the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provides substantial additional sources of polluted runoff.
  - d. Impedes or redirects flood flows.
4. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risks release of pollutants due to project inundation.
  5. Conflicts with or obstructs implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan.

#### **4.2.5.2 Impact Analysis**

##### **Threshold 1: Water Quality Standards**

Clearing, grading, excavation, and construction activities associated with future development consistent with the EVSP may result in short-term impacts on water quality due to sheet erosion of exposed soils and subsequent deposition of particulates in local drainages. Grading activities lead to exposed areas of loose soil and sediment stockpiles that are susceptible to uncontrolled sheet flow. Future development consistent with the EVSP may result in long-term impacts on the quality of stormwater and urban runoff, subsequently impacting downstream water quality, and could potentially create new sources for runoff contamination.

Future development consistent with the EVSP would be required to comply with all applicable water quality standards. Any future development in the EVSP Area would be subject to the federal and state Clean Water Act, which is established through compliance with the requirements of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Permit for the City (Municipal Permit), State Water Resources Control Board Order No. 2013-0001-DWG. The Project would be required to comply with the Escondido Stormwater Management and Discharge Control Ordinance (EMC Chapter 22, Article 2), which controls non-stormwater discharges to the stormwater conveyance system; Escondido Grading and Erosion Control Ordinance (EMC Chapter 33, Article 55), which establishes regulations to control erosion from excavation, grading, and other construction activities; Escondido Jurisdictional Urban Runoff Management Program, which establishes strategies to improve the quality of urban runoff (City of Escondido 2021a); and Escondido Hydromodification Management Plan, which establishes requirements for post-project runoff flows (City of Escondido 2011). Compliance with federal, state, and City regulations, would reduce impacts to less than significant. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

##### **Threshold 2: Groundwater Supplies**

The Project would not be within a known groundwater basin in the City (City of Escondido 2012a). As outlined in the Escondido Urban Water Management Plan (City of Escondido 2021b), the City does not participate in any groundwater withdrawal, storage, or recharge programs. Future

development consistent with the EVSP would receive water supplies from the City, rather than groundwater resources. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

### **Threshold 3: Site Drainage and Hydrology**

Because the EVSP Area is primarily composed of impervious surfaces (structures, paving, and concrete), it is expected that new development would not significantly increase the overall quantity of impervious surfaces. Therefore, stormwater runoff quantities are not expected to increase, and the storm drainage system would not require upgrades to increase capacity.

New development and redevelopment would be subject to City and state drainage and stormwater quality requirements as discussed previously. In addition, new development or redevelopment would comply with the specific EVSP stormwater management policies, including the following:

- **PSI-1.4:** Incorporate sustainable stormwater management features in new development and public improvements, including bio-swales, permeable pavers, rainwater collection systems, and other features to manage stormwater runoff.
- **PSI-1.6:** Avoid flood zone areas or incorporate them into the overall site design of new development.

Therefore, the Project would not alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner that would result in substantial erosion or siltation on or off site, substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would result in flooding on or off site, create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems, provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff, or impede or redirect flood flows. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

### **Threshold 4: Activities in Flood Hazard, Tsunami, or Seiche Zone**

A tsunami is a very large ocean wave caused by an underwater earthquake or volcanic eruption. Tsunamis can cause flooding to coastlines and inland areas less than 50 feet above sea level and within one mile of the shoreline. The EVSP Area is more than one mile inland and is not susceptible to inundation or flooding due to a tsunami.

Seiches are defined as wave-like oscillatory movements in enclosed or semi-enclosed bodies of water, such as lakes or reservoirs, and are most typically associated with seismic activity. In the Project's semi-arid climate, naturally occurring enclosed water bodies are not common. Instead most enclosed water bodies are reservoirs built by local municipalities and water districts to provide water service to local residents and businesses, including Lake Wohlford and Lake Dixon. The EVSP Area is not near Lake Wohlford or Lake Dixon and would not place housing near a semi-enclosed body of water.

According to the Escondido General Plan, portions of the EVSP Area are adjacent to Escondido Creek and are in the 100-year floodplain (City of Escondido 2012a, Figure VI-7). This area would be designated as Mixed-Use and Urban Residential and would have the potential to release pollutants due to inundation in a flood hazard area. Future development would be subject to the Escondido Floodplain Overlay Zone, which provides land use regulations in areas with properties situated in the designated floodplains of rivers, creeks, streams, and watercourses. Development projects consistent with the EVSP would be required to include prevention methods, such as detention basins and on-site stormwater features, to control flooding and surface runoff. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

### **Threshold 5: Conflict with Water Quality Control Plan or Sustainable Groundwater Management Plan**

The EVSP Area is within the Carlsbad Watershed, which is one of 11 watersheds in the San Diego Basin. The Water Quality Control Plan for the San Diego Basin (Basin Plan) designates beneficial uses for water bodies in the San Diego region and establishes water quality objectives and implementation plans to protect those beneficial uses (RWQCB 2021).

MS4 Permit conformance includes considerations such as receiving water limitations (e.g., Basin Plan criteria), waste load allocations, and numeric water quality effluent limitations. The City is a copermittee of the regional MS4 Permit and has implemented several regulations to ensure conformance with MS4 Permit requirements. The MS4 Permit implements a strategy for water quality and related concerns and mandates a watershed-based approach that often encompasses multiple jurisdictions. Conforming to the permit and reducing runoff and pollutant discharges involves interjurisdictional planning and coordination to employ BMPs, including low-impact design measures, monitoring, reporting, and enforcement. The MS4 Permit requires co-permittees to develop Water Quality Improvement Plans. For the City, this includes the Water Quality Improvement Plans for the Carlsbad Watersheds. The Escondido Jurisdictional Urban Runoff Management Program (City of Escondido 2021a) details how the City would implement the strategies in the Water Quality Improvement Plan, which include specific strategies targeted at highest priority water quality condition in focused areas of the City and baseline strategies that the MS4 Permit requires to be implemented throughout the City.

Future development consistent with the EVSP would be required to adhere to all federal, state, and local requirements for avoiding and minimizing construction and operations impacts to prevent conflicts with or obstruction of implementation of a Water Quality Control Plan or Sustainable Groundwater Management Plan, including the Basin Plan and the Escondido Jurisdictional Urban Runoff Management Program. Compliance with federal, state, and City regulations would reduce impacts to less than significant.

### 4.2.5.3 Cumulative Impact Analysis

Future development consistent with the EVSP could result in an increase in impermeable surfaces and an increase of runoff of stormwater pollutants contributing to a cumulative increase in impacts on water quality. Future development would be subject to federal, state, and local applicable regulations, including the NPDES permit, Escondido Stormwater Management and Discharge Control Ordinance, Escondido Grading and Erosion Control Ordinance, Escondido Jurisdictional Urban Runoff Management Program, and Escondido Hydromodification Management Plan. With the cumulative projects' compliance with applicable laws and regulations and their incorporation of required construction and operational BMPs, a significant cumulative impact would not occur. Consequently, future development facilitated by the Project and cumulative development would not result in significant cumulative impacts concerning violation of water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, decreased groundwater supplies or interference with groundwater recharge, alterations to existing drainage patterns, or conflicts with water quality or groundwater plans. Therefore, implementation of the Project would not cause a cumulatively considerable impact concerning hydrology and water resources. The Project's contribution would not be cumulatively considerable.

### 4.2.6 Land Use and Planning

The following sections address various potential impacts relating to land use and planning that could result from implementation of the Project.

#### 4.2.6.1 Thresholds of Significance

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project has a significant impact on land use and planning if it meets any of the following thresholds:

1. Physically divides an established community.
2. Causes a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

#### 4.2.6.2 Impact Analysis

##### Threshold 1: Physical Division of Established Community

The EVSP would accommodate residential, mixed-use, and general commercial land uses. The EVSP would focus on maintaining many of the existing uses while clustering them into different areas to create a more cohesive pattern and design and would not divide the established community. In addition, it is not anticipated that development consistent with EVSP would require substantial road widening or other features that can divide the established community. The EVSP would promote strong mobility connections throughout the EVSP Area, especially from the Escondido Creek Trail and adjacent neighborhoods to the commercial corridor along East Valley Parkway. The EVSP roadway network would consist of current roadways in the EVSP Area as depicted on Figure

2-7, East Valley Specific Plan Proposed Roadway Network. No new roadways are proposed; however, some roadways are proposed to be re-classified to accommodate increased traffic volumes and pedestrian and bicycle improvements. Refer to Section 3.7, Transportation, for additional analysis. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

## **Threshold 2: Conflict with Applicable Land Use Plans, Policies, and Regulations**

In 2004, Escondido City Council approved the East Valley Parkway Area Plan to implement a comprehensive strategy for the revitalization of the physical character and economic health of the East Valley Parkway businesses and communities. The East Valley Parkway Area Plan had been the City's implementing document for this area of the City (City of Escondido 2004). In 2012, the City prepared the Escondido General Plan, which identified 11 target areas, including the East Valley Parkway Target Area, that provide unique opportunities for achieving the Escondido General Plan vision (City of Escondido 2012a). The EVSP would be a comprehensive planning and zoning document for the western portion of the East Valley Parkway Target Area. The 191-acre EVSP Area is included within the limits of the previously established East Valley Parkway Target Area and establishes a link between implementing the goals and ideas of the Escondido General Plan.

Under state law, Specific Plans provide detailed land use and infrastructure plans and policies for a certain geographic area and must be consistent with a community's General Plan.

### ***Escondido General Plan***

The Escondido General Plan is a set of long-term goals and policies that decision makers use to guide growth and development and address the community's goals. The Escondido General Plan is divided into various elements that include the Land Use and Community Form Element, Mobility and Infrastructure Element, Housing Element, Community Health and Services Element, Community Protection Element, Resource Conservation Element, Growth Management Element, and the Economic Prosperity Element. Each element details policies and programs to achieve the established goals (City of Escondido 2012a). Appendix H to this PEIR provides a summary of the Project's consistency with relevant Escondido General Plan policies. Consistent with Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, only the goals, objectives, and policies adopted to avoid or mitigate an environmental effect are discussed in Appendix H. In addition, discussion of EVSP compliance with Habitat Conservation Plans can be found in Section 3.3, Biological Resources. Project consistency with the SIP can be found in Section 3.2, Air Quality. Based on the analysis provided in Appendix H and Sections 3.2 and 3.3, impacts would be less than significant.

#### **4.2.6.3 Cumulative Impact Analysis**

Cumulative projects in the City can include the construction of new or widened roadways, airports, railroad tracks, open space areas, or other features that individually have the potential to physically

divide an established community. In addition, a significant cumulative land use impact would occur if future projects combine to be inconsistent with applicable land use plans or policies adopted to protect the environment. However, all cumulative projects would be required to comply and be consistent with the Escondido General Plan and undergo development review before approval. This would ensure that a significant cumulative impact related to the physical division of an established community would not occur. Further, the Project would not propose any new land uses that would divide established communities and would be consistent with applicable land use policies, plans, or regulations. Therefore, the Project, along with the cumulative projects, would not result in cumulative land use impacts. The Project's contribution would not be cumulatively considerable.

#### **4.2.7 Mineral Resources**

The following sections address various potential impacts relating to mineral resources that could result from implementation of the Project.

##### **4.2.7.1 Thresholds of Significance**

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project has a significant impact on mineral resources if it meets any of the following thresholds:

1. Results in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state.
2. Results 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.

##### **4.2.7.2 Impact Analysis**

###### **Threshold 1: Loss of Known Mineral Resources**

The EVSP Area is mostly built out under existing conditions with residential and commercial developments that already directly preclude mining processes and indirectly preclude these operations in the surrounding area. Additional development in the EVSP Area would not substantially limit the future availability of known mineral resources. Therefore, the Project would result in a less than significant impact associated with the availability of mineral resources.

###### **Threshold 2: Loss of Locally Important Mineral Resource Site**

The Escondido General Plan does not identify any zones of locally important mineral resources. Mineral extraction land uses would be incompatible with the existing and planned land uses within and around the EVSP Area. Therefore, no impact would occur.

### 4.2.7.3 Cumulative Impact Analysis

Cumulative development in the City would have the potential to result in the loss of availability of known mineral resources through the development of new land uses that would directly preclude mining operations or would be incompatible with mineral extraction. Future development consistent with the EVSP would not result in a potentially significant direct impact on mineral resource availability because the majority of the City is already developed with incompatible land uses that would preclude the extraction of mineral resources. The Project would not considerably change the existing condition. Consequently, future development consistent with the EVSP would not result in significant environmental impacts on mineral resources generated during future development construction or operation. Therefore, the Project would not cause a cumulatively considerable impact on mineral resources.

### 4.2.8 Population and Housing

The following sections address various potential impacts relating to population and housing that could result from implementation of the Project.

#### 4.2.8.1 Thresholds of Significance

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project has a significant impact on population and housing if it meets any of the following thresholds:

1. Induces substantial unplanned 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).
2. Displaces substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

#### 4.2.8.2 Impact Analysis

##### Threshold 1: Induction of Substantial Population Growth

The ultimate buildout of the EVSP would result in the 6,164 residential units, which is an increase of 5,583 units. Based on the SANDAG Regional Growth Forecast of 3.2 average people per household, the forecasted growth (development capacity) for the EVSP is 17,865 people.

The EVSP would provide the necessary area plan and zoning changes to specifically implement the Escondido General Plan vision for the East Valley Parkway Target Area as defined in the Escondido General Plan. The vision for the Escondido General Plan Land Use and Community Form Element includes increased mixed-use development, improved recreational spaces, and implementation of smart growth principles. Specific land use designations as detailed in the Escondido General Plan included Office, General Commercial, and Mixed-Use Overlay that would accommodate a minimum of 30 units per acre. Consistent with this vision, the EVSP would designate the EVSP Area

for General Commercial, Mixed-Use, Open Space, and Urban Residential development. The EVSP would not increase the planned overall development capacity of the City and would be consistent with the growth assumptions in the Escondido General Plan. Therefore, implementation of the EVSP would not result in unplanned population growth. Impacts would be less than significant.

## **Threshold 2: Displacement of People or Housing**

The EVSP would focus on maintaining many of the existing uses while clustering them into different areas to create a more cohesive development pattern and design. The overall purpose of the EVSP is to guide redevelopment of the underutilized residential and commercial land of low-intensity general retail, office, restaurants, and small-scale service businesses into a new neighborhood with a mix of residential, commercial, public, and open space uses. The Project would provide more housing opportunities to the EVSP Area. Therefore, implementation of the EVSP would not displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. No impact would occur.

### **4.2.8.3 Cumulative Impact Analysis**

The region's population growth is accounted for in SANDAG's population projections for the County, including the individual municipalities' General Plans and Community Plans. The EVSP would not increase the overall planned development capacity of the City and is consistent with the growth assumptions in the Escondido General Plan. In addition, regarding the displacement of housing and people, development in the region is likely to result in the displacement of housing and people. However, the EVSP would focus on maintaining many of the existing uses and does not contribute to these impacts. Therefore, the Project would not cause a cumulatively considerable impact on population and housing.

## **4.2.9 Public Services**

The following sections address various potential impacts relating to public services that could result from implementation of the Project.

### **4.2.9.1 Thresholds of Significance**

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project has a significant impact on public services if it meets any of the following thresholds:

Results 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 public services:



1. Fire protection.
2. Police protection.
3. Schools.
4. Parks.
5. Other public facilities.

#### **4.2.9.2 Impact Analysis**

##### **Threshold 1: Fire Protection**

The Escondido Fire Department (EFD) provides fire protection and emergency medical services to the City through a contractual arrangement established in 1984 with the Rincon del Diablo Fire Protection District. Currently, the EFD has seven fire stations that house emergency response personnel and equipment, and the nearest station to the EVSP Area is Fire Station No. 7 at 1220 North Ash Street. The EFD provides all-risk emergency services, including first response advanced life support emergency medical services, paramedic ambulance transportation, structure and wildfire suppression, hazard materials, vehicle accidents, and rescues. Rescue services include water, trench, confined space, and high/low angle. Disaster responses include damage and injury from earthquakes, flooding, and wind. In addition, the EFD provides fire prevention services, including plan review and approval, construction, building and annual business inspections, weed abatement, and public education and information. The Escondido Emergency Preparedness Division conducts risk assessments and develops disaster planning and community resilience efforts.

Future development consistent with the EVSP would result in increased demand for emergency responses due to increased development in the EVSP Area. Existing EFD facilities are currently adequate to serve the needs of the EVSP Area. New development would be subject to development impact fees, which contribute to the EFD's ability to provide adequate response times. In accordance with EVSP Policy PSI-1.1, new development and redevelopment would contribute their fair share toward public services so that the City continues to meet the quality-of-life standards for public services. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

##### **Threshold 2: Police Protection**

The Escondido Police Department is a full service law enforcement agency. The department responds to citizen calls for services, investigates crimes, enforces traffic laws, conducts routine patrols, performs various other public safety efforts, and participates/facilitates several community outreach programs. The Escondido Police and Fire Headquarters is at 1163 North Centre Parkway and is approximately 2.2 miles from the northwestern corner of the EVSP Area. As discussed in the Escondido General Plan, intensification of land uses has tremendous influence on the demand for police services. Changes in population, additional recreational facilities, increased traffic volumes, expanded City limits, and new businesses all increase the pressure on maintaining and supporting law enforcement services. The Escondido General Plan states, "The city shall maintain

personnel staffing levels based on community generated workloads and officer availability. Resources would be adjusted to maintain an initial response time for Priority 1 calls (crimes in progress or life threatening) of no more than five (5) minutes and an initial response time for Priority 2 calls (serious calls requiring rapid response but not life threatening incidents) of no more than six and one-half (6.5) minutes” (City of Escondido 2012a).

Any development projects resulting in the increase in the population of residents and/or visitors would require additional police personnel to not only adequately serve the EVSP Area but to ensure that existing services are not reduced throughout other portions of the City. New development in the EVSP Area would be subject to development public facility fees, which contribute to the Escondido Police Department’s ability to maintain appropriate staffing levels. In accordance with EVSP Policy PSI-1.1, new development and redevelopment would contribute their fair share toward public services so that the City continues to meet the quality-of-life standards for public services. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

### **Threshold 3: Schools**

The EVSP Area is served by the Escondido Union School District and the Escondido Union High School District. The EVSP Area is served by Central Elementary School to the west, Farr Elementary School to the north, Oak Hill Elementary School to the east, Del Dios Academy of Arts and Sciences to the west, Mission Middle School to the north, Orange Glen High School to the east, and Escondido High School to the north. In addition, several charter and private schools serve the community.

Future development consistent with the EVSP would generate student population growth in Escondido Union School District and the Escondido Union High School District. The student population growth from future development is anticipated to incrementally increase the demand for school facilities/services. New development is subject to development fees and taxes put toward public schools in the area pursuant to California Government Code section 65995 and California Education Code section 17620. Any future school facilities would undergo their own CEQA review prior to approval. With incorporation of these fees for new housing development, impacts would be less than significant.

### **Threshold 4: Parks**

Currently, no City parks are located in the EVSP Area. A portion of the EVSP Area is within a 0.25-mile buffer area of Grape Day Park, Grove Park, and Washington Park. In addition, the Escondido Creek Trail runs through the EVSP Area. Future development consistent with the EVSP could result in an increase in demand for parks and recreation facilities. Chapter 6, Article 18C, of the Escondido Municipal Code requires all new residential development to pay a Park and Recreational Facilities Development Fee to ensure that the parkland and recreational facility standards established by the City are met with respect to the additional need created by such

development. In accordance with EVSP Policy PPR-1.2, development impact fees should be utilized to create public outdoor spaces and amenities within the Park Overlay Zones. Any new park facility would undergo their own CEQA review prior to approval. Future residential development would be required to pay the Park and Recreational Facilities Development Fee before the issuance of building permits. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

### **Threshold 5: Other Public Facilities**

The City currently operates one public library, the Escondido Public Library at 239 South Kalmia Street, approximately 0.3 mile southwest of the EVSP Area. As the Escondido General Plan quality-of-life standard for library services states, “The public library system shall maintain a stock and staffing of two (2) collection items per capita and three (3) public library staff per 8,000 residents of the City of Escondido. The city shall provide appropriate library facilities with a minimum of 1.6 square feet of library facility floor area per dwelling unit of the city prior to buildout of the General Plan where feasible. The city shall continue to expand the role of technology in providing library services and resources to Escondido residents” (City of Escondido 2012a).

Under this standard, the EVSP would generate an additional need to maintain 5,246 collection items, 1.31 library staff members, and 9,862 square feet of library facility floor area. To accommodate the anticipated growth, the Escondido General Plan recommends expanding the City’s existing library facilities to meet the needs of City’s expanding population (City of Escondido 2012a). However, any new library facilities would undergo their own CEQA review prior to approval.

New development and redevelopment in the EVSP Area would be subject to the City’s public facility fees to ensure that public facility standards established by the City are met with respect to the additional need created and to help the City maintain its quality-of-life standards. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

#### **4.2.9.3 Cumulative Impact Analysis**

Future development consistent with the EVSP, in conjunction with cumulative development Citywide and within neighboring cities that are also served by the respective service areas, would increase demands for public services that could require facility expansion or construction, which has the potential to result in an adverse impact on the environment. As discussed previously, future development consistent with the EVSP would increase demand for public services facilities requiring the provision of new or physically altered facilities, which would have the potential to result in adverse environmental impacts. However, in compliance with CEQA, implementation of the identified EVSP policies and required City public facility development impact fees would reduce this impact to a less than significant level. Therefore, the Project would not cause a cumulatively considerable impact on public services.

## 4.2.10 Recreation

The following sections address various potential impacts relating to recreation that could result from implementation of the Project.

### 4.2.10.1 Thresholds of Significance

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project has a significant impact on recreation if it meets any of the following thresholds:

1. Increases 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.
2. Includes recreational facilities or requires the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

### 4.2.10.2 Impact Analysis

#### Threshold 1: Deterioration of Parks and Recreational Facilities

Currently, no City parks are in the EVSP Area. A portion of the EVSP Area is within a 0.25-mile buffer area of Grape Day Park, Grove Park, and Washington Park. Future development consistent with the EVSP could result in an increase in demand for parks and recreation facilities. EMC Chapter 6, Article 18C, requires all new residential development to pay a Park and Recreational Facilities Development Fee to ensure that the parkland and recreational facility standards established by the City are met with respect to the additional need created by such development. See Section 4.2.9.1, Threshold 4: Parks. The Project would not result in an increase in the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facilities would occur or be accelerated. Impacts would be less than significant.

#### Threshold 2: Construction or Expansion of Recreational Facilities

As discussed in Chapter 2, Project Description, the EVSP would incorporate Park Overlay Zones, or priority areas, for parks and public spaces in the EVSP Area. The Park Overlay Zones do not establish what type of park or amenities would occur within that zone. Types of parks and public outdoor spaces that are permitted in these areas include pocket parks, neighborhood parks, linear parks, plazas, courtyards, play areas, dog parks, sidewalks, street furniture, and bicycle lanes. The EVSP would envision the creation of new parks and public spaces as opportunities become available. This is expected to occur over time through a variety of ways, including acquisition of property by the City, public improvements funded by grants and the City's Capital Improvement Program, public/private and public/public joint ventures, and private development.

Future park development would be subject to discretionary permits and CEQA evaluation before approval to determine if adverse physical effects on the environment would occur. Therefore, the EVSP would have a less than significant impact on construction or expansion of recreational facilities.

### 4.2.10.3 Cumulative Impact Analysis

Potential increased demands for recreational facilities from cumulative development would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis at the project level when future development is proposed. In addition, future development would be required to pay the Park and Recreational Facilities Development Fee before the issuance of building permits to ensure that the parkland and recreational facility standards established by the City are met with respect to the additional need created by such development. Consequently, implementation of the EVSP, along with cumulative development, would not result in significant cumulative environmental impacts concerning parks or recreation facilities. Therefore, the Project does not cause a cumulatively considerable impact on recreation resources.

### 4.2.11 Utilities and Service Systems

The following sections address various potential impacts relating to utilities and service systems that could result from implementation of the Project.

#### 4.2.11.1 Thresholds of Significance

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project has a significant impact on utilities and service systems if it meets any of the following thresholds:

1. Requires or results in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects.
2. Has sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years.
3. Results in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that 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.
4. Generates solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impairs the attainment of solid waste reduction goals.
5. Complies with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste.

#### 4.2.11.2 Impact Analysis

##### Threshold 1: New or Expanded Utilities Facilities

The overall purpose of the EVSP is to guide redevelopment of the underutilized residential and commercial land of low-intensity general retail, office, restaurants, and small-scale service businesses into a new neighborhood with a mix of residential, commercial, public, and open space uses. Future developments would be expected to connect to the existing water supply system,

wastewater infrastructure, and existing stormwater infrastructure. Implementation of future development may require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities to meet future demands, which could cause significant environmental effects. However, the locations of specific utility infrastructure improvement projects are unknown at this time. Future infrastructure upgrades would be subject to City and state requirements and require CEQA review to identify any adverse physical effects on the environment. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

### **Threshold 2: Water Supply Availability**

The City is a municipal water retailer that treats and delivers water supplied by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and the County Water Authority to and from local sources to its customers.

The Escondido 2020 Urban Water Management Plan establishes planned water system upgrades in the EVSP Area.

Future development consistent with the EVSP would be subject to discretionary permits and required to adhere to all federal, state, and local requirements during construction and operation to ensure that sufficient water supplies are available. Further, future development would be required to prepare water evaluations and/or studies to determine if existing infrastructure could meet current City standards given project conditions. Considering these requirements, sufficient water supplies would be available to serve the Project. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

### **Threshold 3: Wastewater Treatment Capacity**

The Escondido Water and Wastewater Division provides wastewater treatment facilities and services to the EVSP Area. The Escondido Water Master Plan identifies relevant improvements in the EVSP Area, including the replacement of undersized pipeline in sections on East Valley Parkway. Such projects are financed through the sewer fees charged for connection and services and other capital funds available through the City's Capital Improvement Program (City of Escondido 2012b).

The Escondido Wastewater Master Plan estimates the average daily wastewater flow for the City in 2030 to be approximately 14.4 million gallons per day. Buildout of the EVSP Area would generate a wastewater discharge of approximately 674,888 gallons per capita per day, a net increase of 478,779 gallons per capita per day from the existing wastewater generation (City of Escondido 2012c). This increase would require upsizing of some wastewater mains serving new development and redevelopment. To accommodate the increase in wastewater generation, the City is currently in the process of constructing a recycled water system running adjacent to the existing sewer trunk

main to serve the farming areas east of the EVSP Area. Future expansion of the current recycled water system is anticipated to occur via capital improvement projects and new development projects.

Future development consistent with the EVSP would be subject to discretionary permits and required to adhere to all federal, state, and local requirements during construction and operation to ensure that sufficient wastewater treatment capacities are available. Further, future housing development would be required to prepare wastewater evaluations and/or studies to determine if existing infrastructure could meet current City standards given project conditions. Considering these requirements, there would be capacity to serve future projects. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

#### **Threshold 4: Solid Waste Generation**

Solid waste disposal for the EVSP Area would be provided by Escondido Disposal, Inc. Solid waste from the area is currently taken to either the Sycamore or Otay Mesa Landfills. The Sycamore Landfill in the City of Santee has an approximate remaining capacity of 113,972,637 cubic yards, with a maximum permitted throughput of 5,000 tons per day. The Otay Mesa Landfill in the City of Chula Vista has an approximate remaining capacity of 21,194,008 cubic yards, with a maximum permitted throughput of 5,830–6,700 tons per day (CalRecycle 2022). These landfills currently service the EVSP Area and would have sufficient permitted capacity to service solid waste generated by the Project.

AB 341 requires cities and counties to implement recycling programs, reduce refuse at the source, and compost waste to achieve the established 75% diversion of solid waste from landfills. The City offers a variety of programs to encourage recycling and waste reduction, including the Mandatory Commercial Organics Recycling, the Mandatory Business/Commercial Recycling, and the Recycle More at Home Programs. Diversion of recyclable waste generated by the Project would reduce the amount of waste disposed at the Sycamore and Otay Mesa Landfills. Future projects would be required to comply with the City's efforts in reducing solid waste and solid waste regulations at the state level. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

#### **Threshold 5: Compliance with Solid Waste Regulations**

The City is required to comply with the requirements of AB 939, which requires that municipalities divert at least 50% of their waste from being disposed of at a landfill.

The City's Recycling & Waste Reduction Division provides information to City residents on the recycling and waste reduction programs in Escondido. Diversion of recyclable material redirects solid waste from the Sycamore and Otay Mesa Landfills. In addition, organic waste is recycled in accordance with AB 1826, Chesbro (Chapter 727, Statutes of 2014). Organic waste generated by commercial uses in the EVSP Area would be diverted from landfill disposal in accordance with an organic waste recycling program. Organic waste is defined as food waste, green waste, landscape and pruning waste, nonhazardous wood waste, and food-soiled paper waste that is mixed in with food waste. Diversion of organic waste from the Project would reduce the amount of waste

disposed in the Sycamore and Otay Mesa Landfills. Future development consistent with the EVSP may increase the amount of solid waste generated in the City.

Construction activities are subject to compliance with the 50% diversion of solid waste requirement pursuant to AB 939. In addition, all future development consistent with the EVSP would be required to comply with CALGreen, which implements design and construction measures that act to reduce construction-related waste through material conservation measures and other construction-related efficiency measures.

Future projects would be required to comply with the City's efforts to reduce solid waste and solid waste regulations at the state level. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

#### **4.2.11.3 Cumulative Impact Analysis**

The anticipated impacts, in conjunction with cumulative development in the City, would increase development in a predominately urbanized area and can result increased demand for utilities and service systems. An increase in the demand for these services has the potential to require or result in the construction of new or expanded facilities, the construction of which would potentially result in significant environmental effects. Future infrastructure upgrades would be subject to City and state requirements and would require CEQA review to identify any adverse physical effects on the environment. In addition, cumulative projects would be required to comply with numerous federal, state, and local regulations, which would reduce the potential for significant impacts. Implementation of the EVSP would not result in significant environmental impacts from the exceeding existing utility and system capacities, resulting in insufficient water supplies, exceeding wastewater treatment capacities, interfering with solid waste reduction goals, or existing solid waste statutes or regulations. Therefore, the Project would not cause a cumulatively considerable impact on utilities and service systems.

#### **4.2.12 Wildfire**

The following sections address various potential impacts relating to wildfire that could result from implementation of the Project.

##### **4.2.12.1 Thresholds of Significance**

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project has a significant impact on wildfire if it meets any of the following thresholds:

1. Substantially impairs an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.
2. Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbates wildfire risks, and thereby exposes project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire.



3. Requires the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines, or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment.
4. Exposes people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes.

#### **4.2.12.2 Impact Analysis**

The EVSP Area is a highly urbanized, developed area and is not within or adjacent to a fire hazard severity zone. Therefore, additional analysis is not required.

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## Chapter 5 Other CEQA Considerations

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This chapter includes the following other considerations that are required in an EIR by CEQA:

- Growth-inducing impacts of the EVSP (addressed in Section 5.1, Growth Inducement)
- Significant, irreversible environmental impacts that would be involved with the Project should it be implemented (addressed in Section 5.2, Significant and Irreversible Environmental Impacts)
- Significant environmental impacts that cannot not be avoided if the Project is implemented (addressed in Section 5.3, Significant and Unavoidable Environmental Impacts)

### 5.1 Growth Inducement

CEQA Guidelines section 15126.2(e) requires that an EIR discuss the ways in which a proposed project could directly or indirectly foster economic development, population growth, or additional housing and how that growth would affect the surrounding environment. As an example, direct growth inducement results if a project involves construction of new housing. Indirect growth occurs if a project establishes substantial new permanent employment opportunities that stimulate the need for additional housing, utilities, and public services. Similarly, a project indirectly induces growth if it removes an obstacle to additional development, such as removing a constraint on a required public service or utility. A project proposing to expand water supply capabilities in an area where limited water supply has historically restrained growth is considered growth inducing.

This section discusses the characteristics and consequences of the Project that may encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively. However, the following analysis does not assume that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment (CEQA Guidelines section 15126.2(d)).

#### 5.1.1 Population Growth

State law requires that each jurisdiction demonstrate in its Housing Element that the land inventory is adequate to accommodate that jurisdiction's fair share of the RHNA. The additional units needed to meet the City's 6th Cycle RHNA would be accomplished through land use designation changes and rezoning in the EVSP Area, which would result in planned growth.

The EVSP would re-designate and rezone most of the 191-acre EVSP Area from Commercial and Office to Mixed-Use and High-Density Residential, adding a net increase of 5,583 units of development capacity at full buildout, and directly influences the City's population by providing land use designations to accommodate a population of approximately 17,865 people. As a designated Target Area, the EVSP Area was previously identified in the Escondido General Plan Land Use and Community Form Element as an area to promote development (and redevelopment),

enhance job growth, and increase housing options to accommodate the City's share of projected regional growth. As stated in the Escondido General Plan Land Use and Community Form Element, area plans, in concert with zoning, define and guide future development in the Target Areas. Implementation of the EVSP would provide the necessary area plan and zoning changes to implement the Escondido General Plan vision for the East Valley Parkway Target Area. The vision for the Escondido General Plan Land Use and Community Form Element includes increased mixed-use development, improved recreational spaces, and implementation of smart growth principles. Specific land use designations as described in the Escondido General Plan included Office, General Commercial, and Mixed-Use Overlay that would accommodate a minimum of 30 units per acre. Consistent with this vision, the EVSP would designate the area for General Commercial, Mixed-Use, Open Space, and Urban Residential Development. The EVSP would not increase the planned overall development capacity of the City and would be consistent with the growth assumptions in the Escondido General Plan. Therefore, implementation of the EVSP would not result in direct or indirect inducement of unplanned growth.

### **5.1.2 Economic Growth**

One criterion by which indirect growth inducement can be measured involves economic growth. Economic growth considerations range from a demand for temporary and permanent employees to an increase in the overall revenue base for an area to a new demand for supporting services, such as retail, restaurant, and entertainment uses. Additional indirect growth can occur as new businesses are established or existing businesses expand, thus creating new sources of employment. Increased commercial and residential development typically generates a secondary or indirect demand for other services, such as groceries, entertainment, and medical services, that stimulate economic activity.

The EVSP would guide redevelopment of the underused residential and commercial land of low-intensity general retail, office, restaurant, and small-scale service businesses into a new neighborhood with a mix of residential, commercial, public, and open space uses that would create new sources of employment in the EVSP Area.

In addition, EVSP Area residents would purchase goods and services in the EVSP Area, which could encourage the creation of new businesses and services and improve the economic viability. Implementation of the EVSP would enhance the economic potential of the area, which already contains underused residential and commercial land uses. Therefore, implementation of the EVSP would not result in direct or indirect inducement of unplanned growth.

### **5.1.3 Obstacles to Growth**

The elimination of either physical or regulatory obstacles to growth is considered a growth-inducing impact. A physical obstacle to growth typically involves the lack of public service infrastructure. The EVSP would not trigger unplanned growth because it would not result in infrastructure with

excess capacity. In addition, implementation of the EVSP would not remove an obstacle to growth in an area by providing infrastructure that was previously not available. Future development in the EVSP Area would depend on the availability of existing necessary public infrastructure. Implementation of future development may require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded infrastructure and facilities, such as water and sewer service. However, it would not introduce new facilities to a currently undeveloped area. Therefore, implementation of the EVSP would not result in direct or indirect inducement of unplanned growth.

## 5.2 Significant and Irreversible Environmental Impacts

CEQA Guidelines section 15126.2(d) requires a discussion of any significant, irreversible environmental changes that would be caused by the Project. Generally, a project results in significant, irreversible environmental impacts if the following occurs:

- The project involves a large commitment of nonrenewable resources.
- The primary and secondary impacts generally commit future generations to similar uses (e.g., a highway improvement that provides access to a previously inaccessible area).
- The project involves uses in which irreversible damage could result from any potential environmental accidents associated with the project.
- The proposed consumption of resources is not justified (e.g., the project involves the wasteful use of energy).

Potential physical effects on a programmatic level from implementation of the Project are addressed in Chapter 3, Environmental Analysis, and Chapter 4, Effects Found Not to Be Significant, of this PEIR. Future development resulting from implementation of the EVSP would be a long-term, irreversible commitment of vacant parcels of land or redevelopment of existing developed land in the City. In general, conversion of parts of the EVSP Area from undeveloped land to urbanized uses would represent a permanent, irreversible change to the EVSP Area. However, this change would be minimal because the EVSP Area is mostly built out under existing conditions with residential and commercial developments. Project construction and maintenance of future buildings and infrastructure through implementation of the Project would require the commitment of energy, natural resources, and building materials. Nonrenewable and limited resources that would be consumed with future development consistent with the EVSP include oil, natural gas, gasoline, lumber, sand and gravel, asphalt, aggregate, water, steel, and similar materials. Nonrenewable fuels would be used by future construction equipment, haul trucks, and worker vehicles. This commitment of resources and energy would be irreversible. Post-construction consumption of nonrenewable resources would include the use of electricity, natural gas, and water by future residents, employees, and visitors. The commitment of resources required for the construction and operation of the Project would limit the availability of such resources for future generations or for other uses during the life of the Project. Given the low likelihood that the land would revert to lower-intensity uses or to its

current form, the Project would generally commit future generations to these environmental changes. Therefore, the Project would result in significant, irreversible environmental impacts.

### **5.3 Significant and Unavoidable Environmental Impacts**

CEQA Guidelines section 15126.2(b) requires that an EIR describe any significant impacts that could not be avoided, even with implementation of feasible mitigation measures. The environmental effects of the Project on various aspects of the environment are discussed in detail in Chapter 3 of this PEIR.

Implementation of the mitigation measures identified in the Chapter 3 would not reduce all significant impacts identified for the Project to below a level of significance. Significant and unavoidable noise impacts would occur from implementation of the EVSP. Thus, a Statement of Overriding Considerations is required.

## Chapter 6 Alternatives

CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6 requires that an EIR describe a reasonable range of alternatives to a project that could feasibly attain most of the project objectives while avoiding or considerably reducing any of the significant impacts of the project. In addition, a No Project Alternative must be analyzed in the document. CEQA also requires that an environmentally superior alternative be selected from the alternatives. The environmentally superior alternative is the alternative with the fewest or least severe adverse environmental impacts. When the No Project Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative, the EIR must also identify an environmentally superior alternative from the other alternatives (CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(e)(2)).

To comply with CEQA, it is necessary to identify alternatives that reduce the significant impacts that are anticipated to occur if a project is implemented while trying to meet most of the basic objectives of the project. The CEQA Guidelines emphasize a commonsense approach. The alternatives shall be reasonable, “foster informed decision making and public participation,” and focus on alternatives that avoid or substantially lessen the significant impacts (CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(a)).

### 6.1 Summary of Impacts

A summary of the environmental impacts resulting from implementation of the Project, as disclosed in Chapter 3, Environmental Analysis, of this PEIR, is provided in Table 6-1, Summary of Project Impacts.

**Table 6-1. Summary of Project Impacts**

| Impact  | Level of Significance Before Mitigation | Level of Significance After Mitigation |
|---|---|--|
| <b>3.1, Aesthetics</b>  |   |  |
| Threshold 1: Scenic Vistas  | LS                                      | LS                                     |
| Threshold 2: Scenic Resources                                       | NI                                      | NI                                     |
| Threshold 3: Conflict with Zoning or Regulations for Scenic Quality | LS                                      | LS                                     |
| Threshold 4: Light and Glare  | LS                                      | LS                                     |
| <b>3.2, Air Quality</b>   |   |  |
| Threshold 1: Consistency with Applicable Air Quality Plan           | LS                                      | LS                                     |
| Threshold 2: Cumulative Increase in Criteria Pollutant Emissions    | LS                                      | LS                                     |
| Threshold 3: Sensitive Receptors                                    | PS                                      | LS                                     |
| Threshold 4: Odors  | LS                                      | LS                                     |

**Table 6-1. Summary of Project Impacts**

| <b>Impact</b>   | <b>Level of Significance Before Mitigation</b> | <b>Level of Significance After Mitigation</b> |
|---|--|---|
| <b>3.3, Biological Resources</b>                                      |  |   |
| Threshold 1: Candidate, Sensitive, or Special-Status Species          | PS   | LS  |
| Threshold 2: Riparian Habitat and Other Sensitive Natural Communities | PS   | LS  |
| Threshold 3: Wetlands   | PS   | LS  |
| Threshold 4: Native Resident or Migratory Fish or Wildlife Species    | PS   | LS  |
| Threshold 5: Policies Protecting Biological Resources                 | LS   | LS  |
| Threshold 6: Habitat Conservation Plan                                | LS   | LS  |
| <b>3.4, Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources</b>                    |  |   |
| Threshold 1: Historic Built Environment Resources                     | PS   | LS  |
| Threshold 2: Archaeological Resources                                 | PS   | LS  |
| Threshold 3: Human Remains  | PS   | LS  |
| Threshold 4: Tribal Cultural Resources                                | PS   | LS  |
| <b>3.5, Greenhouse Gas Emissions</b>                                  |  |   |
| Threshold 1: Generation of Greenhouse Gas Emissions                   | LS   | LS  |
| Threshold 2: Applicable Plan  | LS   | LS  |
| <b>3.6, Noise</b>   |  |   |
| Threshold 1: Exceedance of Noise Standards                            | PS   | SU  |
| Threshold 2: Excessive Groundborne Vibration or Noise                 | PS   | SU  |
| Threshold 3: Aircraft Noise   | NI   | NI  |
| <b>3.7, Transportation</b>  |  |   |
| Threshold 1: Circulation System Performance                           | LS   | LS  |
| Threshold 2: Induction of Substantial Vehicle Miles Traveled          | LS   | LS  |
| Threshold 3: Hazardous Design Features                                | LS   | LS  |
| Threshold 4: Inadequate Emergency Access                              | LS   | LS  |

**Notes:** LS = Less than Significant Impact; NI = No Impact; PS = Potentially Significant Impact; SU = Significant and Unavoidable

As shown in Table 6-1, the Project would result in significant and unavoidable impacts after mitigation to the following environmental issue:

- Exceedance of Noise



## 6.2 Project Objectives

Identifying potential alternatives involves consideration of the project objectives, which are described in Chapter 2, Project Description. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15124(b), the City identified the following objectives for the Project:

1. Create a self-contained land use pattern that offers a mix of compatible lands uses and quality landscaped community spaces.
2. Enhance the quality of the City's housing stock that is environmentally mindful and equitable while preserving the physical character and pride of the EVSP Area.
3. Provide a range of housing opportunities for all income groups and households that seamlessly supports all right-of-way users.
4. Plan both public and private development to provide safe vehicular circulation connected to safe multimodal transportation with reliable and timely transit options.
5. Provide for robust economic activity within the EVSP Area.

## 6.3 Alternatives Considered But Rejected

The CEQA Guidelines state that an EIR should identify alternatives that were considered by the lead agency but were rejected, and should briefly state the reasons for the lead agency's determination. Factors used to eliminate alternatives from detailed consideration in the EIR include the failure to meet most of the basic project objectives and the inability to avoid significant environmental effects (CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(c)).

The following section describes alternatives or alternative concepts that were given consideration by the lead agency but rejected from further analysis in the PEIR.

### 6.3.1 Economic Alternative

The Economic Alternative proposes more Commercial and Office land uses, replacing some of the Residential land uses in the EVSP Area. Under this alternative, General Commercial land uses would be placed along East Valley Parkway, which differs from the Mixed-Use land uses that would be placed along East Valley Parkway under the Project, reducing the number of housing units by 2,622 dwelling units compared to the Project. The residential units would be on the southern side of the EVSP Area and would include a mix of Urban III and Urban IV land uses. This alternative would provide for robust economic activity in the EVSP Area, which would meet Project Objective 5. This alternative was rejected from further consideration because the proposed reduction in housing units would not provide enough units for the City to meet its 6th Cycle Housing Element RHNA goals. In addition, this alternative would not reduce any impacts associated with the Project.

## 6.4 Analysis of Project Alternatives Selected for Evaluation

The following alternatives are analyzed in this chapter:

- **Alternative 1:** No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative
- **Alternative 2:** Reduced Development Capacity Alternative
- **Alternative 3:** Reduced Retail/Office Alternative

These alternatives were determined to adequately represent the range of feasible alternatives required under CEQA for the Project. The No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative is included, as required by CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(e), even though it would not meet the basic project objectives.

### 6.4.1 No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15126(e)(1), a No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative is addressed in this PEIR. The discussion of the No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative must examine the existing conditions and reasonably foreseeable future conditions that would exist if the Project is not approved (CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(e)). The No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative is defined as a continuation of existing conditions and conditions that are reasonably expected to occur in the event that the Project is not implemented. The No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative would leave the existing Escondido General Plan land use map in place for the East Valley Parkway Target Area and would not accommodate the planned growth as anticipated in the Escondido General Plan for the EVSP Area.

Land uses would include Office and General Commercial with a Mixed-Use Overlay (Figure 6-1, No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative). Under the existing Escondido General Plan, the development capacity of the total East Valley Parkway Target Area includes 2,100 dwelling units and 8,328,596 square feet of non-residential development. The EVSP Area represents 58% of the East Valley Parkway Target Area as defined in the Escondido General Plan. Therefore, the development capacity of the No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative includes 1,218 dwelling units and 4,830,585 square feet of non-residential development compared to 6,164 dwelling units and 1,683,587 square feet of non-residential development for the Project.

#### 6.4.1.1 Impact Analysis

##### Aesthetics

The No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative would result in a reduction in overall development, including General Commercial, Office, and Residential land uses, which would reduce the visual impacts of future development compared to the Project. The No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative would continue to implement Escondido General Plan goals and policies that protect aesthetic resources in the EVSP Area. Therefore, because the No

Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative would result in decreased overall development, aesthetics impacts would be reduced, compared to those identified for the Project, and still less than significant.

### **Air Quality**

Similar to the Project, the No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the SDAPCD Clean Air Plans. However, the overall development capacity would be less under the No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative because it does not implement the goals of the East Valley Parkway Target Area. The reduced development capacity would result in reduced levels of criteria air pollutant emissions and TACs at buildout. The net increase in pollutants for which the project region is in non-attainment and exposure of sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations would be less intensive than buildout under the Project. Similar mitigation would be required for impacts to sensitive receptors, similar to the Project. Under the No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative, air quality impacts would be reduced, compared to those identified for the Project, but still mitigated to a less than significant level.

### **Biological Resources**

Under the No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative, biological resources impacts would be similar to those identified for the Project. The EVSP Area consists of and is entirely surrounded by urban/developed land. Similar to implementation of the Project, future construction and operation of projects under the No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative would have the potential to require clearing, grading, or grubbing activities that would directly and indirectly impact nesting birds and federally protected wetlands, although at a lesser level than proposed by the Project due to a reduction in overall development that would occur under this alternative. Mitigation measures identified for the Project are applicable to this alternative. Therefore, biological resources impacts would be mitigated to a less than significant level, similar to those identified for the Project.

### **Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources**

Similar to the Project, the No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative would involve demolition, destruction, alteration, structural relocation, grading, trenching, or excavation as a result of new private or public development or redevelopment allowable under the existing Escondido General Plan. Activities associated with development of land uses proposed under this alternative would have the potential to result in substantial adverse changes to historical resources, archaeological resources, human remains, and TCRs, although at a lesser level than proposed by the Project due to the reduction in new development that would occur under this alternative. Therefore, implementation of the No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative would result in similar potentially significant impacts as those identified for the Project. Mitigation measures identified for

the Project are applicable to this alternative. Therefore, impacts on cultural resources and TCRs would be mitigated to a less than significant level, similar to those identified for the Project.

### **Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

Similar to the Project, the No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative would result in GHG emissions from electricity and natural gas consumption, water and wastewater transport, and solid waste generation. In addition, future development would generate mobile source emissions from motor vehicle trips. However, similar to the Project, under the No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative, future projects would be required to demonstrate consistency with the Escondido CAP as part of the project approval process, and through CAP consistency, the No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative would also be consistent with statewide reduction goals established in AB 32 and SB 32. Therefore, GHG emissions impacts would be less than significant, similar to those identified for the Project.

### **Noise**

Compared to the Project, the overall reduction in new development that would occur under the No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative would reduce the potential for this alternative to generate noise from traffic and land use development. However, similar to the Project, implementation of the No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative would still have the potential to expose land uses to noise levels in excess of noise compatibility guidelines during construction with the development of future land uses. Similar to the Project, the No Project/Existing General Plan 2012 Alternative has the potential to result in significant groundborne vibration impacts on sensitive land uses and historic buildings during construction activities because similar types of development are expected to occur. Also similar to the Project, this alternative has the potential to increase vehicle noise as a result of future development and would result in the placement of new sensitive receptors in areas that would be exposed to vehicle noise levels in excess of the City's noise and land use compatibility standards. Mitigation measures identified for the Project would be required to reduce noise impacts associated with the No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative. Therefore, noise impacts under the No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative would be slightly reduced compared to those identified for the Project due to the overall reduction in new development. However, impacts would still be significant and unavoidable after feasible mitigation is applied.

### **Transportation**

Compared to the Project, the No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative would result in reduced traffic due to the reduced development capacity that would result from implementation of the alternative. Future development under the No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative would be consistent with goals and policies in the Escondido General Plan Mobility and Infrastructure Element, and impacts would be less than significant. In addition, this alternative

would result in reduced VMT and, similar to the Project, would not exceed the 85% threshold of the regional average; thus, impacts would be less than significant. Therefore, under the No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative, transportation impacts would be reduced compared to those identified for the Project and would be less than significant.

#### **6.4.1.2 Ability to Meet Project Objectives**

The No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative would meet Project Objective 4 because the existing Escondido General Plan provides opportunities for private and public development with safe vehicular circulation connected to safe multimodal transportation, including existing sidewalks and bike lanes. In addition, the existing Escondido General Plan provides reliable and timely transit options with the existing bus service, and the Escondido Transit Center located one mile west of the EVSP Area.

The No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative would not meet Project Objectives 1, 2, or 5 and would partially meet Project Objective 3. The Alternative would not create a self-contained land use pattern that offers a mix of compatible lands uses and quality landscaped community spaces (Project Objective 1) or enhance the quality of the City's housing stock that is environmentally mindful and equitable while preserving the physical character and pride of the EVSP Area because the number of dwelling units would be greatly reduced (Project Objective 2). In addition, the No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative would not provide the necessary area plan and zoning changes to implement the Escondido General Plan vision for the East Valley Parkway Target Area. The No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative partially meets Project Objective 3. The current Escondido General Plan land use plan does not provide a range of housing opportunities for all income groups and households. Finally, the No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative would not provide for robust economic activity in the EVSP Area because the square footage of commercial and retail development would be smaller compared to the square footage and development in the Project (Project Objective 5).

#### **6.4.2 Reduced Development Capacity Alternative**

The Reduced Development Capacity Alternative would concentrate Mixed-Use and General Commercial land uses east of the EVSP Area and away from East Valley Parkway compared to the Project (Figure 6-2, Reduced Development Capacity Alternative). Urban III and Urban IV land uses would be concentrated along East Valley Parkway compared to the Mixed-Use designations in the Project. In addition, this alternative would incorporate the Urban III land use designation into the land use map, which is not part of the Project, and would not include the Urban V land use designation that the Project includes. The Urban III land use designation accommodates a wide range of housing types but only allows for 18 dwelling units per acre. In comparison, the Urban IV and V land use designations allow for a high density of units up to 45 units per acre. The

reduced acres of Mixed-Use and Commercial land uses and the incorporation of the Urban III land use designation would reduce the overall development capacity of the EVSP Area.

Table 6-2, Comparison of Development Capacity of Reduced Development Capacity Alternative and East Valley Specific Plan, provides a summary of the development capacity under the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative compared to the Project. Compared to the Project, this alternative would result in 1,914 fewer overall dwelling units and would reduce the amount of overall non-residential space by 381,781 square feet.

**Table 6-2. Comparison of Development Capacity of Reduced Development Capacity Alternative and East Valley Specific Plan**

| Land Use Type                  | Reduced Development Capacity Alternative | 2035 EVSP Buildout    |
|--------------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Single Family Residential      | 511 du                                   | 648 du                |
| Multi-Family Residential       | 3,739 du                                 | 5,516 du              |
| <b>Total Residential Units</b> | <b>4,250 du</b>                          | <b>6,164 du</b>       |
| Office Services                | 559,019 square feet                      | 657,786 square feet   |
| Retail                         | 833,886 square feet                      | 1,025,801 square feet |
| Parks                          | 7.1 acres                                | 25 acres              |
| Community Services             | 31,985 square feet                       | 123,084 square feet   |

**Source:** Rick Engineering 2021.

**Notes:** du = dwelling units; EVSP = East Valley Specific Plan

Furthermore, similar to the Project, the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative would include a Park Overlay Zone intended to integrate public parkland and outdoor spaces. However, compared to the Park Overlay Zone in the Project, the Park Overlay Zone in this alternative would be reduced and concentrated in different areas of the EVSP Area as shown on Figure 6-2 to facilitate more commercial and residential development. Similar to the Project, the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative would include the same proposed mobility network and development and design standards. However, building heights would be reduced due to the inclusion of the Urban III land use designation, which would allow for a lesser capacity of residential development.

#### 6.4.2.1 Impact Analysis

##### Aesthetics

Similar to the Project, under the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative, views of City scenic vistas from the EVSP Area would be limited by existing development. However, the alternative would include the Urban III land use designation, which is not included in the Project. Building heights and densities would be limited in these areas compared to those under the Project's proposed Urban IV/V land use designations, which accommodate higher densities for urban multi-family housing and is characterized by taller structures. Because building heights and densities would be limited in these areas, the potential to impact views of the ridgelines surrounding the

City is reduced. However, similar to the Project, new development and redevelopment under this alternative would be required to comply with the Escondido General Plan (City of Escondido 2012), EVSP goals and policies, and Escondido Zoning Ordinance requirements that address building height, spatial arrangements, and building clustering. Conformance with these requirements would minimize impacts on scenic vistas and scenic quality, reducing aesthetic impacts to less than significant. In addition, similar to the Project, the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative would be required to comply with the Escondido Outdoor Lighting Ordinance and EVSP policies and site design guidelines intended to control nighttime lighting. Under the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative, aesthetic impacts would be reduced compared to those identified for the Project and less than significant.

### **Air Quality**

Similar to the Project, the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the SDAPCD Clean Air Plans. Similar to the Project, this alternative would result in the generation of criteria pollutant emissions during construction and operation due to similar development types. However, compared to the Project, this alternative would result in decreased development. Similar to the Project, the net increase in emissions compared to existing conditions would be expected to be less than significant. In addition, similar to the Project, allowable commercial development under this development would include potential sources of TACs, such as dry-cleaning facilities and gas stations. As such, this alternative has the potential to expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations as a result of exposure to TACs during project operation. Mitigation measures identified for the Project are applicable to this alternative and would reduce impacts to a less than significant level. Finally, similar to the Project, the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative would not result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people, and due to similar development types, impacts would be less than significant. Therefore, due to the overall reduction in new development that would occur, the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative would result in reduced air quality impacts compared to the Project. Similar to the Project, impacts would be mitigated to below a level of significance.

### **Biological Resources**

Under the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative, biological resources impacts are like those identified for the Project. The EVSP Area consists of and is surrounded by urban/developed land. One open-water concrete channel, Escondido Creek, runs through the northern portion of the EVSP Area and is designated as open-water habitat, which has the potential to support sensitive aquatic vegetation communities. In addition, future construction activities, such as vegetation clearing, grubbing, or trimming, could potentially harm active nesting birds. Mitigation measures identified for the Project are applicable to this alternative. Therefore, impacts on biological

resources would be less than significant with the incorporation of mitigation measures under this Alternative, similar to those identified for the Project.

### **Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources**

Cultural resources impacts are primarily associated with potential ground disturbance and development of previously undisturbed areas and impacts on potential historic structures (e.g., building additions, demolition). Development under the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative would be similar to the development in the Project because development of the EVSP Area would still occur. The potential to impact archaeological resources is similar. In addition, this alternative would have the potential to impact historic buildings because of redevelopment, similar to the Project. Mitigation measures identified for the Project are applicable to this alternative. Therefore, impacts from development under the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative would be less than significant with the incorporation of mitigation measures, similar to those identified for the Project.

### **Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

Similar to the Project, the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative would result in GHG emissions from electricity and natural gas consumption, water and wastewater transport, and solid waste generation. In addition, future development would also generate mobile source emissions from motor vehicle trips. Under this alternative, development would be reduced compared to development in the Project due to the overall reduction in development. However, similar to the Project, under the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative, future projects would be required to demonstrate consistency the Escondido CAP as part of the project approval process, and through Escondido CAP consistency, the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative would also be consistent with statewide reduction goals. Therefore, GHG impacts would be less than significant, similar to those identified for the Project.

### **Noise**

Similar to the Project, the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative has the potential to result in temporary construction noise impacts. Future development under this alternative would be subject to the Escondido Noise Ordinance limits to reduce impacts to less than significant. In addition, the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative has the potential to increase vehicle noise as a result of future development and would result in the placement of new sensitive receptors in areas that would be exposed to vehicle noise levels in excess of the City's noise and land use compatibility standards. However, the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative would result in fewer residential dwelling units and non-residential space, which would result in the reduction of average daily vehicle trips and vehicle noise compared to those identified under the Project. While the reduced vehicle noise attributed to the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative would reduce vehicle noise from future development, a permanent increase in vehicle noise would



occur as a result of new development. Similar to the Project, it is unlikely that significant increases in noise level would be able to be reduced because project-level attenuation, such as noise barriers, window or other building upgrades, or changes to roadway design or speed, may not be available in all cases. Impacts related to permanent increases in noise level would remain significant and unavoidable under this alternative, similar to those identified for the Project.

Similar to the Project, the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative has the potential to result in significant groundborne vibration impacts on sensitive land uses and historic buildings during construction activities because similar types of development are expected to occur. Implementation of mitigation measures would reduce impacts to a less than significant level. In addition, similar to the Project, the planning area for the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative is not within an airport noise contour for any airport that would exceed the City's noise compatibility standard for the most sensitive land uses (60 dBA CNEL) and would not expose people residing or working in the planning area to excessive noise during construction activities or operational activities resulting from aircraft noise. Therefore, due to the overall reduction in new development that would occur, the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative would result in reduced noise impacts compared to the Project. However, even after feasible mitigation is implemented, impacts related to a permanent increase in vehicle noise from new development would remain significant and unavoidable.

## **Transportation**

Similar to the Project, the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative would include policies that promote alternative modes of transportation, a safe and connective pedestrian and cyclist experience, and a transit-oriented community with safe, reliable, and timely transit options that are consistent with the goals and policies outlined in the Escondido General Plan Mobility and Infrastructure Element.

In addition, compared to the Project, this alternative would result in reduced VMT due to the overall reduction in development that would occur under this alternative. Similar to the Project, this alternative would not exceed the 85% threshold of the regional average. In addition, similar to the Project, future development under the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative would be subject to the Escondido Design Standards and Standard Drawings and the requirements of the Escondido Fire Marshal for roadway modifications, including enhanced sidewalks and bicycle facilities, and for site access. Therefore, transportation impacts would be less than significant, similar to those identified for the Project.

### **6.4.2.2 Ability to Meet Project Objectives**

The Reduced Development Capacity Alternative would partially meet Project Objectives 1, 2, 3, and 4 and would not meet Project Objective 5. It would partially create a self-contained land use pattern that offers a mix of compatible land uses and quality landscaped community spaces (Project

Objective 1), although not to the same degree as the Project because it would result in 1,914 fewer overall dwelling units and a reduction in non-residential space by 381,781 square feet. This alternative would partially enhance the quality of the City's housing stock that is environmentally mindful and equitable while preserving the physical character and pride of the EVSP Area (Project Objective 2) but, with 1,914 fewer dwelling units, would not fully meet this objective. The Reduced Development Capacity Alternative would provide a range of housing opportunities for all income groups and households that supports all ROW users; however, it would result in 1,914 fewer overall dwelling units and would not fulfill this objective to the same degree as the Project (Project Objective 3). The Reduced Development Capacity Alternative would partially provide opportunities for private and public development with safe vehicular circulation connected to safe multimodal transportation, including sidewalks and bike lanes connected to reliable and timely transit options (Project Objective 4). However, it would not be to the same degree as the Project due to the reduced residential and non-residential development. The Reduced Development Capacity Alternative would not meet Project Objective 5 because it would not provide robust economic activity in the EVSP Area due to reduced development capacity. The Commercial and Mixed-Use land use designations under this alternative would be limited to the boundaries of the EVSP Area, and housing units would be focused along the major road corridors, reducing the amount of economic activity in the central portion of the EVSP Area.

### **6.4.3 Reduced Retail/Office Alternative**

The Reduced Retail/Office Alternative would concentrate the General Commercial land uses in the eastern portion of EVSP Area (Figure 6-3, Reduced Retail/Office Alternative). Mixed-Use land use designations would remain along East Valley Parkway and in the eastern portion of the EVSP Area. This alternative would incorporate the Urban III land use designation, which is not included in the Project, in the central part of the EVSP Area. Table 6-3, Comparison of Development Capacity of Reduced Retail/Office Alternative and East Valley Specific Plan, provides a summary of the development capacity under the Reduced Retail/Office Alternative compared to the development capacity in the Project. Compared to the Project, this alternative would result in 290 fewer dwelling units and would reduce the amount of non-residential space by 204,830 square feet.

**Table 6-3. Comparison of Development Capacity of Reduced Retail/Office Alternative and East Valley Specific Plan**

| Land Use Type                  | Reduced Retail/Office Alternative | 2035 EVSP Buildout    |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Single Family Residential      | 0 du                              | 648 du                |
| Multi-Family Residential       | 5,874 du                          | 5,516 du              |
| <b>Total Residential Units</b> | <b>5,874 du</b>                   | <b>6,164 du</b>       |
| Office Services                | 631,968 square feet               | 657,786 square feet   |
| Retail                         | 937,888 square feet               | 1,025,801 square feet |
| Parks                          | 0 acre                            | 25 acres              |
| Community Services             | 31,985 square feet                | 123,084 square feet   |

**Source:** Rick Engineering 2021.

**Notes:** du = dwelling units; EVSP = East Valley Specific Plan

The Reduced Retail/Office Alternative would not include a Park Overlay Zone and would not include recommended or priority areas for parks and public spaces to focus on various housing opportunities while leveraging the existing Escondido Creek Trail as the main source for parks/open space. The Reduced Retail/Office Alternative would include the same proposed mobility network and development and design standards as identified for the Project. However, building heights would be reduced due to the inclusion of the Urban III land use designation, which provides reduced capacity of residential development.

### 6.4.3.1 Impact Analysis

#### Aesthetics

Similar to the Project, under the Reduced Retail/Office Alternative, views of City scenic vistas from the EVSP Area would be limited by existing development. However, the Reduced Retail/Office Alternative would include the Urban III land use designation and building heights, and densities would be limited in these areas compared to those in the Project's proposed Urban IV/V land use designations, which accommodate higher densities for urban multi-family housing and is characterized by taller structures. Development in Urban III areas would reduce the potential to impact views of the ridgelines surrounding the City. However, similar to the Project, new development and redevelopment under this alternative would be required to comply with the Escondido General Plan (City of Escondido 2012), EVSP goals and policies, and Escondido Zoning Ordinance requirements that address building height, spatial arrangements, and building clustering. Conformance with these requirements would minimize impacts on scenic vistas and scenic quality, reducing impacts to less than significant. In addition, similar to the Project, the Reduced Retail/Office Alternative would be required to comply with the Escondido Outdoor Lighting Ordinance and EVSP policies and site design guidelines intended to control nighttime lighting. Under the Reduced Retail/Office Alternative, aesthetic impacts would be reduced compared to those identified for the Project and would be less than significant.

## **Air Quality**

Similar to the Project, the Reduced Retail/Office Alternative would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the SDAPCD Clean Air Plans. Also, similar to the Project, this alternative has the potential to generate criteria pollutant emissions during construction and operation due to similar development types. However, compared to the Project, this alternative would result in reduced overall development. Similar to the Project, the net increase in emissions would be less than significant compared to existing emissions. In addition, similar to the Project, allowable commercial development would include potential sources of TACs, such as dry-cleaning facilities and gas stations. As such, this alternative has the potential to expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations as a result of exposure to TACs during project operation. Mitigation measures identified for the Project are applicable to this alternative and would reduce impacts to less than significant. Finally, similar to the Project, the Reduced Retail/Office Alternative would not result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people, and impacts would be less than significant due to similar development types. Therefore, due to the overall reduction in new development that would occur, compared to the Project, the Reduced Retail/Office Alternative would result in reduced air quality impacts compared to the Project. Impacts would be mitigated to a less than significant level.

## **Biological Resources**

Under the Reduced Retail/Office Alternative, biological resources impacts would be similar to those identified for the Project. The EVSP Area consists of and is surrounded by urban/developed land. One open-water concrete channel, Escondido Creek, runs through the northern portion of the EVSP Area and is designated as open-water habitat, which has the potential to support sensitive aquatic vegetation communities. In addition, future construction activities, such as vegetation clearing, grubbing, or trimming, could potentially impact active nesting birds. Mitigation measures identified for the Project are applicable to this alternative and would reduce impacts to below a level of significance. Therefore, impacts on biological resources would be less than significant with incorporation of mitigation measures similar to those identified for the Project.

## **Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources**

Cultural resources impacts are primarily associated with potential ground disturbance and development of previously undisturbed areas and impacts on potential historic structures (e.g., building additions, demolition). Development under the Reduced Retail/Office Alternative would be similar to the Project because development of the EVSP Area would still occur. The potential to impact archaeological resources is similar. Like the Project, this alternative would have the potential to impact historic buildings as a result of redevelopment. Mitigation measures identified for the Project apply to this alternative and would reduce impacts to below a level of significance.

Therefore, development under the Reduced Retail/Office Alternative would be similar to the Project, and impacts would be less than significant with the incorporation of mitigation measures.

### **Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

Like the Project, the Reduced Retail/Office Alternative would result in GHG emissions from electricity and natural gas consumption, water and wastewater transport, and solid waste generation. In addition, future development would also generate mobile source emissions from motor vehicle trips. Overall development under this alternative would be reduced compared to development in the Project due to the overall reduction in development. However, similar to the Project, under the Reduced Retail/Office Alternative, future projects would be required to demonstrate consistency the Escondido CAP as part of the project approval process and through CAP consistency, the Reduced Retail/Office Alternative would also be consistent with statewide reduction goals. Therefore, GHG impacts would be less than significant, similar to those identified for the Project.

### **Noise**

Like the Project, the Reduced Retail/Office Alternative has the potential to result in temporary construction noise impacts. Future development under this alternative would be subject to the Escondido Noise Ordinance limits to reduce impacts to less than significant. The Reduced Retail/Office Capacity Alternative would have the potential to increase vehicle noise because of future development and result in the placement of new sensitive receptors in areas that would be exposed to vehicle noise levels in excess of the City's noise and land use compatibility standards. However, compared to the Project, the Reduced Retail/Office Alternative would result in fewer overall dwelling units and non-residential space, which would result in a reduction in the average daily trip volumes and vehicle noise. However, the reduced vehicle noise attributed to the Reduced Retail/Office Alternative would not reduce vehicle noise from future development to a less than significant level. Similar to the Project, impacts related to increases in ambient vehicle noise levels would be significant and unavoidable. Similar to the Project, the Reduced Retail/Office Alternative would have the potential to result in significant groundborne vibration impacts on sensitive land uses and historic buildings during construction activities because similar types of development are expected to occur, although total development would be reduced. Implementation of mitigation measures would reduce impacts. However, similar to the Project, it cannot be demonstrated at this time that these best management practices would reduce all construction-related vibration impacts to a less than significant level. Therefore, impacts from groundborne vibration during construction would be significant and unavoidable.

In addition, similar to the Project, the planning area for the Reduced Retail/Office Alternative is not within an airport noise contour for any airport that would exceed the City's noise compatibility standard for the most sensitive land uses (60 dBA CNEL) and would not expose people residing

or working in the planning area to excessive noise during construction activities or operational activities resulting from aircraft noise.

Therefore, compared to the Project, the Reduced Retail/Office Alternative would result in reduced noise impacts due to the overall reduction in new development that would occur; however, impacts related to ambient vehicle noise levels and excessive groundborne vibration would remain significant and unavoidable, similar to those identified for the Project.

## **Transportation**

Similar to the Project, the Reduced Office/Retail Alternative would include policies that promote alternative modes of transportation, a safe and connective pedestrian and cyclist experience, and a transit-oriented community with safe, reliable, and timely transit options which are consistent with the goals and policies outlined in the Escondido General Plan Mobility and Infrastructure Element.

In addition, this alternative would result in reduced VMT compared to the Project due to the overall reduction in development that would occur under this alternative. Similar to the Project, this alternative would not exceed the 85% threshold of the regional average. In addition, like the Project, future development under the Reduced Office/Retail Alternative would be subject to the Escondido Design Standards and Standard Drawings and the requirements of the Escondido Fire Marshal for roadway modifications, including enhanced sidewalks and bicycle facilities, and for site access. Therefore, transportation impacts would be less than significant, similar to the Project.

### **6.4.3.2 Ability to Meet Project Objectives**

The Reduced Retail/Office Alternative would partially meet Project Objectives 2, 4, and 5 and would not meet Project Objectives 1 and 3. It would not meet Project Objective 1 because, while it would create a self-contained land use pattern that offers a mix of compatible lands uses, it does not include the Park Overlay Zone, which would provide for public community landscaped spaces. The Reduced Retail/Office Alternative would partially enhance the quality of the City's housing stock that is environmentally mindful and equitable while preserving the physical character and pride of the EVSP Area (Project Objective 2), but with 290 fewer dwelling units, it would not fully meet this objective. Compared to the Project, the Reduced Retail/Office Alternative would not provide a range of housing opportunities for all income groups by providing only multi-family dwelling units, which excludes single-family dwelling units (Project Objective 3). The Reduced Retail/Office Alternative would partially meet Project Objective 4 because the alternative would provide some opportunities for private and public development with safe vehicular circulation connected to safe multimodal transportation, including sidewalks and bike lanes connected to reliable and timely transit options. However, it would not be to the same degree as the Project because the alternative would provide 290 fewer dwelling units and 204,830 square feet less of non-residential development. Finally, the Reduced Retail/Office Alternative would partially meet Project Objective 5 because it would provide

for economic activity in the EVSP Area through the incorporation of both Commercial and Mixed-Use land use designations, albeit with 204,830 square feet less of non-residential development.

## 6.5 Environmentally Superior Alternative

CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6(e)(2) requires the identification of an environmentally superior alternative among the alternatives analyzed in an EIR. The CEQA Guidelines require that, if the No Project Alternative (No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan) is identified as the environmentally superior alternative, then another environmentally superior alternative must be identified. Table 6-4, Summary of Impacts for Alternatives Compared to the Project, provides a summary comparison of the alternatives with the Project to highlight if each alternative would result in a similar, greater, or lesser impact regarding potentially significant impacts. In addition, Table 6-5, Ability of Project Alternatives to Meet the Project Objectives, provides a summary comparison of the alternatives with the Project to determine if each alternative would meet the objectives of the Project.

**Table 6-4. Summary of Impacts for Alternatives Compared to the Project**

| Impact  | EVSP               |                 | Alternatives                           |                              |                       |
|---|--------------------|-----------------|--|------------------------------|-----------------------|
|   | Without Mitigation | With Mitigation | No Project/ Existing 2012 General Plan | Reduced Development Capacity | Reduced Retail/Office |
| <b>Section 3.1, Aesthetics</b>  |                    |                 |  |                              |                       |
| Threshold 1: Scenic Vistas  | LS                 | LS              | <                                      | <                            | <                     |
| Threshold 2: Scenic Resources   | NI                 | NI              | =                                      | =                            | =                     |
| Threshold 3: Conflict with Zoning or Regulations for Scenic Quality   | LS                 | LS              | =                                      | =                            | =                     |
| Threshold 4: Light and Glare  | LS                 | LS              | =                                      | =                            | =                     |
| <b>Section 3.2, Air Quality</b>                                       |                    |                 |  |                              |                       |
| Threshold 1: Consistency with Applicable Air Quality Plan             | LS                 | LS              | =                                      | =                            | =                     |
| Threshold 2: Cumulative Increase in Criteria Pollutant Emissions      | LS                 | LS              | <                                      | <                            | <                     |
| Threshold 3: Sensitive Receptors                                      | PS                 | LS              | <                                      | =                            | =                     |
| Threshold 4: Odors  | LS                 | LS              | =                                      | =                            | =                     |
| <b>Section 3.3, Biological Resources</b>                              |                    |                 |  |                              |                       |
| Threshold 1: Candidate, Sensitive, or Special-Status Species          | PS                 | LS              | =                                      | =                            | =                     |
| Threshold 2: Riparian Habitat and Other Sensitive Natural Communities | PS                 | LS              | =                                      | =                            | =                     |
| Threshold 3: Wetlands   | PS                 | LS              | =                                      | =                            | =                     |
| Threshold 4: Native Resident or Migratory Fish or Wildlife Species    | PS                 | LS              | =                                      | =                            | =                     |

**Table 6-4. Summary of Impacts for Alternatives Compared to the Project**

| Impact   | EVSP               |                 | Alternatives                                 |                                    |                          |
|--|--------------------|-----------------|--|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
|  | Without Mitigation | With Mitigation | No Project/<br>Existing 2012<br>General Plan | Reduced<br>Development<br>Capacity | Reduced<br>Retail/Office |
| Threshold 5: Policies Protecting Biological Resources        | LS                 | LS              | =  | =                                  | =                        |
| Threshold 6: Habitat Conservation Plan                       | LS                 | LS              | =  | =                                  | =                        |
| <b>Section 3.4, Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources</b>   |                    |                 |  |                                    |                          |
| Threshold 1: Historic Built Environment Resources            | PS                 | LS              | =  | =                                  | =                        |
| Threshold 2: Archaeological Resources                        | PS                 | LS              | =  | =                                  | =                        |
| Threshold 3: Human Remains                                   | PS                 | LS              | =  | =                                  | =                        |
| Threshold 4: Tribal Cultural Resources                       | PS                 | LS              | =  | =                                  | =                        |
| <b>Section 3.5, Greenhouse Gas Emissions</b>                 |                    |                 |  |                                    |                          |
| Threshold 1: Generation of Greenhouse Gas Emissions          | LS                 | LS              | =  | =                                  | =                        |
| Threshold 2: Applicable Plan                                 | LS                 | LS              | =  | =                                  | =                        |
| <b>Section 3.6, Noise</b>                                    |                    |                 |  |                                    |                          |
| Threshold 1: Exceedance of Noise Standards                   | PS                 | SU              | <  | <                                  | <                        |
| Threshold 2: Excessive Groundborne Vibration or Noise        | PS                 | SU              | <  | <                                  | <                        |
| Threshold 3: Aircraft Noise                                  | NI                 | NI              | =  | =                                  | =                        |
| <b>Section 3.7, Transportation</b>                           |                    |                 |  |                                    |                          |
| Threshold 1: Circulation System Performance                  | LS                 | LS              | <  | =                                  | =                        |
| Threshold 2: Induction of Substantial Vehicle Miles Traveled | LS                 | LS              | <  | <                                  | <                        |
| Threshold 3: Hazardous Design Features                       | LS                 | LS              | =  | =                                  | =                        |
| Threshold 4: Inadequate Emergency Access                     | LS                 | LS              | =  | =                                  | =                        |

**Notes:** EVSP = East Valley Specific Plan; LS = Less than Significant Impact; NI = No Impact; PS = Potentially Significant Impact; SU = Significant and Unavoidable; < = reduced; = = similar



**Table 6-5. Ability of Project Alternatives to Meet the Project Objectives**

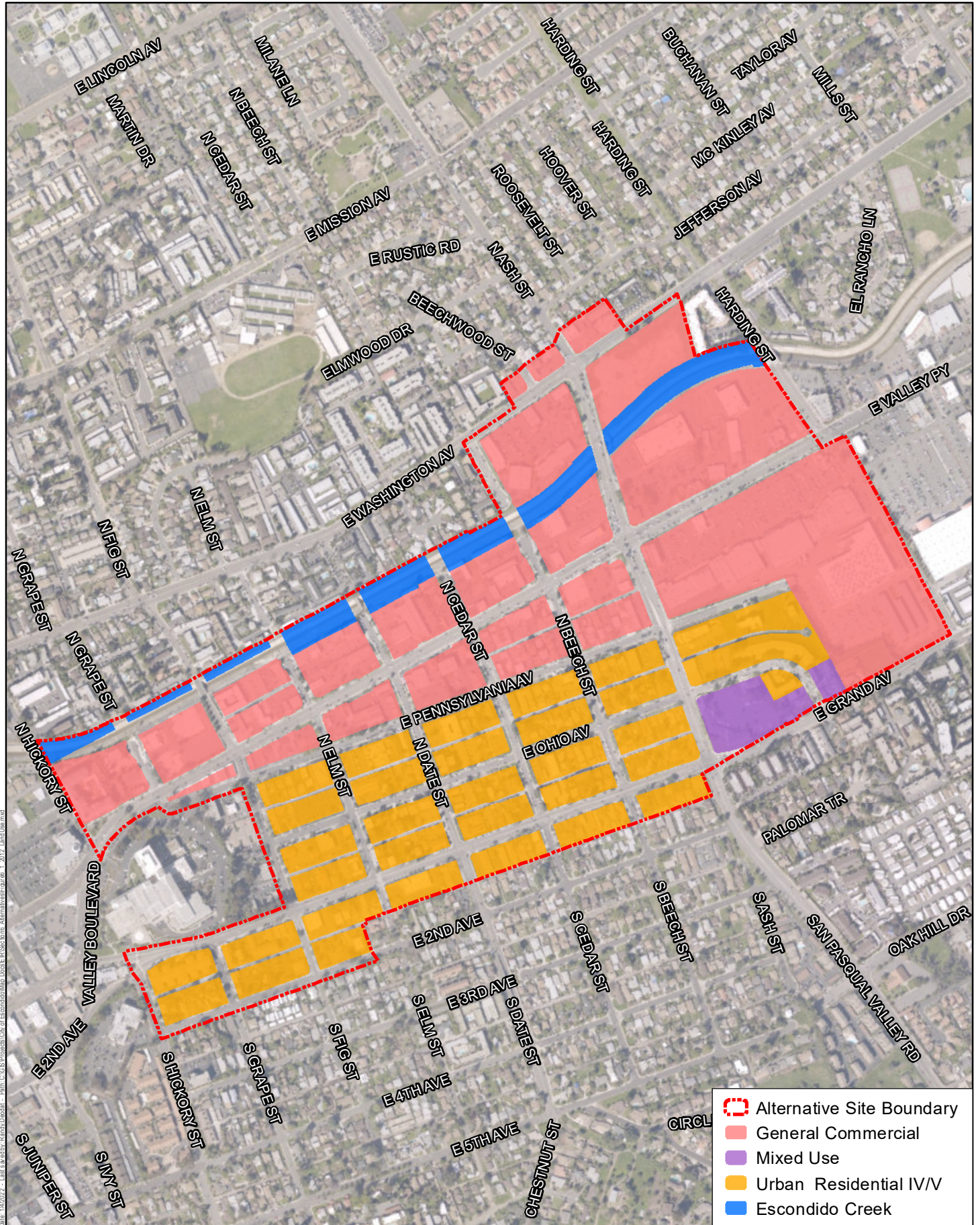
| Project Objectives  | Ability of Alternatives to Meet the Project Objectives |                                    |                          |
|---|--|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
|   | No Project/<br>Existing 2012<br>General Plan           | Reduced<br>Development<br>Capacity | Reduced<br>Retail/Office |
| 1. Create a self-contained land use pattern that offers a mix of compatible lands uses and quality landscaped community spaces.   | No   | Partial                            | No                       |
| 2. Enhance the quality of the City's housing stock that is environmentally mindful and equitable while preserving the physical character and pride of the EVSP Area.    | No   | Partial                            | Partial                  |
| 3. Provide a range of housing opportunities for all income groups and households that seamlessly supports all right-of-way users.                                       | Partial  | Partial                            | No                       |
| 4. Plan both public and private development to provide safe vehicular circulation connected to safe multimodal transportation with reliable and timely transit options. | Yes  | Partial                            | Partial                  |
| 5. Provide for robust economic activity within the EVSP Area.   | No   | No                                 | Partial                  |

Based on a comparison of the alternatives' overall environmental impacts and their compatibility with the project's goals and objectives, the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative. As shown in Table 6-4, the significance levels of the environmental impacts associated with the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative would be reduced compared to the significance levels identified for the Project for aesthetics, air quality, noise, and transportation.

Regarding attaining most of the basic project objectives, the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative would partially implement Project Objectives 1, 2, 3, and 4, but would not implement Project Objective 5. Therefore, while the Reduced Development Capacity Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative, it would only partially meet four of the five project objectives.

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Source: Escondido 2012; SanGIS Imagery 2017.



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Figure 6-1

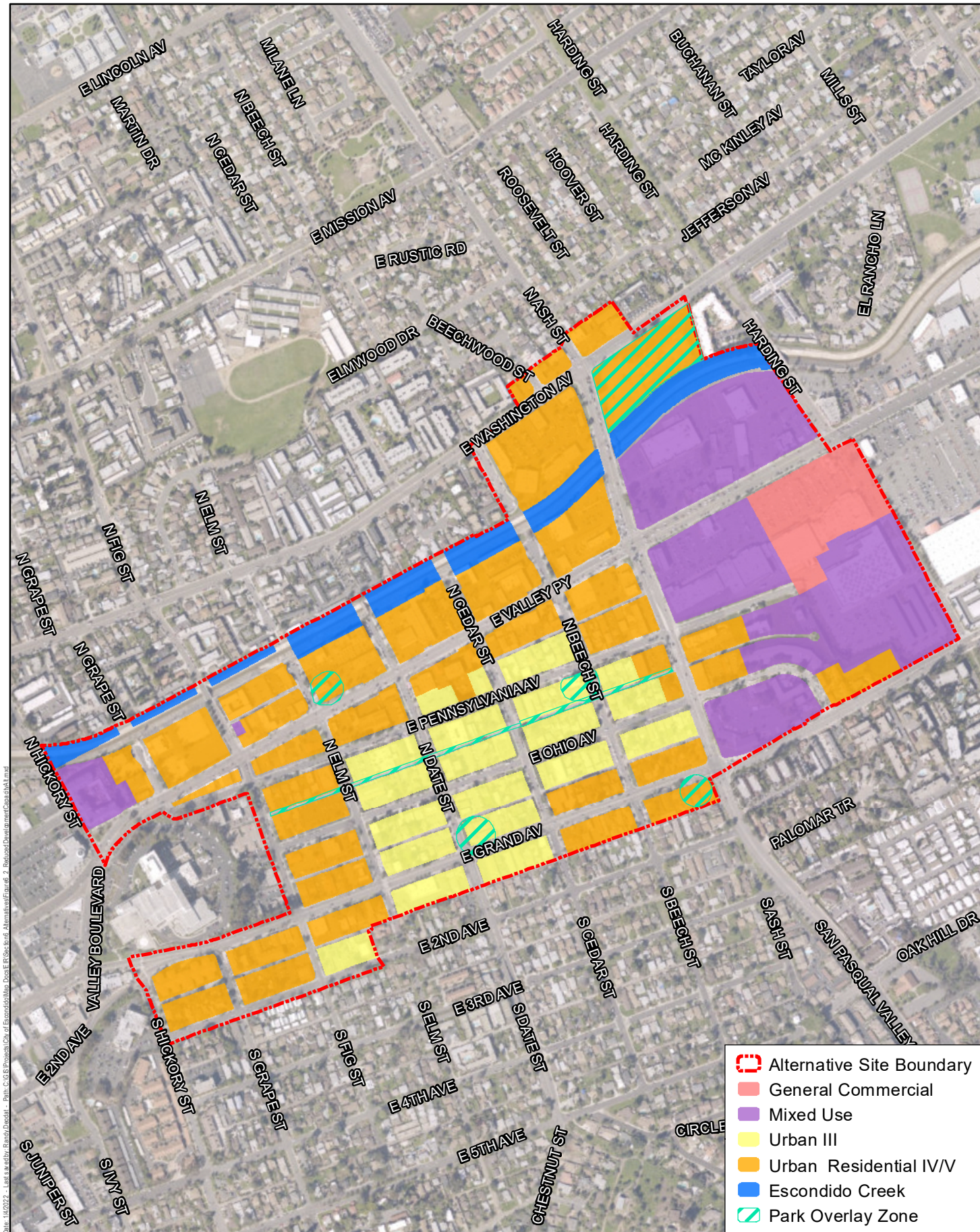
No Project/Existing 2012 General Plan Alternative

East Valley Specific Plan



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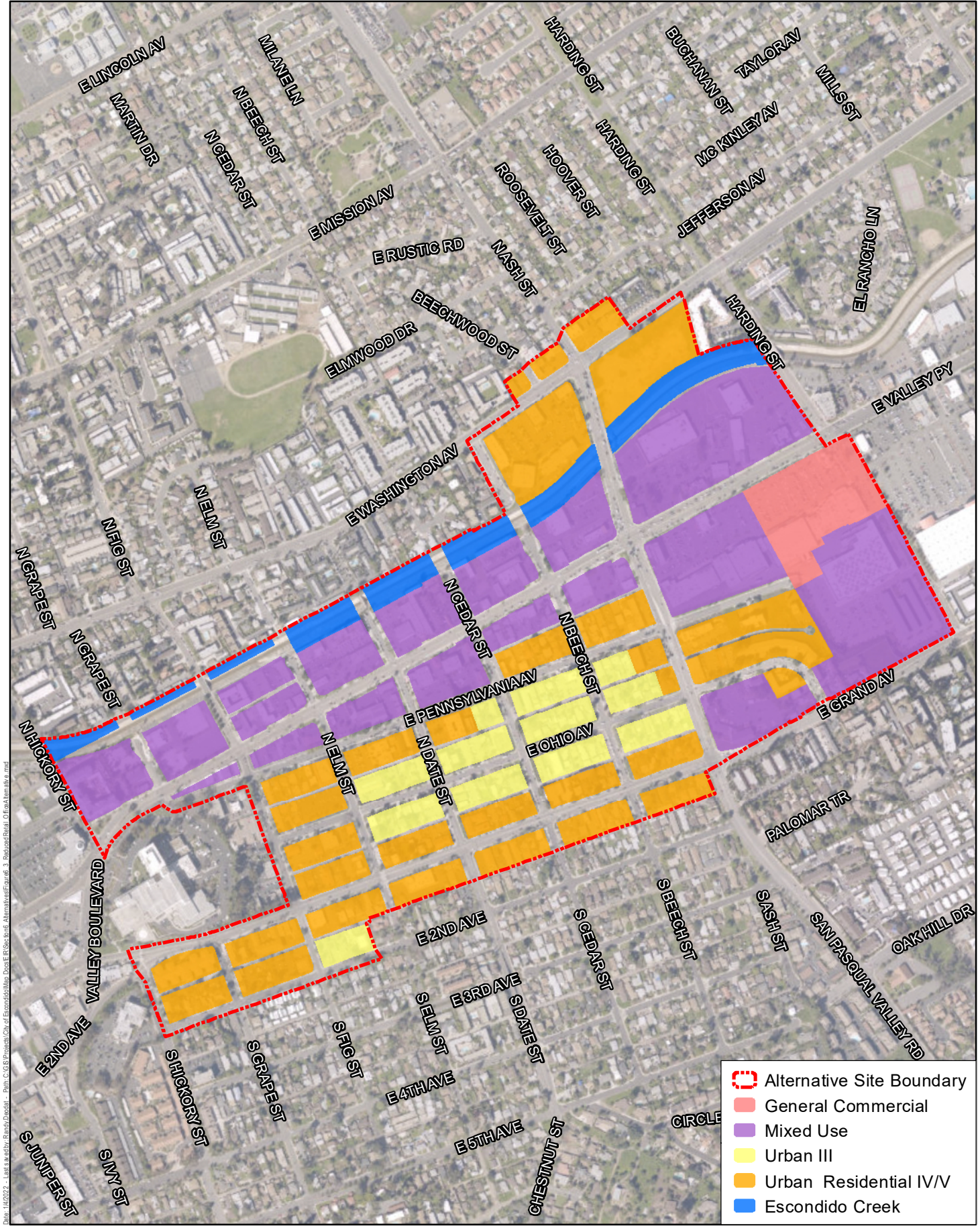




Source: Escondido 2012; SanGIS Imagery 2017.



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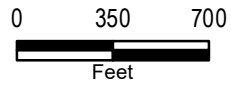


Date: 10/2022 - Last saved by: Randy Danciel - Path: C:\GIS\Projects\City of Escondido\Map Docs\ER\Scenarios - Alameda\Map\Figure6\_3\_ReducedRetail\_C2\ra\A\ra\ra.mxd

Source: SanGIS Imagery 2017.



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**Figure 6-3**

Reduced Retail/Office Alternative

East Valley Specific Plan



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## **Chapter 7 List of Preparers**

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This chapter lists the lead agency and consultants who prepared this PEIR and technical reports and the consultants who prepared the East Valley Specific Plan.

### **7.1 Environmental Impact Report Preparation**

#### **7.1.1 Lead Agency**

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Lindsey Messner, Technical Editor

### **7.2 Technical Reports**

#### **7.2.1 Air Quality Technical Memorandum – Harris & Associates**

Sharon Toland, Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Specialist

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## **7.2.2 Biological Resources Letter Report – Harris & Associates**

Emily Mastrelli, Senior Biologist

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## **7.2.3 Cultural Resources Technical Report – ASM Affiliates**

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## **7.2.4 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Technical Memorandum – Harris & Associates**

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## **7.2.5 Noise Technical Memorandum – Harris & Associates**

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## **7.2.6 Transportation Analysis – Linscott, Law & Greenspan, Engineers**

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## **7.3 East Valley Specific Plan Preparers**

### **7.3.1 Rick Engineering**

Brooke Peterson, AICP, Director of Planning + Design

Shannon Baer, Senior Planner

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### Chapter 3: Environmental Analysis

None.

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**Appendix A. Notice of Preparation and Comment Letters**

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## **Appendix B1. Air Quality Technical Memorandum**

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## **Appendix B2. Air Quality Modeling Output**

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## **Appendix C. Biological Resources Letter Report**

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## **Appendix D. Cultural Resources Technical Report**

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## **Appendix E. Greenhouse Gas Emissions Technical Memorandum**

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## **Appendix F. Noise Technical Memorandum**

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## **Appendix G. Transportation Analysis**

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**Appendix H. Project Consistency with  
Relevant Escondido General Plan Policies**

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