4.17 TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

This section provides a discussion of the existing transportation conditions in the region, in Menifee, and in the vicinity of the proposed Project. In addition, this section addresses potential impacts to transportation facilities resulting from construction and operation of the proposed Project. This section also summarizes information provided in the *Menifee Valley Specific Plan Project Traffic Study*[1] (Project Traffic Study) and the *Vehicle Miles Traveled Analysis (VMT) Memo* prepared for the proposed Project[2] (VMT Memo). The Project Traffic Study and VMT Memo are included as **Appendices K-1** and **K-2** to this Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). This section also incorporates data and information from the City of Menifee (City) General Plan, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Traffic Accident Surveillance and Analysis System (TASAS) crash data summary, a review of existing resources and technical data, and applicable laws, regulations, and guidelines.

4.17.1 Scoping Process

The City received 10 comment letters during the public review period of the Notice of Preparation (NOP). For copies of the NOP comment letters, refer to **Appendix A-1** of this Draft EIR. Five NOP responses included comments related to transportation and traffic. Those comment letters are summarized as follows:

- Mitchell M. Tsai commented that the City should consider utilizing skilled and trained workforce policies and requirements to benefit the local area economically and mitigate greenhouse gas, air quality, and transportation impacts.

- Mike Tunney from Howard Industrial Partners requested that the City confirm that the Menifee Valley Specific Plan Project analyzes the build out of the Menifee North Specific Plan and a proposed project as a near-term project as part of the cumulative analysis.[3]

- Marven E. Norman from the Inland Empire Biking Alliance requested that the Project team utilize bikeway selection guidelines from Caltrans or the Federal Highway Administration to ensure that proper bicycle facilities provide a low-stress connection on all roadways internal to the Project as well as any offsite improvements deemed necessary as part of any traffic studies which are completed. Mr. Norman also requested completion of an active transportation master plan specific to the Project that includes an account of how all residences and destinations would have access to a Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) 2 or greater bikeway, as well as how the internal network would connect to and enhance the broader regional network. Mr. Norman also requested that bicycling be considered in the traffic study itself, including the use of bicycle level of service as part of any other level of service considerations or calculations that are carried out for the Project.

1 LSA Associates, Inc. 2023. *Menifee Valley Specific Plan Project Traffic Study*. September.
2 LSA Associates, Inc. 2023. *Vehicle Miles Traveled Analysis (VMT) Memo*. October.
3 The Project traffic study analysis included the future build out of the Menifee North Specific Plan as part of the cumulative analysis.

- The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) requested environmental documentation of the proposed Project once available for full review. SCAG encouraged the use of a side-by-side comparison of SCAG Connect SoCal goals with the proposed Project. SCAG also recommended that the Final Program Environmental Impact Report for Connect SoCal be reviewed for guidance in crafting mitigation measures as appropriate.[4]

- David Cordero from the Southwest Regional Council of Carpenters (SWRCC) commented that local skilled and trained workforce requirements can boost economic development and mitigate transportation and greenhouse gas impacts by minimizing vehicle miles traveled.

4.17.2 Methodology

Project transportation impact discussion assumes the following based on Threshold 4.14-1 Substantial Unplanned Population Growth, in **Section 4.14**: (1) commercial, business park, commercial business park, and public facility uses on the Project site would provide employment to 6,225 people at Specific Plan build out, and (2) the proposed single-family and multi-family residential units have the potential to increase the population in Menifee by up to approximately 5,220 persons.

Trip generation was generated for the proposed Project using the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual (11th Edition) and other applicable sources used to prepare the Project Traffic Study and VMT Memo.

Until July 1, 2020, roadway congestion or level of service (LOS) was used as the primary study metric for planning and environmental review of discretionary development projects in California. However, Senate Bill (SB) 743 required the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to establish a new metric for identifying and mitigating transportation impacts pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in an effort to meet the State's goals to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, encourage infill development, and improve public health through more active transportation.

California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21099(b) states that, upon certification of the revised guidelines for determining transportation impacts, 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 under CEQA. OPR identified VMT as the required CEQA transportation metric and beginning July 1, 2020, VMT (not LOS) is the only legally acceptable threshold for transportation-related environmental impacts pursuant to CEQA. However, because LOS is still used by the City of Menifee in its General Plan for local planning purposes, that information is analyzed for consistency with the City of Menifee General Plan[5] under Threshold 4.11-2 in **Section 4.11**. Further discussion on LOS analysis and the traffic study area can be referenced in the Project Traffic Study in **Appendix K-1**.

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4 A comparison of the proposed Project with SCAG Connect SoCal goals is provided in Section 4.11 Land Use and Planning of this EIR.

5 City of Menifee. 2013. General Plan, Circulation Element C-1. Website: https://www.cityofmenifee.us/863/Circulation-Element (accessed October 11, 2022).

VMT is a measurement of the amount and distance that a person drives, accounting for the number of passengers within a vehicle. Many interdependent factors affect the amount and distance a person might drive. In particular, the type of built environment affects how many places a person can access within a given distance, time, and cost, using different ways of travel (e.g., private vehicle, public transit, bicycling, walking). Typically, low-density development located at great distances from other land uses and in areas with few alternatives to the private vehicle provides less access than a location with a high density and mix of land uses and numerous ways of travel. Therefore, low-density development typically generates more VMT per person compared to a similarly sized development located in urban areas. In general, higher VMT areas are associated with more air pollution, including GHG emissions and energy usage, than lower VMT areas. VMT is calculated by multiplying the number of trips generated by a project by the total distance of each of those trips.

Lead agencies have the discretion to set their own thresholds of significance with the goals of the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the development of multimodal transportation networks, and a diversity of land uses. The City of Menifee Engineering Department revised its *LOS Traffic Study Guidelines* in October 2020.[6] The City of Menifee *Traffic Impact Analysis Guidelines for Vehicle Miles Traveled* (TIA Guidelines for VMT) (2020, updated January 2022) establish VMT metrics and thresholds for projects within the City.[7]

The City's TIA Guidelines for VMT (2022) list standardized screening criteria for project-level VMT analyses that can be used to identify when a proposed land use development project would result in a less than significant impact thereby eliminating the need to conduct a full VMT analysis. The City's VMT screening criteria described in its TIA Guidelines for VMT (2022) are listed below:

- Transit Priority Area (TPA Screening)
- Map Based Screening based on Low VMT Area
- K-12 schools
- Local parks
- Day care centers
- Local-serving retail uses less than 50,000 square feet (gas stations, banks, restaurants, shopping centers)
- Local-serving hotels (non-destination hotels)
- Student housing projects on or adjacent to college campuses
- Local-serving assembly uses (places of worship, community organizations)
- Community institutions
- Local-serving community colleges (Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy [RTP/SCS])
- Affordable or supportive housing

6 City of Menifee. 2020. *LOS Traffic Study Guidelines*. Website: https://www.cityofmenifee.us/DocumentCenter/View/12099/LOS-Traffic-Study-Guidelines-October-2020 (accessed October 11, 2022).

7 Fehr & Peers. 2020. *City of Menifee Traffic Impact Analysis Guidelines for Vehicle Miles Traveled*. June 3. Website: https://www.cityofmenifee.us/DocumentCenter/View/10699/Final-Adopted-TIA-Guidelines-for-VMT_6-3-20 (accessed October 11, 2022).

- Senior housing (United States Department of Housing and Urban Development [USHUD])
- Projects generating less than 110 daily vehicle trips

However, given that the Project is a specific plan and would generate more than 110 daily vehicle trips, none of the screening criteria are applicable to the Project. As such, the Project cannot be screened out from a full VMT analysis, and hence a detailed VMT analysis was prepared for the Project (**Appendix K-2**).

4.17.2.1 VMT Modeling

The City's TIA Guidelines for VMT (2020, updated 2022) identify the Riverside County Model (RIVCOM) as the appropriate tool for conducting VMT analysis for land development projects in Menifee. The Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG) is the developer/owner of RIVCOM and in August 2021 launched the new modeling tool for use by its member agencies. At the time the Project-specific analysis was prepared, the RIVCOM tool was in its fourth update (also referred to as version 3.0). This analysis has been prepared based on version 3.0 of RIVCOM, which is consistent with the version of the RIVCOM model used to develop the City's VMT impact thresholds listed by the City Guidelines.

4.17.3 Existing Environmental Setting

The Project site is located in Menifee, in Riverside County. The areas surrounding the Project site consist of a mix of land uses, including industrial, residential, and public/quasi-public facilities (including Heritage High School), as illustrated on **Figure 3.3** in **Chapter 3.0** of this EIR. The Project site is bounded on the north by State Route 74 (SR-74), to the south by the BNSF Railway (BNSF RR) and Matthews Road, to the east by Briggs Road, and to the west by Menifee Road. Single-family residential uses around the Project site include the Heritage Lake residential subdivision to the south (below the BNSF RR tracks) and a residential neighborhood to the east. To the north of the Project site (across SR-74) is vacant land planned for commercial and industrial uses. Heritage High School is located northeast of the Project site. A Southern California Edison (SCE) service center abuts northwest of the Project site, and the Mira Loma SCE power station is located to the west of the Project site (across Menifee Road).

The Project includes up to 59.0 acres of off-site physical disturbances to install utility and road improvements to support the operation and construction of the proposed Project. These improvements include roadway improvements and subsurface utility line installations and connections along Briggs Road, Menifee Road, and SR-74; the installation of subsurface utility lines in the current alignment of Matthews Road along segments of the Project site's southern boundary; and the installation of a nonvehicular bridge across the railroad tracks to connect the Project site with the Heritage Lake community to the south.

Implementation of the Project would also result in off-site roadway improvements to address traffic impacts in conflict with the General Plan policies as identified in the Circulation Element. These roadway improvements, which include widening and additional turn lanes as required, include Matthews Road/Case Road (between McLaughlin Road and Ethanac Road), McLaughlin Road (between McLaughlin Road and Menifee Road), and McCall Boulevard (between Encanto Drive and Menifee Road). These roadway improvements were identified in the General Plan Circulation

Element and included in the Final General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) certified by the City on December 18, 2013 (Certified 2013 EIR).

4.17.3.1 Roadway Network

The Menifee General Plan identifies classifications for roadway facilities within the city.[8] Detailed discussion of the Menifee circulation network by street name is found in Section 3.1.1 of the Project Traffic Study. Discussion of the circulation network within Riverside County and the cities of Lake Elsinore, Perris, Hemet, and San Jacinto can also be found in Section 3.1.1 of the Project Traffic Study. The City's roadway facilities are defined below:

- The **Expressway/Limited Access Conventional Highway** classification accommodates 6 to 8 through travel lanes, applicable to the Ethanac Road/SR-74 east-west corridor on the northern edge of the city. SR-74 abuts the northern boundary of the Project site.

- An **Urban Arterial** is generally a 6-lane section with a curbed median, although an 8-lane version of this classification is required in at least one location in the city (Newport Road in the vicinity of the Interstate 215 [I-215] interchange) based upon traffic projections. Menifee Road abuts the western boundary of the Project site.

- An **Arterial** is a 4-lane section with a raised median. The Arterial cross-section has been modified from the county typical cross-section to provide more detail and flexibility for the median and parkway widths. Shoulders may accommodate exclusive bike lanes or shared Neighborhood Electric Vehicle (NEV)/bike lanes. Sidewalks may be curb-adjacent or separated from the roadway by a landscaped parkway or on-street parking, subject to approval. No arterials are within immediate proximity to the Project site.

- A **Major** is a 4-lane section with a painted median. The Major cross-section has been modified from the county cross-section to provide more flexibility for parkway widths. Shoulders may accommodate exclusive bike lanes or shared NEV (i.e., Golf Carts)/bike lanes. Sidewalks may be curb-adjacent or separated from the roadway by a landscaped parkway. Briggs Road abuts the eastern boundary of the Project site.

- A **Secondary** is a 4-lane roadway that provides median turn lanes and bike lanes or shared NEV/bike lanes when median turn lanes are not needed. The Secondary classification provides a 100-foot right-of-way. No Secondaries are within immediate proximity to the Project site.

- A **Collector** is generally a 2-lane undivided road with shoulders that can accommodate on-street parking, exclusive bike lanes, or shared NEV/bike lanes. There are two Collectors within the Project site: McLaughlin Road and Malaga Road.

[8] City of Menifee. 2013. General Plan. Circulation Element, Exhibit C-3, Roadway Network. Website: https://www.cityofmenifee.us/863/Circulation-Element (accessed October 11, 2022).

4.17.3.2 Truck Network

Due to the concentration of warehouse/distribution uses in the area and proximity to major highways, local roadways in the traffic area, including Riverside County, Menifee, Lake Elsinore, Perris, San Jacinto, and Hemet, are heavily used by truck traffic. [9]

4.17.3.3 Pedestrian Facilities

Pedestrian facilities are comprised of sidewalks, off-street pathways, marked and enhanced crosswalks (mid-block and at intersections), curb ramps, median refuges, and pedestrian scale lighting. Sidewalks abutting the Project site boundaries are not contiguous and currently only occur on the street frontage of Heritage High School facing SR-74 and Briggs Road, and the street frontage of the Valley Substation and the gas station located at the southeast corner of Menifee Road and SR-74. Marked crosswalks occur adjacent to Heritage High School and at Biscayne Road/Menifee Road, Menifee Road/SR-74, and Briggs Road/SR-74.

4.17.3.4 Bicycle Facilities

Bikeway planning and design in California typically relies on guidelines and design standards established by Caltrans in the Highway Design Manual (Chapter 1000: Bikeway Planning and Design). The Caltrans guidelines cover four primary types of bikeway facilities: Class I, Class II, Class III, and Class IV. These facility types are discussed below:

- **Class I Bikeways** (Bike Paths) provide a separate right-of-way, are designated for the exclusive use of bicycles and pedestrians, and minimize vehicle and pedestrian crossflow. In general, bike paths serve corridors that are not served by existing streets and highways, or where sufficient right-of-way exists for such facilities to be constructed.

- **Class II Bikeways** (Bike Lanes) are lanes for bicyclists generally adjacent to the outer vehicle travel lanes. These lanes have special lane markings, pavement legends, and signage. Bicycle lanes are generally 5 feet wide. Adjacent vehicle parking and vehicle/pedestrian crossflow are permitted. Note that when grade separation or buffers are constructed between the bicycle and vehicle lanes, these facilities are classified as Class IV Separate Bikeways.

- **Class III Bikeways** (Bicycle Routes/Bicycle Boulevards) are designated by signs or pavement markings for shared use with pedestrians or motor vehicles but have no separated bicycle right-of-way or lane striping. Bicycle routes serve either to (a) provide continuity to other bicycle facilities or (b) designate preferred routes through high-demand corridors. Bicycle routes are implemented on low-speed (less than 25 miles per hour) and low-volume (fewer than 3,000 vehicles/day) streets.

- **Class IV Bikeways**, also known as “cycle tracks” or “protected bike lanes,” provide a right-of-way designated exclusively for bicycle travel within a roadway and which are protected from other

[9] LSA Associates, Inc. 2023. *Menifee Valley Specific Plan Project Traffic Study.*

vehicle traffic with devices, including, but not limited to, grade separation, flexible posts, inflexible physical barriers, or parked cars.

4.17.3.5 Transit

Transit service in Menifee is provided by the Riverside Transit Agency (RTA), which provides fixed route and Dial-a-Ride bus service within the city and neighboring jurisdictions. RTA Route 28 travels along SR-74, with the two nearest bus stops serving the Project site located at SR-74/Briggs Road and SR-74/Menifee Road.[10] Transit service is reviewed and updated by the RTA periodically to address ridership, budget, and community demand needs/changes. Changes in land use (i.e., occurring as part of the proposed Project) can affect these periodic adjustments, which may lead to either enhanced or reduced service where appropriate.

4.17.4 Regulatory Setting

The following State, regional, and local transportation plans, policies, and regulations guide transportation planning in Menifee.

4.17.4.1 State Regulations

California Department of Transportation. Caltrans is responsible for the maintenance and operation of State routes and highways. In Menifee and surrounding areas, Caltrans facilities include I-215, SR-74, and SR-79. Caltrans maintains a volume monitoring program and reviews local agencies' planning documents (such as this EIR) to assist in its forecasting of future volumes and congestion points. The Guide for the Preparation of Traffic Impacts Studies published by Caltrans is intended to provide a consistent basis for evaluating traffic impacts to State facilities. Based on Caltrans District 8 Office of Intergovernmental Review, Community and Regional Planning, LOS D is considered as the level of service standard for State highways and freeway ramps within the district jurisdiction. It should be noted Caltrans does not have roadway segment level of service criteria. Therefore, study segments within the easterly part of SR-74 (between I-15 and Central Avenue interchange and I-215 and 4th Street interchange) and westerly part of SR-74 (between I-215 and SR-74 interchange to SR-79 and SR-74 junctions) have been analyzed using the local jurisdictions' (City of Lake Elsinore, City of Perris, City of Menifee, City of Hemet, City of San Jacinto and County of Riverside) roadway segment LOS criteria.

Caltrans released a VMT-Focused Transportation Impact Study Guide (May 20, 2020) that recommends use of the OPR recommendations for land use projects and plans. For transportation projects, Caltrans has suggested that any increase in VMT would constitute a significant impact for transportation projects. This has been referred to as the "Net Zero VMT threshold."

The Project will be required to implement several circulation network improvements, including intersection turn lanes and roadway segment lane additions within the Project vicinity. However, these recommended improvements are consistent with the City's General Plan Circulation Element.

[10] Riverside Transit Agency. September 11, 2022. Route 28. Website: https://www.riversidetransit.com/images/DOWNLOADS/MAPS_SCHEDULES_PDFS/Route%2028%20%7C%20Perris%20Station%20Transit%20Center,%20Hemet%20Valley%20Mall,%20Florida%20&%20New%20Chicago.pdf (accessed October 11, 2022).

The Final General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) certified by the City on December 18, 2013 (Certified 2013 EIR) had previously analyzed the transportation impacts under CEQA for these proposed circulation improvements.

Senate Bill 375. As a means to achieve the statewide emission reduction goals set by Assembly Bill 32 ("The California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006"), SB 375 ("The Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008") directs the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to set regional targets for reducing GHG emissions from cars and light trucks. Using the template provided by the State's Regional Blueprint program to accomplish this goal, SB 375 seeks to align transportation and land use planning to reduce VMT through modified land use patterns. There are five basic directives of the bill: (1) creation of regional targets for GHG emissions reduction tied to land use, (2) a requirement that regional planning agencies create a sustainable communities strategy (SCS) to meet those targets (or an Alternative Planning Strategy if the strategies in the SCS would not reach the target set by CARB), (3) a requirement that regional transportation funding decisions be consistent with the SCS, (4) a requirement that the Regional Housing Needs Allocation numbers for municipal general plan housing element updates must conform to the SCS, and (5) CEQA exemptions and streamlining for projects that conform to the SCS.

Senate Bill 743. SB 743 was signed into law in 2013 and fundamentally changed the way transportation impacts under CEQA are analyzed. It required the OPR to "prepare, develop, and transmit to the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency for certification and adoption proposed revisions to the [CEQA] guidelines …establishing criteria for determining the significance of transportation impacts of projects" to "promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the development of multimodal transportation networks, and a diversity of land uses."

On December 28, 2018, the Natural Resources Agency adopted *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.3, which establishes specific criteria for evaluating a project's transportation impacts and states that "vehicle miles traveled is the most appropriate measure of transportation impacts". It gives agencies the "discretion to choose the most appropriate methodology to evaluate a project's vehicle miles traveled, including whether to express the change in absolute terms, per capita, per household or in any other measure" provided that "[a]ny assumptions used to estimate vehicle miles traveled… should be documented and explained in the environmental document prepared for the project." Section 15064.3 further states that except for certain transportation projects, "a project's effect on automobile delay shall not constitute a significant environmental impact." See Citizens for Positive Growth & Preservation v. City of Sacramento (2019) 43 Cal. App. 5th 609, 626 (holding that a general plan's impact on LOS, which effectively measures automobile delay, can no longer constitute a significant environmental impact).

Additionally, OPR issued a technical advisory memorandum in December 2018 that includes general guidance and information for lead agencies to use in implementing SB 743, including choosing VMT methodology and establishing VMT thresholds. On June 3, 2020, the City approved Resolution 20-920, which adopted the City of Menifee Traffic Impact Analysis Guidelines for Vehicle Miles Traveled, which was further updated in January 2022. The City of Menifee VMT Guidelines establish project screening criteria, VMT metrics and thresholds for land use projects within the City. Since the Project is a specific plan and would generate more than 110 daily vehicle trips, none of the City's

VMT screening criteria are applicable to the Project; thus, a detailed VMT analysis was prepared for the Project.

4.17.4.2 Regional Regulations

Southern California Association of Governments. Regional planning in Orange, Los Angeles, Ventura, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Imperial Counties is conducted by SCAG. SCAG is also the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for these six counties. As the designated MPO, SCAG is mandated by the federal government to research and prepare plans for transportation, a growth forecast, hazardous waste, and air quality. The growth forecast serves as the foundation of these plans. Of the various plans adopted by SCAG, the Regional Comprehensive Plan and the 2020–2045 RTP/SCS are relevant to the proposed Project.[11]

- **Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide:** In 2008, SCAG adopted the Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) for the purpose of providing a comprehensive strategic plan for defining and solving housing, traffic, water, air quality, and other regional challenges. The 2008 RCP has two primary objectives in implementing this strategic plan: (1) integrating transportation, land use, and air quality planning approaches, and (2) outlining key roles for public and private sector stakeholders to implement reasonable policies regarding transportation, land use, and air quality approaches. While the 2008 RCP outlines several policies to inform local decision-makers within the SCAG region with respect to policy and planning decisions, these policies are considered recommendations and are not mandated by law. With respect to land use policy, the 2008 RCP includes a Land Use and Housing chapter that aims to link land use and transportation planning decisions to the projected population and economic growth in the SCAG region. Specifically, the Land Use and Housing chapter of the 2008 RCP promotes sustainable planning for land use and housing in the SCAG region by maximizing the efficiency of the existing circulation network, providing a greater variety in housing types, promoting a diverse and growing economy, and protecting the existing natural environment. The 2008 RCP identifies 2 percent Strategy Areas as part of the Sustainability Planning Grant (formerly known as Compass Blueprint growth vision); however, these areas have since been updated and replaced by the High-Quality Transit Areas (HQTAs) identified in the 2016–2040 RTP/SCS.

- **Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy.** On September 3, 2020, SCAG's Regional Council unanimously voted to approve and fully adopt Connect SoCal (2020–2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy). Connect SoCal is a long-range visioning plan that builds upon and expands land use and transportation strategies established over several planning cycles to increase mobility options and achieve a more sustainable growth pattern. It charts a path toward a more mobile, sustainable, and prosperous region by making connections between transportation networks, between planning strategies, and between the people whose collaboration can improve the quality of life for Southern Californians, including consideration of housing-jobs balance within the region. Connect SoCal was developed through a 4-year planning process involving rigorous technical analysis, extensive stakeholder engagement, and robust policy discussions with local elected leaders, who make up

[11] Southern California Association of Governments. 2020. 2020–2045 RTP/SCS. Website: https://scag.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/0903fconnectsocal-plan_0.pdf?1606001176 (accessed August 9, 2022).

SCAG's policy committees and Regional Council. SCAG's leadership explored the challenges and barriers to the transformative change the region needs to address demographic and economic shifts, including an increasingly aging and economically inequitable society. SCAG's analysis considered both the physical constraints and economic barriers of continuing to grow rapidly on the fringes of the region. SCAG's policy committees reviewed and discussed emerging technologies and transportation innovations aimed at relieving congestion, while reducing emissions. The following goals in the 2020–2045 RTP/SCS are applicable to the proposed Project:

1. Encourage regional economic prosperity and global competitiveness.
2. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality.
3. Support healthy and equitable communities.
4. Adapt to a changing climate and support an integrated regional development pattern and transportation network.
5. Promote conservation of natural and agricultural lands and restoration of habitats.

4.17.4.3 Local Regulations

Riverside County Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fee. The Riverside County Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fee (TUMF) program is administered by the WRCOG based upon a regional Nexus Study that was most recently updated in 2016 to address major changes in right-of-way acquisition and improvement cost factors. The regional TUMF program was put into place to ensure that development pays its fair share, and that funding is in place for construction of Riverside County transportation facilities needed to maintain the requisite level of service and critical to mobility in the region. TUMF, as it is a regional mitigation fee program, is imposed and implemented in every jurisdiction (i.e., City of Menifee) in Western Riverside County.

City of Menifee Development Impact Fee Program. The Development Impact Fee (DIF) Program created and imposed by the City of Menifee collects fees from new residential, commercial, and industrial development for the purpose of funding roadways and intersections necessary to accommodate city growth as identified in the City's General Plan Circulation Element. The Project Applicant would be subject to the City's DIF program and would pay the requisite City DIFs at the rates in effect.

City of Menifee General Plan. The City of Menifee General Plan Circulation Element provides the following goals and policies pertaining to transportation that would be applicable to the proposed Project:[12]

> **Goal C-1:** A roadway network that meets the circulation needs of all residents, employees, and visitors to the City of Menifee.
>
> > **Policy C-1.1:** Require roadways to comply with federal, state, and local design and safety standards; meet the needs of multiple transportation modes and users; be compatible

[12] City of Menifee. 2013. General Plan, Circulation Element. Website: https://www.cityofmenifee.us/863/Circulation-Element (accessed October 11, 2022).

with the streetscape and surrounding land uses; and be maintained in accordance with best practices.

Policy C-1.2: Require development to mitigate its traffic impacts and achieve a peak hour Level of Service (LOS) D or better at intersections, except at constrained intersections at close proximity to the I-215 where LOS E may be permitted.

Policy C-1.5: Minimize idling times and vehicle miles traveled to conserve resources, protect air quality, and limit greenhouse gas emissions.

Goal C-2: A bikeway and community pedestrian network that facilitates and encourages nonmotorized travel throughout the City of Menifee.

Policy C-2.1: Require on- and off- street pathways to comply with federal, state, and local design and safety standards; meet the needs of multiple types of users; be compatible with the streetscape and surrounding land uses; and be maintained in accordance with best practices.

Policy C-2.2: Provide off-street multipurpose trails and on-street bike lanes as our primary paths of citywide travel and explore the shared use of low-speed roadways for connectivity wherever it is safe to do so.

Policy C-2.3: Require walkways that promote safe and convenient travel between residential areas, businesses, schools, parks, recreation areas, transit facilities, and other key destination points.

Policy C-2.4: Explore opportunities to expand the pedestrian and bicycle networks; this includes consideration of utility easements, drainage corridors, road rights-of-way, and other potential options.

Policy C-2.5: Work with the Western Riverside Council of Governments to implement the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan for Western Riverside County.

Goal C-3: A public transit system that is a viable alternative to automobile travel and meets basic transportation needs of the transit dependent.

Policy C-3.2: Require new development to provide transit facilities, such as bus shelters, transit bays, and turnouts, as necessary.

4.17.5 Thresholds of Significance

The City has not established local CEQA significance thresholds as described in Section 15064.7 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*. Therefore, significance determinations utilized in this section are from Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*. The proposed Project would result in a significant impact associated with transportation and traffic if the Project or any Project-related component would:

Threshold 4.17-1: Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Threshold 4.17-2: **Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b).**

Threshold 4.17-3: **Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment).**

Threshold 4.17-4: **Result in inadequate emergency access.**

4.17.6 Project Impacts

4.17.6.1 Conflict with Transportation Programs, Plans, Ordinances, or Policies

Threshold 4.17-1: **Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities.**

Please refer to **Table 4.11.2** in **Section 4.11** of this EIR for project consistency analysis with the City of Menifee's Circulation Element goals and policies identified therein.

On-Site Improvements.

Roadway Facilities. The Project proposes a system of interconnecting roadways and frontage improvements to the perimeter roads. **Figure 3.7** in **Chapter 3.0** of this EIR depicts public street locations and access point locations. Interior roadway alignments and locations of expected traffic control devices described in the draft Specific Plan are conceptual until approved by the City Engineer as part of subdivision map approvals. Intersection spacing is required to conform with the City's standards depending on the street's classification. Rights-of-way conflicts (i.e., streets and easements) would be resolved with the appropriate City Departments and responsible agencies. Conceptual design specifications for perimeter, interior residential, and commercial/business park/commercial-business park roadways are subject to change based on engineering review and approval by the City Engineer at the time subdivision maps are brought forward for approval. Facility implementation would be consistent with Policy C 1.1 and Policy C 1.5 of the Circulation Element (**Table 4.11.2** in **Section 4.11**):

- Conceptual Project roadway designs shall comply with federal, State, and local design and safety standards; meet the needs of multiple transportation modes and users; be compatible with the streetscape and surrounding land uses; and be maintained in accordance with best practices **(Policy C 1.1).**

- Project implementation and operation shall comply with applicable air quality regulations to the extent feasible. The conceptual Specific Plan sites commercial, recreational, industrial, school, and pedestrian and biking trails near on-site residential units, which would reduce vehicle miles traveled. **(Policy C 1.5).**

The proposed Project was evaluated against the City's General Plan for consistency with policies, including the City's desired LOS. The proposed Project would be mostly consistent with the General Plan Street System. However, even with payment of the Project's fair share, implementation of local improvements (discussed below), and implementation of recommended intersection improvements as required in **MM LU-1 (Section 4.11)**, existing or

forecasted operational deficiencies cannot be fully improved to the desired LOS at several intersections because of right-of-way constraints. As such, the proposed Project would not be able to improve the LOS at all intersections to meet the City's aspirational General Plan standards **(Policy C 1.2)**.

Chapter 7.0 of the Project Traffic Study contains a full list of intersections and segments for each scenario analyzed. The number of intersections that would not meet the City's General Plan standards are listed below for each scenario:

- **Existing Plus Project:** Under Existing Plus Project conditions, 34 intersections are forecast to operate at a deficient LOS in the a.m. peak hour, p.m. peak hour, or in both peak hours. It should be noted that out of these intersections, 14 intersections currently operate at a deficient LOS under the Existing Condition. As such, the Project adds to the existing operational deficiencies at these intersections.

  In addition, 31 roadway segments are forecast to operate at a deficient LOS under Existing Plus Project conditions. It should be noted that out of these roadway segments, 18 segments currently operate at a deficient LOS under the Existing Condition. As such, the Project adds to the existing operational deficiencies at these segments.

- **Phase 1 Opening Year Cumulative (2025) Plus Project:** Under the Phase 1 Opening Year Cumulative (2025) Plus Project conditions, 33 intersections are forecast to operate at a deficient LOS in the a.m. peak hour, p.m. peak hour, or in both peak hours. It should be noted that out of these intersections, 24 intersections are also forecast to operate at a deficient LOS under Phase 1 Opening Year Cumulative (2025) without Project conditions. As such, the Project contributes to the cumulative operational deficiency at these intersections.

  In addition, 29 roadway segments are forecast to operate at a deficient LOS under Phase 1 Opening Year Cumulative (2025) Plus Project conditions. It should be noted that out of these roadway segments, 23 segments currently operate at a deficient LOS under Phase 1 Opening Year Cumulative (2025) without Project conditions. As such, the Project adds to the existing operational deficiencies at these segments.

- **Phases 2 and 3 Opening Year Cumulative (2026) Plus Project:** Under Phases 2 and 3 Opening Year Cumulative (2026) Plus Project conditions, 50 intersections are forecast to operate at a deficient LOS in the a.m. peak hour, p.m. peak hour, or in both peak hours. It should be noted that out of these intersections, 29 intersections are also forecast to operate at a deficient LOS under Phases 2 and 3 Opening Year Cumulative (2026) without Project conditions. As such, the Project contributes to the cumulative operational deficiency at these intersections.

  In addition, 44 roadway segments are forecast to operate at a deficient LOS under Phases 2 and 3 Opening Year Cumulative (2026) Plus Project conditions. It should be noted that out of these roadway segments, 24 segments are also forecast to operate at a deficient LOS under Phases 2 and 3 Opening Year Cumulative (2026) without Project conditions. As such, the Project contributes to the cumulative operational deficiency at these segments.

- **Horizon Year (2045) Plus Project:** Under the Horizon Year (2045) Plus Project scenario, 76 intersections are forecast to operate at a deficient LOS in the a.m. peak hour, p.m. peak hour, or in both peak hours. It should be noted that out of these intersections, 62 intersections are also forecast to operate at a deficient LOS under Horizon Year (2045) without Project conditions. As such, the Project contributes to the cumulative operational deficiency at these intersections.

  In addition, 79 roadway segments are forecast to operate at a deficient LOS under Horizon Year (2045) Plus Project conditions. It should be noted that out of these roadway segments, 63 segments are also forecast to operate at a deficient LOS under Horizon Year (2045) without Project conditions. As such, the Project contributes to the cumulative operational deficiency at these intersections.

  Recommended Improvement Scenario. The in-depth analysis of LOS deficiencies and improvements required for consistency or inability to meet with Circulation Element C 1.2 is provided in the Project Traffic Study (**Appendix K-1**). At intersections and roadway segments where the LOS is forecast to be unsatisfactory or where the Project contributes to deficient LOS, improvements are recommended to improve the LOS to the respective jurisdiction's LOS standards or better.

  However, given the estimated amount of project trips, and its effect on the regional circulation network, the Project would be implementing circulation improvements within the project vicinity. These improvements would assist in providing project traffic as well as cumulative traffic in accessing the nearby interchanges with I-215.

  Given the current constraints for roadway improvements, the Project will be extending McLaughlin Road and connect it to Case Road-Matthews Road. As such, Case Road will be reconfigured to connect to McLaughlin Road in the vicinity of the Project. McCall Boulevard, between Encanto Drive and Menifee Road, would be widened to its ultimate General Plan configuration. Additionally, the Project will be enforcing diversion of southbound truck traffic from McCall Boulevard to the Ethanac Road interchange using the McLaughlin Road extension. As such, for this improvement scenario, the Project will be implementing the following measures:

  - Extend McLaughlin Road as a 2-lane modified arterial west of the Project and connect it to Case Road-Matthews Road;
  - Widen Case Road-Matthews Road to a 2-lane modified arterial;
  - Widen McCall Boulevard, between Encanto Drive and Menifee Road, to its ultimate General Plan configuration; and
  - Enforce diversion of southbound project truck traffic to the Ethanac Road interchange using the McLaughlin Road extension to Matthews Road/Case Road.

However, it should be noted that the diversion of track traffic from McCall Boulevard would not negate the proposed Project's impact on McCall Boulevard, and the proposed Project would still be required to implement roadway improvements along portions of McCall Boulevard as described under Off-Site Roadway Improvements, below.

The City will be requiring the implementation of these improvements as part of the Project's conditions of approval. The timeline for implementation of these improvements will also be identified in the Project's conditions of approval.

As previously stated, the proposed Project would not be able to improve the LOS at several intersections as discussed above to meet the LOS that the City's General Plan strives to achieve. Therefore, the proposed Project would conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the roadway facilities (Circulation Element C 1.2). Despite implementation of **MM LU-1**, the proposed Project's inconsistency with Circulation Element Policy C 1.2 is a **significant and unavoidable impact**.

Pedestrian Facilities. The Project proposes a system of interconnecting pedestrian-friendly sidewalks and walking trails that would connect neighborhoods and encourage exercise and walkability in between the commercial/business park areas (Planning Areas 10 through 13), residential and open space areas (Planning Areas 1 through 9), and beyond its borders (**Figure 3.8** in **Chapter 3.0** of this EIR). The pedestrian system would include greenbelt trails, multi-use meandering trails, meandering sidewalks, traditional linear sidewalks, and a nature trail. The positioning and placement of the pedestrian facilities in greenbelts, roadway parkways, open space, and other areas of the planned community and elsewhere in the Specific Plan is conceptual. Final locations of such facilities would be determined at the time that implementing development projects are brought forward. Facility implementation would be consistent with Goal C 2 of the Circulation Element (**Table 4.11.2** in **Section 4.11**):

- Conceptual Project on-street and off-street pathway designs shall comply with federal, State, and local design and safety standards, including Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines; meet the needs of multiple transportation modes and users; be compatible with the streetscape and surrounding land uses; and be maintained in accordance with best practices. (Policy C 2.1)

- Conceptual Project features include multipurpose trails and on-street bike lanes for connectivity within and around the Project site wherever it is feasible and safe to do so. (Policy C 2.2)

- Conceptual Project walkways are sited in areas that would promote safe and convenient travel between residential, business, school, park, and recreation areas, and other key destination points within the Project site. (Policy C 2.3)

Therefore, the Project would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing pedestrian facilities.

Bicycle Facilities. The Project proposes a system of interconnecting Class I, Class II, and Class III bike lanes throughout the interior and perimeter of the Project site that would connect to the City of Menifee's bikeway network by means of bicycle accommodations described in **Chapter 3.0** (**Figure 3.9** of this EIR). Class I bike lanes would be planned per the conceptual design along McLaughlin Road and internal residential streets. Class II bike lanes would be planned along the Project frontages on Menifee Road to the west and Briggs Road to the east, as well as flanking the travel lanes on both sides of the primary residential entry street and within the right-of-way of the secondary residential entry streets are also proposed. Class III bike paths are also proposed within the right-of-way of Malaga Road and McLaughlin Road. Internal roadways that do not provide Class I bike lanes would accommodate Class III bike lanes. Specific Plan uses would also provide appropriate bicycle facilities (i.e., racks and lockers) as required by the latest California Green Building Standards (CALGreen Code 5.106.4 Bicycle Parking).[13] Installation of bicycle facilities would be consistent with Goal C 2 of the Circulation Element (**Table 4.11.2** in **Section 4.11**).[14] Therefore, the Project would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing bicycle facilities.

Transit Facilities. There is existing RTA service along SR-74, which abuts the northern site boundary. The City of Menifee General Plan identifies potential future transit service along Menifee Road. At the time that road improvement plans or subdivision maps are filed for development adjacent to these roads, locations of bus stops or turnouts would be determined in consultation with the RTA and the City of Menifee. At a minimum, a bus turnout would be provided at the intersection of SR-74 and Malaga Road in Planning Area 13.

Planning Area 9 is designated as a 5.3-acre Civic Node site, with development in this area to be facilitated by the City of Menifee. Planning Area 9 is located next to a Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) rail line.

Future development of the Specific Plan uses would be subject to Goal C 3 of the Circulation Element (**Table 4.11.2** in **Section 4.11**):

- The Project includes a Civic Node that could site a potential transportation facility. The proposed Project does not include the development of bus turnouts; however, Specific Plan development along Menifee Road would require consultation with the RTA for potential bus turnouts and facilities (Policy C 3.2).

[13] California Green Building Standards Code 2019. Chapter 5.106.4 Bicycle Parking. Website: https://up.codes/viewer/california/ca-green-code-2019/chapter/5/nonresidential-mandatory-measures#5.106.4 (accessed December 15, 2022).

[14] Consistency with the Circulation Element would meet the request made by Marven E. Norman's NOP comment requesting the Project providing low-stress bike facilities. Bicycling was considered in the Project Traffic Study. However, bicycle LOS and the preparation of an active transportation master plan was excluded from further consideration as LOS consistency in this section focused on intersection LOS under Circulation Element Policy C-1.2, and the Project's proposed bicycle facilities and improvements in Section 3 of the draft Specific Plan document would serve as the active transportation plan for the Project.

Therefore, the Project would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing transit facilities.

Off-Site Improvements. Implementation of the Project will result in off-site physical disturbances to up to 59.0 acres of off-site land to install utility and road improvements including but not limited to roadway widening and subsurface utility line installations/connections along Briggs Road, Menifee Road, and SR-74; the installation of subsurface utility lines in the current alignment of Matthews Road along segments of the Project site's southern boundary; and the installation of a nonvehicular bridge across the railroad tracks to connect the Project site with the Heritage Lake community to the south. Roadway improvements would be implemented to the satisfaction of the City Engineer. Rights-of-way conflicts with utilities would be resolved with the appropriate agencies. Implementation of the pedestrian bridge would be consistent with Goal C 2 of the Circulation Element (**Table 4.11.2** in **Section 4.11**). Therefore, the off-site improvements would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system.

Off-Site Roadway Improvements. Implementation of the Project would also result in off-site roadway improvements to address traffic impacts in conflict with the General Plan Circulation Element policies that strive to maintain desired LOS. These roadway improvements, which include widening and additional turn lanes as required, include Matthews Road/Case Road (between McLaughlin Road and Ethanac Road), McLaughlin Road (between McLaughlin Road and Menifee Road), and McCall Boulevard (between Encanto Drive and Menifee Road). These roadway improvements were identified in the General Plan Circulation Element and included in the Final General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) certified by the City on December 18, 2013 (Certified 2013 EIR).

The Certified 2013 EIR found that traffic volumes associated with General Plan buildout, which includes the off-site roadway improvements along Matthews Road/Case Road, McLaughlin Road, and McCall Boulevard, would exceed roadway capacity at various locations throughout the City. As such, the Certified 2013 EIR prescribed mitigation to reduce impacts to less than significant levels, including the implementation of intersection improvements and the payment of Traffic Impact and TUMF fees.

The in-depth analysis of LOS impacts and improvements required for consistency or inability to meet with Circulation Element C 1.2 is provided in the Project Traffic Study (**Appendix K-1**). The Project Traffic Study analyzed impacts associated with buildout of the proposed Project and included improvement recommendations to Matthews Road/Case Road, McLaughlin Road, and McCall Boulevard that would address traffic impacts in conflict with the General Plan policies as identified in the Circulation Element. As the proposed Project would implement these roadway improvements and roadway improvements would be implemented to the satisfaction of the City Engineer, implementation of the off-site roadway improvements along Matthews Road/Case Road, McLaughlin Road, and McCall Boulevard would be consistent with Goal C 2 of the Circulation Element (**Table 4.11.2** in **Section 4.11**). Therefore, the off-site roadway improvements would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation: Potentially Significant Impact.

Regulatory Compliance Measures and Mitigation Measures: MM LU-1 in **Section 4.11** shall apply. Despite the implementation of recommended intersection improvements, several intersections would continue to operate at a deficient LOS.

MM LU-1 **Circulation Element Consistency.** At intersections and roadway segments where the project contributes to a LOS that conflicts with Circulation Element policies that strive to maintain desired LOS (Policy C.1.2), the Project Applicant shall be responsible for improvements identified by the City as part of the project's Conditions of Approval. The timeline for implementation of these improvements will also be identified in the Project's Conditions of Approval. Where there is a funding mechanism (fee program) for the recommended improvements, payment into the fee program shall be considered sufficient for mitigation of project-related operational deficiencies. At study locations where the addition of project traffic creates an operational deficiency and there is no funding mechanism in place, the project Applicant shall be responsible for the implementation of the improvement as identified in the Project's Conditions of Approval. At locations where the project adds to or creates a forecast deficiency and there is no funding mechanism in place, the Project Applicant shall be responsible for its fair share payment, as calculated based on project traffic as a percentage of total growth from existing to Horizon Year (2045) plus Project scenario conditions. The timing for payment of fees or physical improvements shall be established through the Project's Conditions of Approval.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Significant and Unavoidable Impact

4.17.6.2 VMT Impacts

Threshold 4.17-2: Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b).

On-Site Improvements. As previously discussed in **Section 4.17.2** above, because the Project is a specific plan and generates more than 110 daily trips, the City's VMT screening criteria are not applicable to the Project. The City's TIA Guidelines for VMT (2020) establish VMT per service population as the VMT evaluation metric for land use projects. The service population includes total population, employment, and any consumers for uses such as commercial land use, hotel, medical office, etc. For the purposes of the VMT analysis, the entire Riverside County is identified as the "region" and the General Plan Buildout (County) has been identified as the comparison scenario for land use projects. The guidelines also include a numerical value of 33.6 as the County of Riverside General Plan Buildout VMT per service population or threshold. Therefore, based on the guidelines, the Project will have a significant impact if the Project VMT per service population is greater than 33.6 (County of Riverside General Plan Buildout VMT per service population).

The *VMT Memo*[15] prepared for the proposed Project summarizes the Project-generated VMT per service population for all 13 planning areas combined for both base (2018) and build out (2045) scenarios compared with the County of Riverside General Plan Buildout VMT per service population (threshold) as identified in the guidelines. As discussed in the VMT Memo, the Project's VMT per service population is 20.3 percent higher and 11.6 percent higher than the threshold in the base year and build out scenarios, respectively. Based on the City guidelines, the Project would result in a significant VMT impact for Project-generated VMT.

The City guidelines also require evaluation of a project's effect on VMT by comparing link-level VMT per service population for the citywide boundary between no project and with project conditions. A project's effect on VMT is defined as roadway link-level VMT per service population within the Citywide boundary. The project will have a significant impact for the project's effect on VMT if the Citywide link level VMT per service population in the plus project condition increases compared to the no project condition. In other words, does the proposed project affect local traffic circulation in such a way that VMT is impacted due to addition of traffic on local roads. (e.g. traffic may choose to travel a different route than normal as a result of project traffic). The *VMT Memo*[16] concluded that the 'with project' regional link-level VMT per service population was lower than the corresponding 'no project' metric for both base and forecast scenarios. Therefore, the Project's effect on VMT would be less than significant.

When a lead agency identifies a significant CEQA impact, the agency must identify feasible mitigation measures in order to avoid or substantially reduce that impact. Therefore, VMT reduction of 20.3 percent (base scenario as conservative) is required to reduce the project VMT impact to less than significant. VMT impacts can be mitigated through behavioral changes in travel/commute patterns. Project design features that encourage mode shift from automobiles to transit or non-motorized modes can therefore help reduce project VMT as well. VMT reduction credit can be accounted for these design features similar to VMT mitigation measures to help reduce the project's VMT impact. As such, the project includes extensive active transportation amenities as project design features as described in the Specific Plan. Following is a detailed description of both project design features and the corresponding potential VMT reduction that could be achieved with implementation of these measures.

> ***Project Design Features.*** The active transportation amenities identified in Section 3 of the draft specific plan document (Mobility and Infrastructure), which include pedestrian/mobility improvements and bicycle/mobility improvements, would serve as possible Project Design Features.[17] These amenities would likely encourage the community to shift its mode of transportation, especially for short trips. The VMT reduction possible due to these project

15 LSA Associates, Inc. 2023. Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Memo. October.

16 Ibid.

17 An NOP comment and a scoping meeting comment described the Project utilizing local skilled and trained workforce policies and requirements to benefit the local area economically and mitigate greenhouse gas, air quality, and transportation impacts. However, it is speculative on how much VMT would be reduced as a result of utilizing local skilled and trained workforce requirements due to factors such as unknown number of workers employed during each phase, behavior, personal preferences, environmental conditions, etc.

design features has been evaluated using the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association's (CAPCOA) Handbook for Analyzing Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions, Assessing Climate Vulnerabilities, and Advancing Health and Equity – Designed for Local Governments, Communities, and Project Developers dated December 2021.[18]

The Specific Plan is designed with a greenbelt, sidewalk, and bicycle trail system that would provide ease of mobility throughout the community. Connectivity will be provided to and through the residential planning areas, as well as to the parks, amenity areas, the elementary school site, civic facilities, and pedestrian and bicycle routes extending beyond the specific plan's boundary. Sidewalk connectivity is ensured between the Business Park, Commercial Business Park, and Commercial planning areas as well. The non-vehicular network ensures that residents, employees, and visitors have opportunities to travel by foot and bike in different settings. Project design features that could attribute to VMT reduction are described in further detail below.

Pedestrian Infrastructure/Improvements. The Project would include construction of an additional 44.8 miles of sidewalks. These extensive pedestrian design features included in the specific plan design could help increase active transportation mode share in the area. CAPCOA transportation measure "T-18: Provide Pedestrian Network Improvement" was deemed applicable to estimate the VMT reduction due to Project pedestrian features. Based on CAPCOA estimates, the pedestrian features have a potential to reduce 6.4 percent of the Project VMT, which is the cap or maximum for the measure.

Bike Lanes/Facilities. The Project would include construction of interconnecting Class I, Class II, and Class III bike lanes throughout the interior and perimeter of the Project site. Specific Plan uses would also provide appropriate bicycle facilities (i.e., racks and lockers) as required by the latest California Green Building Standards (CALGreen Code 5.106.4 Bicycle Parking).

CAPCOA transportation measure "T-19A: Construct or Improve Bike Facility" was deemed applicable to estimate the VMT reduction due to Project bicycle features. Based on CAPCOA estimates, the Project bicycle design features have a potential to reduce 0.5 percent of the Project VMT for all the bicycle facilities combined.

CAPCOA transportation measure "T-10: Provide End-of-Trip Bicycle Facilities" was deemed applicable to estimate the VMT reduction due to end-of-trip bike facilities. A total of six facilities were assumed:

- One facility in Planning Area 6 for the proposed school site;
- One facility each for the Business Park uses in Planning Areas 10 and 11;

[18] CAPCOA. 2021. *Handbook for Analyzing Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions, Assessing Climate Vulnerabilities, and Advancing Health and Equity – Designed for Local Governments, Communities, and Project Developers*. Website: https://www.caleemod.com/documents/handbook/full_handbook.pdf (accessed January 2023).

- One facility in Planning Area 12 for Commercial Business Park uses; and
- Two facilities in Planning Area 13 for Commercial uses (both sides of Malaga Road).

Based on CAPCOA estimates, the Project end-of-trip bicycle facilities at all six locations have a combined potential to reduce 0.4 percent of the Project VMT.

In summary, all the proposed Project design features could reduce the Project VMT by up to 7.3 percent. However, this reduction in VMT would not reduce the Project VMT to a less than significant impact.

Regulatory Compliance Measures and Mitigation Measures: The active transportation amenities identified in Section 3 of the draft specific plan document (Mobility and Infrastructure), which include pedestrian/mobility improvements and bicycle/mobility improvements, would serve as possible VMT mitigation strategies. The VMT reduction possible due to these project design features have been evaluated using California Air Pollution Control Officers Association's (CAPCOA) "Handbook for Analyzing Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions, Assessing Climate Vulnerabilities, and Advancing Health and Equity – Designed for Local Governments, Communities, and Project Developers" dated December 2021.

Mitigation Measure (MM) TRA-1 would require the preparation of a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategy report to reduce employee VMT. Since future tenants are unknown at this time, implementation of the feasible TDM measures identified in **MM TRA-1** would help reduced VMT impacts but cannot be guaranteed to reduce the industrial and service component's VMT per employee and retail component's total VMT to a less than significant level. VMT impacts would be reduced but not entirely eliminated with the implementation of **MM TRA-1**; therefore, Impact 4.17-2 would remain significant and unavoidable.

Off-Site Improvements. Implementation of the Project will result in off-site physical disturbances to approximately 59.0 acres to install utility and road improvements including but not limited to roadway widening and subsurface utility line installations, relocations (along occurring axis), and connections along Briggs Road, Menifee Road, and SR-74; the installation of subsurface utility lines in the current alignment of Matthews Road along segments of the Project site's southern boundary; and the installation of a nonvehicular bridge across the railroad tracks to connect the Project site with the Heritage Lake community to the south. No new land use would occur in the off-site improvement areas; therefore, no additional VMT outside of what is analyzed in the *VMT Memo* prepared for the proposed Project and discussed above would occur. As such, VMT impacts associated with the off-site improvements along Briggs Road, Menifee Road, and SR-74 would be *less than significant*.

Off-Site Roadway Improvements. Implementation of the Project would also result in off-site roadway improvements to address traffic impacts in conflict with the General Plan Circulation Element policies that strive to maintain desired LOS. These roadway improvements, which include widening and additional turn lanes as required, include Matthews Road/Case Road (between

McLaughlin Road and Ethanac Road), McLaughlin Road (between Matthews/Case Road and Menifee Road), and McCall Boulevard (between Encanto Drive and Menifee Road). These roadway improvements were identified in the General Plan Circulation Element and included in the Final General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) certified by the City on December 18, 2013 (Certified 2013 EIR).

Since the certification of the Certified 2013 EIR in December 2013, the standard for analyzing transportation impacts pursuant to CEQA changed from Level of Service (LOS) to Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). Further, the City approved Resolution 20-920 on June 3, 2020, which adopted the City of Menifee VMT Analysis Implementation Guidelines. As such, the Certified 2013 EIR did not discuss VMT impacts associated with buildout of the General Plan, which includes the off-site roadway improvements along Matthews Road/Case Road, McLaughlin Road, and McCall Boulevard.

VMT impacts associated with the offsite roadway improvements along Matthews Road/Case Road, McLaughlin Road, and McCall Boulevard would be similar to those associated with the off-site improvements along Briggs Road, Menifee Road, and SR-74. No new land use would occur in the off-site roadway improvement areas; therefore, no additional VMT outside of what is analyzed in the *VMT Memo* prepared for the proposed Project and discussed above would occur. As such, VMT impacts associated with the off-site improvements along Matthews Road/Case Road, McLaughlin Road, and McCall Boulevard would be *less than significant*.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation: Potentially Significant Impact

Regulatory Compliance Measures and Mitigation Measures: MM TRA-1 shall apply. Despite the preparation of a TDM, VMT impacts cannot be guaranteed to reduce the industrial and service component's VMT per employee and retail component's total VMT to a less than significant level.

MM TRA-1 Prior to issuance of building permit/occupancy permits, the Project Applicant shall prepare a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategy report for review and approval by the City Traffic/Transportation Manager. The TDM strategy shall include measures to reduce Project vehicle miles traveled (VMT), including but not limited to:

- Provide Electric Vehicle Parking and EV Charging Infrastructure. CAPCOA transportation measure "T-14: Provide Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure" was deemed applicable to estimate VMT reduction via reduced GHG emissions. Based on CAPCOA estimates, provision of EV charging infrastructure has a potential to achieve a maximum VMT reduction of up to 11.9 percent, dependent on the number of EV charging stations the Project may provide (in addition to CALGreen requirements).

- Unbundle Residential Parking Costs from Property Costs. CAPCOA transportation measure "T-16: Unbundle Residential Parking Costs from Property Cost" was deemed applicable to estimate VMT reduction by charging for additional residential parking space. Based on CAPCOA estimates, fee

implementation of additional parking space has a potential to achieve a maximum of up to 15.7 percent VMT reduction for the Project's multifamily uses.

- Although proposed Project design features such as pedestrian and bicycle improvements, and the above TDM measures have the potential to reduce the Project vehicle VMT, the Project cannot mitigate VMT impacts to a less than significant level; therefore, the Project would conflict or be inconsistent with *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.3, subdivision (b).

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Significant and Unavoidable Impact(s)

4.17.6.3 Transportation Hazards

Threshold 4.17-3: Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment).

On-Site Improvements. The Project site is located adjacent to SR-74, Menifee Road, and Briggs Road. SR-74 and Briggs Road are classified as major roadways in the General Plan Circulation Element. Menifee Road is classified as an urban arterial in the General Plan Circulation Element. Access to the Project site will be provided at four vehicular access points (one each along SR-74, Briggs Road, Matthews Road, and Menifee Road). Improvements to the existing roadway network (i.e., widening, parkways, sidewalk, curb and gutter, new lanes, etc.) and new internal roadways would be constructed to meet City standards. The proposed driveways and intersections would be designed so as to not introduce hazards due to geometric design features (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections). This impact would therefore be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation is required.

The proposed Project's land uses are similar to surrounding land uses and do not include incompatible uses (i.e., farm equipment, industrial equipment). The proposed Project's land uses would be separated from adjacent land uses by existing roadways, providing a distance buffer for surrounding development. Therefore, the proposed Project would not introduce safety hazards due to incompatible uses. This impact would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation is required.

Off-Site Improvements. Implementation of the Project will result in off-site physical disturbances to approximately 59.0 acres to install utility and road improvements including but not limited to roadway widening and subsurface utility line installations, relocations (along occurring axis), and connections along Briggs Road, Menifee Road, and SR-74; the installation of subsurface utility lines in the current alignment of Matthews Road along segments of the Project site's southern boundary; and the installation of a nonvehicular bridge across the railroad tracks to connect the Project site with the Heritage Lake community to the south. Roadway improvements to the existing roadways, which are fully improved roadways that meet City standards, would be implemented to the satisfaction of the City Engineer. No new land use would occur on the public rights-of-way. Therefore, the off-site improvements would not introduce safety hazards due to geometric design features or incompatible land uses. This impact would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation measures are required.

Off-Site Improvements. Implementation of the Project would also result in off-site roadway improvements to address traffic impacts in conflict with the General Plan Circulation Element policies that strive to maintain desired LOS. These roadway improvements, which include widening and additional turn lanes as required, include Matthews Road/Case Road (between McLaughlin Road and Ethanac Road), McLaughlin Road (between McLaughlin Road and Menifee Road), and McCall Boulevard (between Encanto Drive and Menifee Road). These roadway improvements were identified in the General Plan Circulation Element and included in the Final General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) certified by the City on December 18, 2013 (Certified 2013 EIR).

The Certified 2013 EIR determined that circulation improvements associated with buildout of the General Plan, which includes the off-site roadway improvements, would be designed to adequately address potentially hazardous conditions (such as sharp curves), potential conflicting uses, and emergency access. In addition, roadway improvements to the existing roadways, which are fully improved roadways that meet City standards, would be implemented to the satisfaction of the City Engineer. No new land use would occur on the public rights-of-way. Therefore, the off-site improvements would not introduce safety hazards due to geometric design features or incompatible land uses. This impact would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation measures are required.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact

Regulatory Compliance Measures and Mitigation Measures: No Regulatory Compliance Measures or Mitigation Measures are required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact

4.17.6.4 Emergency Access

Threshold 4.17-4: Result in inadequate emergency access.

On-Site Improvements. Construction activities associated with the Project may affect emergency access and response times, due to temporary detour routes and temporary road/pedestrian/bicycle facility closures along the perimeter and interior of the Project site. However, internal access roads would be constructed throughout the Project site to provide emergency response vehicles with access to the Project site. Additionally, as specified in **Regulatory Compliance Measure (RCM) TRA-1**, the Project would be required to prepare a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) to maintain safety and adequate traffic operations on roadways affected by project construction. Specifically, **RCM TRA-1** would ensure that unobstructed access to the Project site is maintained during project construction and would utilize trained traffic management personnel to assist in emergency response to control traffic that could interfere with emergency vehicle access. Therefore, with adherence to **RCM TRA-1**, emergency service providers would still be able to access the Project site from Menifee Road, SR-74, Briggs Road, Matthews Road, McLaughlin Road, or Malaga Road during Project construction. This impact would be ***less than significant,*** and no mitigation measures are required.

During Project operations, unimpeded access throughout the Project site would be maintained by ensuring that vehicles would not be parked or placed in a manner that would impede access for emergency response vehicles. Additionally, perimeter and internal roadways would be maintained in such condition to allow for the safe and unobstructed passage of emergency response vehicles. As

discussed throughout **Section 4.17**, the proposed Project would include improvements to the existing roadway network and development of an internal roadway network consistent with City design standards. Overall, the proposed Project would provide adequate access and signage for patrons, workers, and emergency access personnel. This impact would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation measures are required.

Off-Site Improvements. Implementation of the Project will result in off-site physical disturbances to approximately 59.0 acres to install utility and road improvements including but not limited to the widening of SR-74, Menifee Road, and Briggs Road. Construction of the off-site improvements is not anticipated to result in any significant emergency access impacts during construction with the implementation of **RCM TRA-1**. Emergency service providers would still be able to access the improvement areas via Menifee Road, SR-74, and Briggs Road. Partial lane closures would ensure that access on the off-site improvement roadways would continue during construction. Therefore, the off-site improvements would not result in inadequate emergency access with the implementation of **RCM TRA-1**. This impact would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation measures are required.

Off-Site Roadway Improvements. Implementation of the Project would also result in off-site roadway improvements to address traffic impacts in conflict with the General Plan Circulation Element policies that strive to maintain desired LOS. These roadway improvements, which include widening and additional turn lanes as required, include Matthews Road/Case Road (between McLaughlin Road and Ethanac Road), McLaughlin Road (between McLaughlin Road and Menifee Road), and McCall Boulevard (between Encanto Drive and Menifee Road). These roadway improvements were identified in the General Plan Circulation Element and included in the Final General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) certified by the City on December 18, 2013 (Certified 2013 EIR).

The Certified 2013 EIR determined that circulation improvements associated with buildout of the General Plan, which includes the off-site roadway improvements along Matthews Road/Case Road, McLaughlin Road, and McCall Boulevard, would be designed to adequately address potentially hazardous conditions (such as sharp curves), potential conflicting uses, and emergency access. In addition, construction of the off-site roadway improvements is not anticipated to result in any significant emergency access impacts during construction with the implementation of RCM TRA-1. Emergency service providers would still be able to access the improvement areas via Matthews Road/Case Road, McLaughlin Road, and McCall Boulevard. Partial lane closures would ensure that access on the off-site improvement roadways would continue during construction. Therefore, the off-site improvements would not result in inadequate emergency access with the implementation of RCM TRA-1. This impact would be *less than significant*, and no mitigation measures are required.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact

Regulatory Compliance Measures and Mitigation Measures: RCM TRA-1 shall apply.

RCM TRA-1 **Construction Traffic Management Plan.** Prior to commencement of grading activities, the construction contractor shall prepare a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) to the satisfaction of the City of Menifee and shall ensure

that the plan is implemented during construction with the goal of maintaining safety and adequate traffic operations to roadways affected by construction traffic. The CTMP shall be consistent with the *California Temporary Traffic Control Handbook* (CATTCH) (previously known as the California Joint Utility Traffic Control Manual). At a minimum, the CTMP shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Provisions for temporary traffic control to improve traffic flow on public roadways and ensure the safe access into and out of the site (e.g., warning signs, lights and devices, and flag personnel);
- Prohibiting construction-related vehicles from parking on public streets;
- Providing safety precautions for pedestrians, equestrians, and bicyclists through such measures as alternate routing and protection barriers;
- Obtaining the required permits for truck haul routes from the City of Menifee and/or the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans); and
- Maintaining unobstructed emergency access to the Project site and adjacent areas during all phases of construction. Flag personnel shall be trained to assist in emergency response by restricting or controlling the movement of traffic that could interfere with emergency vehicle access.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact

4.17.7 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative transportation impacts can occur when project impacts are combined with the impacts of proposed, approved, and reasonably foreseeable projects. The cumulative geographic study area for VMT transportation impacts is the City and Riverside County. Implementation of the proposed Project in combination with the related projects in the region (please refer to the Project Traffic Study) would result in cumulative transportation impacts.

As discussed throughout **Section 4.17**, despite implementation of **MM LU-1**, the proposed Project would result in significant and unavoidable impact relating to conflicts with a General Plan policy governing the circulation system (Circulation Element Policy C 1.2), but a less than significant impact relating to roadway design hazards, and emergency access. Other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects in the region would be required to meet standard requirements to provide project-specific transportation facilities that accommodate pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle travel. Other cumulative projects whose scope and nature would affect the aforementioned intersections in **Section 4.17.6.1** above will require discretionary review by the City and/or Caltrans for consistency with policies governing intersection LOS. The proposed Project, when considered with cumulative projects, would result in significant and unavoidable conflicts with transportation policies governing the circulation system (intersection LOS), but would not create roadway design hazards, and would not create emergency access impacts that are cumulatively considerable.

The Project forecasted VMT per service population is greater than 33.6 (County of Riverside General Plan Buildout VMT per service population). Even with implementation of the feasible mitigation measures/Project features discussed above, the Project's VMT cannot be reduced to levels that would be less than significant. Therefore, the Project's contribution to cumulative transportation impacts from increases in VMT would be considerable significant. No mitigation measures beyond the measures identified in **MM TRA-1** are feasible. This cumulative impact would be significant and unavoidable.

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