

## 6.0 OTHER CEQA CONSIDERATIONS

Section 15126 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (*State CEQA Guidelines*) requires that all phases of a project must be considered when evaluating its impact on the environment, including: planning, acquisition, development, and operation. This chapter discusses these CEQA considerations associated with the implementation of the proposed Menifee Valley Specific Plan (proposed Project). According to Section 15126.2 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must include a discussion of the following:

- **15126.2(a):** Significant short- and long-term environmental effects associated with project implementation (refer to the analysis provided in **Sections 4.1–4.20**);
- **15126.2(b):** Significant environmental effects due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption use of energy, or wasteful use of energy resources (**Section 4.6** and **Section 6.2**);
- **15126.2(c):** Significant environmental effects that cannot be avoided if the proposed project is implemented (**Section 6.3**);
- **15126.2(d):** Significant irreversible environmental changes that would result from implementation of the proposed project (**Section 6.4**); and
- **15126.2(e):** Growth-inducing impacts resulting from implementation of the proposed project (**Section 6.5**).

### 6.1 DIRECT AND INDIRECT SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

The proposed Project would facilitate the development of the 590.3-acre Project site as a mixed-use, master-planned community and improvements including roadway improvements to existing roadways, utility connections, landscaping, and construction of a nonvehicular bridge on off-site improvement areas. The Menifee Valley Specific Plan would establish guidelines for the future development of the planned community, which would consist of a residential area for single-family and multi-family residential units as well as green spaces and a potential elementary school site, recreation areas including a public sports park, greenbelts, and the preservation of Granite Hill. It would also consist of an area for public facilities, a commercial area, and a business park and a commercial business park to provide commercial and retail uses and small-scale light industrial uses, as well to provide opportunities for employment. The proposed Project would include physical changes to the environment and would induce changes in population distribution, population concentration, and the human use of the land. Implementation of the proposed Project would create potential short-term or long-term direct or indirect significant effects. Discussions of direct and indirect effects are provided in **Sections 4.1–4.20** of this environmental document.

### 6.2 ENERGY IMPACTS

The proposed Project would increase the demand for energy during Project construction and through day-to-day operations and fuel consumption. As described in **Section 4.6**, the proposed Project would not result in significant impacts related to energy use.

Construction activities are not anticipated to result in an inefficient use of energy as gasoline and diesel fuel would be supplied by construction contractors who would conserve the use of their supplies to minimize their costs. Construction of the proposed Project would increase the annual construction-generated fuel use in Riverside County by approximately 0.12 percent for gasoline fuel usage and by 0.19 percent for diesel fuel usage, which would yield negligible effects on local and regional energy supplies. In addition, compliance with State regulations would reduce the inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary consumption of energy.

Energy use consumed by the proposed Project through day-to-day operations would be associated with natural gas use, electricity consumption, and fuel used for vehicle trips associated with the Project. However, operation of the proposed Project would increase the annual electricity and natural gas consumption in Riverside County by approximately 0.4 percent and 0.1 percent, respectively. This electrical and natural gas demand associated with Project operations would therefore not be considered excessive or inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary for a project of this size. In regard to vehicle trips associated with the proposed Project, gasoline demand generated by vehicle trips would increase the annual fuel use in Riverside County by approximately 0.5 percent for gasoline fuel usage and approximately 0.4 percent for diesel fuel usage. This increase would not be considered excessive or inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary for a project of this size. Additionally, the planning areas established in the Specific Plan are organized such that residential uses are located in proximity to employment centers and retail uses, thereby promoting alternative forms of transportation (e.g., walking and bicycling). Furthermore, the Project would not conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency, including the 2019 California Building Code (CBC), the California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen), and the California Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan. Therefore, impacts to energy would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

### 6.3 SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS

Section 15126.2(c) of the *State CEQA Guidelines* requires that an EIR describe any significant impacts that cannot be avoided. Specifically, Section 15126.2(c) states that an EIR shall:

Describe any significant impacts, including those which can be mitigated but not reduced to a level of insignificance. Where there are impacts that cannot be alleviated without imposing an alternative design, their implications and the reasons why the project is being proposed, notwithstanding their effect, should be described.

**Chapter 1.0** of this Draft EIR contains a summary that identifies the proposed Project's environmental impacts as compared to existing conditions, proposed mitigation measures, and the level of significance of any impacts after mitigation. The significant and unavoidable impacts anticipated to result from the proposed Project, even with implementation of the mitigation measures identified in the **Chapter 4.0** analysis, are listed below.

- **Air Quality**
  - Conflict with or obstruct implementation of an applicable air quality plan

- Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment under an applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard.
- Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.
- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions**
  - Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment.
- **Land Use and Planning**
  - Conflict with Applicable Land Use Plans, Policies, or Regulations in the General Plan Circulation Element.
- **Transportation and Traffic**
  - Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system in the General Plan Circulation Element.
  - Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b).

As determined in the contents of this Draft EIR and specified above, implementation of the proposed Project would result in significant and unavoidable adverse impacts.

## 6.4 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

Section 15126.2 (d) of the *State CEQA Guidelines* requires that an EIR consider and discuss significant irreversible changes that would be caused by implementation of the proposed project. Specifically, Section 15126.2 (d) states:

Uses of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project may be irreversible since a large commitment of such resources makes removal or nonuse thereafter unlikely. Primary impacts and, particularly, secondary impacts (such as highway improvement which provides access to a previously inaccessible area) generally commit future generations to similar uses. Also irreversible damage can result from environmental accidents associated with the project. Irretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified.

Generally, a project would result in significant irreversible environmental changes if the proposed consumption of resources is not justified, if the project would involve a large commitment of nonrenewable resources, or if the project would involve uses in which irreversible damage could result from any potential environmental accidents associated with the project.

The proposed Menifee Valley Specific Plan would facilitate the development of the 590.3-acre Project site as a mixed-use, master-planned community and improvements including roadway improvements to existing roadways, utility connections, landscaping, and construction of a nonvehicular bridge on off-site improvement areas. The types and level of development associated with the construction of the proposed Project would permanently convert land utilized for

agricultural purposes to urban land uses and consume nonrenewable resources, and operation of the proposed Project would consume natural gas, electricity, and fuel. The development of the proposed Project would require a commitment of resources that would include (1) building materials, (2) fuel and operational materials/resources, and (3) the transportation of goods and people to and from the Project site.

As described in **Section 4.2**, the proposed Project site is located on land designated as Farmland of Local Importance according to the California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. Although this designation is not considered Important Farmland pursuant to Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines* and therefore not considered a significant impact to agricultural lands, the conversion of Farmland of Local Importance to nonagricultural uses will permanently and irreversibly prohibit agricultural uses on the Project site.

Construction of the proposed Project would require consumption of energy and construction materials that are not replenishable or that may renew so slowly as to be considered nonrenewable. These resources would include petroleum fuels (e.g., diesel and gasoline), which would be the primary resources of energy for construction. Construction would require energy for the manufacture and transportation of construction material, construction materials for the preparation of the site for grading and building activities, and installation of infrastructure. Water, which is a limited, slowly renewable resource, would also be consumed during construction of the proposed Project. Energy and water usage on the Project site during construction would be temporary in nature. Energy use on the Project site during construction would increase the annual construction generated fuel use in Riverside County by approximately 0.12 percent for gasoline fuel usage and by 0.19 percent for diesel fuel usage, which would yield negligible effects on local and regional energy supplies. Water use on the Project site during construction would be limited to temporary dewatering of the on-site and off-site areas. Therefore, energy and water usage would be negligible in comparison to the State's available energy sources and would therefore result in a less than significant impact on limited, slowly renewable, and nonrenewable resources. Energy use consumed during operation of the proposed Project is discussed in **Section 6.2** above.

As described in **Section 4.9**, although the Project would involve the use of hazardous materials and petroleum products (e.g., diesel fuel, lubricants, paints and solvents, and cement products containing strong basic or acidic chemicals) and could result in their accidental release, the Project would adhere to applicable local, State, and federal regulations related to the transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials regulatory compliance measures and would be required to ensure that construction contractors maintain equipment and supplies on site for containing and cleaning up hazardous materials spills and train workers in containment and cleanup.

In summary, construction and operation of the proposed Project would commit the use of slowly renewable and nonrenewable resources and would limit the availability of these resources on the Project site for future generations or for other uses during the life of the proposed Project. However, the continued use of such resources during operation would increase the annual electricity and natural gas consumption by approximately 0.4 percent and 0.1 percent, respectively. It would also increase gasoline and diesel fuel demand generated by vehicle trips associated with the Project by approximately 0.5 percent and 0.4 percent, respectively. These increases would be considered negligible in comparison to other similar developments in the region and would remain

consistent with regional and local development goals for the area. As a result, the use of nonrenewable resources in this manner would not result in significant irreversible changes to the environment under the proposed Project.

## 6.5 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

Sections 15126(d) and 15126.2(e) of the *State CEQA Guidelines* require that an EIR analyze growth-inducing impacts and state that an EIR should discuss the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth or construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Additionally, *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.2(e) specifies that growth does not necessarily imply impacts that are beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment. A project that meets any of these criteria may be considered growth inducing. To address these issues, potential growth-inducing effects were examined through analysis of the following questions:

- Would the project remove obstacles to, or otherwise foster, population growth (e.g., through the construction or extension of major infrastructure facilities that do not presently exist in the project area, or through changes in existing regulations pertaining to land development)?
- Would the project foster economic growth?

This issue is presented to provide additional information on ways in which this Project could contribute to significant changes in the environment beyond the direct consequences of implementing the proposed Project as described in earlier sections of this Draft EIR.

### 6.5.1 Removal of Obstacles to, or Otherwise Foster, Population Growth

Implementation of the proposed Project transfers up to 1,718 single-family and multi-family residential homes and residential neighborhood amenities previously approved under Menifee Valley Ranch Specific Plan No. 301 to the Project site. Although these units were previously approved for the Menifee Valley Ranch Specific Plan No. 301, the proposed Project would result in direct population growth in the city through development of up to 1,718 units. Using a rate of 3.12 persons per single-family residential household and 2.48 persons per multi-family household, as determined by the American Community Survey 2019 5-Year Estimates,<sup>1</sup> the proposed single-family and multi-family residential units are expected to increase the population in Menifee by approximately 5,220 persons.<sup>2</sup> The population growth induced by the proposed Project has previously been accounted for since the Project would transfer 1,718 residential units approved

<sup>1</sup> United States Census Bureau. 2019. 2015–2019 5-Year Estimates. Table DP02. Website: <https://data.census.gov/table?q=persons+per+household&t=Family+Size+and+Type:Household+and+Family&g=1600000US0646842&tid=ACSDP1Y2019.DP02&moe=false> (accessed November 15, 2022).

<sup>2</sup> 87.2 percent of residential development is single-family; 12.8 percent of residential development is multi-family (per the Menifee Valley Specific Plan).

- ◆  $87.2\% * 1,718 = 1,498$  single-family units;  $12.8\% * 1,718 = 220$  multi-family units
- ◆  $3.12$  persons per unit \*  $1,498$  units =  $4,674$  persons (single-family households)
- ◆  $2.48$  persons per unit \*  $220$  units =  $546$  persons (multi-family households)
- ◆  $4,674 + 546 = 5,220$  persons

under Menifee Valley Ranch Specific Plan No. 301 to the Project site. As discussed in **Chapter 3.0**, although the Project site is located adjacent to existing infrastructure that would provide adequate service connections for the proposed Project, the proposed Project would also include infrastructure improvements to water facilities, sanitary sewer facilities, natural gas utilities, and stormwater drainage facilities as well as connection to existing utility infrastructure per the applicable connection requirements and easement agreements established by the respective utility providers. While the proposed Project requires additional water, sewer, electricity, and natural gas lines on site compared to existing conditions, such improvements would be intended to meet Project-related demand and would not necessitate substantial utility infrastructure improvements.

The Project would provide jobs close to home for current and future city residents, and thus the Project would serve to improve the housing-jobs balance in the northeastern portion of the city. As of June 2022, the city had a labor force of 42,700, and the county had a labor force of 1,146,300, with approximately 1,700 and 45,300 people unemployed, respectively.<sup>3</sup> The June 2022 unemployment rate was 4.0 percent for the city and 4.0 percent for the county.<sup>4</sup> These elevated unemployment figures reflect the economic slowdown associated with the widespread shelter-in-place orders in effect throughout much of 2020 and 2021 due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Although there is a great deal of uncertainty regarding the pandemic's effect on the economy, it has resulted in reduced business activity and related higher unemployment in the area. This suggests an ample available local and regional labor pool to serve the long-term employment opportunities offered by the Project and makes it unlikely that the Project's labor demand would need to draw a substantial number of employees from outside the region to meet the need for employees resulting from development of the Project site. Therefore, short-term employment opportunities offered by the construction phases of the proposed Project would likely be met by the available local and regional labor pool. Long-term new jobs would be generated by the commercial, business park, commercial business park, and public facility uses on the Project site. The Project would provide jobs close to home for current and future city residents, and thus the Project would serve to improve the housing-jobs balance in the northeastern portion of the city.

The Project would extend infrastructure into a previously undeveloped site; however, infrastructure facilities are located in the areas surrounding the Project site. The extension of utilities and infrastructure would only serve the Project site. Therefore, it is not anticipated that the associated Project site infrastructure improvements would spur development in undeveloped areas that would be available for any other future development. The existing regional infrastructure and the established roadway network would be utilized by employees and residents accessing the Project site and would not indirectly or directly induce population or growth. The Land Use Buildout Summary (Exhibit LU-4) provided in the Land Use Element of the City's General Plan has identified future urban uses and development on the Project site. As mentioned previously, the proposed Project would remain consistent with the land use buildout calculations provided by the General

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<sup>3</sup> California Employment Development Department. 2022. Labor Market Information Division, Monthly Labor Force Data for Cities and Census Designated Places June 2022. Website: <https://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/data/unemployment-and-labor-force.html> (accessed July 31, 2022).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

Plan and therefore would not lead to unplanned growth not previously anticipated by the City and the utility companies.

Although the proposed Project would result in the development of 1,718 dwelling units, which is expected to increase the population in Menifee by approximately 5,220, this would not result in a net increase in the number of residents and employees on the Project site from the originally anticipated increase associated with development of the northern portion of the Menifee Valley Specific Plan No. 301. Additionally, given that the employment opportunities generated by construction and operation of the proposed Project would be filled by people who would commute to the Project site, the potential population growth associated with Project employees would be minimal.

### **6.5.2 Foster Economic Growth**

In its existing condition, the Project site is undeveloped and vacant. The Project site does not currently generate substantial tax revenue for the City. With implementation of the proposed Project, up to 5,600,000 square feet of development at a maximum of 0.5 Floor Area Ratio (FAR) would be developed for a mix of light industrial, manufacturing, warehouse/storage, and e-commerce operations, and up to 260,000 square feet of development at a maximum of 0.25 FAR would be developed for a mix of commercial, retail, small-scale light industrial, warehouse/storage, and manufacturing. In addition to the long-term employment that the proposed Project would provide at Specific Plan build out, the proposed Project would generate a small number of temporary construction-related jobs in Menifee during the construction period. Construction workers are anticipated to be drawn from the existing regional work force, and construction of the proposed Project would not be growth inducing from an employment standpoint. As described above, the proposed Project would generate new permanent employment opportunities. Therefore, the proposed Project would result in significant economic growth.

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