

2.0 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

This Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared utilizing information from planning and environmental documents from the City of Menifee (City), applicant- and LSA-prepared technical studies, and other publicly available data. Alternatives to the proposed Project are discussed and mitigation measures that would offset, minimize, or otherwise avoid significant environmental impacts from the proposed Project have been identified. This section of the EIR provides an overview of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process, outlines the document's format, summarizes public review of the EIR, describes the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP), identifies the environmental issues discussed in the EIR, and defines the parameters and data to be used in the analysis of cumulative impacts.

2.1 LEAD AGENCY

CEQA requires the preparation of an EIR for any project that has the potential to significantly affect the environment.¹ The City of Menifee is the "... public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving the Project." As such, it is the "Lead Agency" pursuant to CEQA.² CEQA requires the Lead Agency to prepare, process, and consider the information contained in the EIR prior to taking any discretionary³ action on the Project.

Through its preliminary review of the Project, the City of Menifee has determined the Project will have a potentially significant effect on the environment and, therefore, has required the preparation of this EIR. A primary purpose of this EIR is to provide decision-makers and the public with information regarding the significant environmental effects associated with the Project; identify methods to reduce or eliminate significant direct, indirect, and cumulative Project impacts; and to detail reasonable Project alternatives that would reduce any identified significant impacts.⁴ The City will use and consider information in and supporting this EIR during the CEQA process and during the decision to approve, disapprove, or modify the proposed Project.

¹ *State CEQA Guidelines* §15360. "Environment" is defined as the physical conditions which exist within the areas that will be affected by a proposed project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historical or aesthetic significance. The area involved shall be that in which significant effects would occur either directly or indirectly as a result of the project. The "environment" includes both natural and man-made conditions.

² *State CEQA Guidelines* §15367.

³ *State CEQA Guidelines* §15357. "Discretionary Project" is defined as a project that requires the exercise of judgment or deliberation when a public agency decides to approve or disapprove a particular activity, as distinguished from situations where the public agency merely has to determine where there has been conformity with applicable statutes, ordinances, regulations, or other fixed standards. The key question is whether the public agency can use its subjective judgment to decide whether and how to carry out or approve a project.

⁴ *State CEQA Guidelines* §15126.6. "Alternatives": An EIR shall describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives.

The EIR must reflect the independent judgement of the Lead Agency. LSA has prepared this EIR under the direction of City staff. When prepared by a party other than the Lead Agency, the EIR must be subjected to Lead Agency review and reflect the City's independent judgment.⁵

2.2 OVERVIEW OF THE EIR PROCESS

Pursuant to *State CEQA Guidelines*,⁶ the basic purposes of CEQA are to:

- Inform government decision-makers and the public about the potential significant environmental effects of proposed activities.
- Identify ways that environmental damage can be avoided or significantly reduced.
- Prevent significant, avoidable damage to the environment by requiring changes in projects through the use of alternatives or mitigation measures when the governing agency finds the changes to be feasible.
- Disclose to the public the reasons why a governmental agency approved the project in the manner the agency chose if significant environmental effects are involved.

The EIR contains a detailed description of the Project under consideration; establishes the existing environmental conditions of the Project site and adjacent areas; identifies the standards and thresholds against which environmental impacts are measured; assesses the environmental effects that would result from the Project; identifies measures to reduce or eliminate significant environmental impacts; and evaluates alternatives that may reduce the impacts associated with the proposed Project.

The recognized standard⁷ is that an EIR analysis presents an adequate, complete, and good faith effort to provide decision-makers with the information to intelligently consider the environmental consequences of the Project under consideration. While not requiring exhaustive evaluation, the EIR must include a "reasonably feasible" assessment of Project impacts. Where disagreement amongst experts occurs, the EIR must detail the main points of disagreement.

The Draft EIR is distributed to public agencies and made available to the general public for review and comment. Upon completion of the public comment period, the Lead Agency prepares responses to comments received and, as appropriate, revises the EIR to accommodate minor corrections or

⁵ *State CEQA Guidelines* §15084(e).

⁶ *State CEQA Guidelines* §15002(a).

⁷ *State CEQA Guidelines* §15151. An EIR should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision-makers with information that enables them to make a decision that intelligently takes account environmental consequences. An evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in the light of what is reasonably feasible. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR should summarize the main points of disagreement among the experts. The courts have looked not for perfection but for adequacy, completeness, and a good faith effort at full disclosure.

modifications to the Draft EIR. The revised document, the Final EIR, must be certified by the Lead Agency prior to or in conjunction with the decision to approve the Project.

The City, acting as the CEQA Lead Agency, will consider the information contained in this EIR in their evaluation of the Project. The information presented in the EIR does not serve to control the decision(s) related to the Project; rather, it fosters informed decision-making and appropriate public participation.

2.3 EIR CONTENT AND FORMAT

In accordance with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15060, the City has determined that the Project will have a potentially significant effect on the environment and an EIR is required to assess Project-related impacts. As permitted under CEQA (*State CEQA Guidelines* §15060[d]), the City has elected to begin work directly on the EIR in lieu of further initial review. Because an Initial Study has not been prepared for the Project, the EIR will address each of the environmental issues identified in Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utility and Service Systems
- Wildfire

This EIR is organized as follows:

- **Chapter 1.0, Executive Summary:** Chapter 1.0 (a) provides a summary of the Project; (b) identifies potentially significant impacts, mitigation measures, and the level of significance of each impact following mitigation; and (c) provides a description of Project alternatives.
- **Chapter 2.0, Introduction and Purpose:** Chapter 2.0 (a) outlines the EIR document's format, including technical appendices; (b) describes the purpose of the EIR, including the legal purpose of CEQA, the intended use of an EIR, and the EIR's incorporated documents and referenced technical reports; (c) summarizes the public review of the EIR to date; (d) identifies environmental issues that are discussed; and (e) defines the cumulative analysis provided in the EIR.
- **Chapter 3.0, Project Description:** Chapter 3.0 details the geographical setting, Project location, Project setting, applicable land use and zoning designations, Project characteristics, Project objectives, and discretionary actions required to implement the proposed Project.

- **Chapter 4.0, Environmental Impact Evaluation:** Chapter 4.0 provides the detailed analysis of each environmental issue. Evaluation of each issue follows the following format:
 - **Summary:** Provides an introduction to the issue to be discussed, summarizing the content of the analysis to follow. This section identifies the specific reference material utilized in the environmental analysis.
 - **Existing Setting:** Identifies the existing local and regional environmental conditions (natural and built) in existence at the time the EIR was prepared. Existing setting information provides the reader with the “baseline” from which future impacts are analyzed and provides a standard against which to measure these impacts.
 - **Existing Policies and Regulations:** Details the federal, State, and local regulations, ordinances, and policies applicable to the issue area under discussion.
 - **Thresholds of Significance:** Provides the criteria against which the relative significance of impacts resulting from Project implementation are measured.
 - **Methodology:** A brief summary of the methods and resources utilized in the preparation of the environmental analysis.
 - **Impacts and Mitigation:** This discussion focuses on the potential short-term, long-term, and cumulative impacts of the Project. For those issues where no impact or a less than significant impact would occur, either (1) no mitigation would be required, or (2) adherence to established regulations, standards, and policies would sufficiently mitigate Project impacts to below the established significance threshold.

In instances when the implementation of measure(s) cannot eliminate or reduce a Project impact to below established significance thresholds, the impact will be identified as “Significant and Unavoidable.”
 - **Cumulative Impacts:** This discussion focuses on the potential environmental effect of the proposed Project combined with the effects of reasonably foreseeable cumulative projects within the Project study area.
- **Chapter 5.0, Alternatives:** Chapter 5.0 contains discussion of alternatives to development of the proposed Project. As allowed by CEQA, the impacts of these alternatives are evaluated at a more general level than the analyses of the proposed Project that is contained in Chapter 4.0. This chapter also evaluates the proposed effects of the No Project Alternative and identifies the environmentally superior alternative.
- **Chapter 6.0, Other CEQA Topics:** Chapter 6.0 contains discussions of additional topics required by CEQA, including effects found to be significant and unavoidable, and irreversible environmental changes caused by the Project.
- **Chapter 7.0, Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program:** Chapter 7.0 includes the schedule, responsible party, and method of verification for the mitigation measures identified in the EIR require to reduce or eliminate potential significant impacts resulting from development of the Project.

- **Chapter 8.0, List of Preparers:** Chapter 8.0 identifies City and Consultant staff who participated in the preparation and review of the EIR.
- **Chapter 9.0, References:** Chapter 9.0 identifies the references used in the preparation of the EIR, the persons contacted, and the other source material.
- **Appendices:** The Appendices contain the Notice of Preparation (NOP), NOP mailing list, NOP comment letters and responses, and public scoping meeting information; the various technical studies that support the EIR analysis; referenced materials; and other relevant material utilized during the preparation of the EIR.

2.4 AREA-WIDE, REGIONALLY, OR STATEWIDE SIGNIFICANT PROJECT

CEQA establishes the criteria⁸ for identifying projects of statewide, regional, or area-wide significance. Projects that include the adoption or amendment of a local general plan or general plan element or cause significant impacts (e.g., significant amounts of traffic or exceedance of State or federal air quality standards) beyond the boundary of the jurisdiction in which the project is located are representative conditions that would be considered of area-wide, regional, or statewide significance. An EIR for such projects must be sent to the State Clearinghouse and the appropriate metropolitan area council of governments for review and comment.

The Project proposes amendments to the City's General Plan and is therefore considered a regionally significant project. The EIR will be transmitted to the State Clearinghouse and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) for review and comment.

2.5 DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

CEQA permits the incorporation by reference of all or portions of other documents that provide information relevant to the Project and the environmental analysis.⁹ Documents incorporated by reference must be available for public review at an office of the Lead Agency or other public building. The documents identified below are incorporated by reference, and where relevant, the information therein has been summarized throughout the EIR.

2.5.1 City of Menifee

2.5.1.1 City of Menifee General Plan (2013)

The State of California mandates that every city and county adopt a General Plan. The City's General Plan is considered its blueprint for the future. It lays out the vision for how the City would develop over the next 20 to 50 years. The plan contains many goals designed to help City officials and the community preserve our past while building a future that enhances the quality of life for all age groups. The City's General Plan was adopted in December 2013.

⁸ *State CEQA Guidelines* §15206.

⁹ *State CEQA Guidelines* §15150.

The City's General Plan is available at the City's Community Development Department and can be accessed online at the following location:

- <https://www.cityofmenifee.us/221/General-Plan>

2.5.1.2 City of Menifee General Plan Final EIR (2013)

The City of Menifee General Plan Final EIR summarizes the potential environmental impacts associated with implementation of the City's General Plan, including growth-inducing and cumulative impacts. The Final EIR was certified by the Menifee City Council on December 18, 2013. The proposed Project would require an amendment to the General Plan. As appropriate, the analysis and mitigation identified in the General Plan Final EIR has been incorporated into this EIR.

The City's General Plan Final EIR is available at the City's Community Development Department and can be accessed online at the following location:

- <https://www.cityofmenifee.us/262/Environmental-Impact-Report>

2.5.2 Riverside County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (2004)

The Riverside County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan promotes compatibility between airports and their surrounding land uses in Riverside County. The Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) adopted the compatibility plan in 2004 to replace compatibility plans for individual airports adopted by the ALUC between 1974 and 1998. The ALUC uses the compatibility plan as a tool to review proposed development plans for airports and surrounding land uses. State law requires local agencies to modify their general plan and applicable specific plans to be consistent with the compatibility plan within 180 days of when the ALUC adopts or amends its plan. To meet the consistency test, a general plan must specifically address compatibility planning issues (e.g., through a zoning ordinance) and the general plan must avoid direct conflicts with compatibility planning criteria. A general plan can demonstrate compatibility planning consistency by incorporating airport land use policies into existing general plan elements, adopting an airport land use element, or adopting a compatibility plan as a standalone document. This document is accessible online at:

- <https://www.rcaluc.org/Plans/New-Compatibility-Plan>

2.5.3 Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (2004)

The Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) is a multijurisdictional Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) that promotes the conservation of species and their associated habitats in Western Riverside County. The purpose of the MSHCP is to establish policies in accordance with the State and federal Endangered Species Acts to maintain biological and ecological diversity within a rapidly urbanizing region. The plan area encompasses approximately 1.26 million acres and includes all unincorporated Riverside County land west of the San Jacinto Mountains to the Orange County line, as well as the cities of Temecula, Murrieta, Lake Elsinore, Canyon Lake, Norco, Corona, Riverside, Moreno Valley, Banning, Beaumont, Calimesa, Perris, Hemet, and San Jacinto. The MSHCP was adopted in 2004. This document is accessible online at:

- <https://rctlma.org/Portals/0/mshcp/index.html>

2.5.4 Other Relevant Plans/Programs

2.5.4.1 Connect SoCal 2020–2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS)

The Connect SoCal 2020–2045 RTP/SCS, adopted by SCAG on September 3, 2020, analyzed the region’s transportation system, future growth projections, and potential funding sources in order to develop a long-term framework for transportation improvements and maintenance. The RTP/SCS includes policies and regulations set forth to ensure that development within the SCAG regional area is within planned and forecast socioeconomic projections. As part of the RTP, SCAG developed an SCS, which was required by Senate Bill (SB) 375, the Sustainable Communities Act of 2008. The SCS is intended to combine land use and transportation planning with the overall goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions generated by vehicle travel. This document is accessible online at:

- https://scag.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/0903fconnectsocial-plan_0.pdf?1606001176.

2.5.4.2 Technical Studies and Plans

A number of technical Project-related reports have been prepared to assess specific issues that may result from the construction and operation of the Project. As relevant, the EIR analysis is supported by information obtained from the following technical studies, which have been included as appendices to this EIR (listed in order of appearance.)

- **Appendix A-1:** Notice of Preparation (NOP) and NOP Responses
- **Appendix A-2:** Public Scoping Meeting Materials and Scoping Meeting Comments
- **Appendix B:** *Menifee Valley Specific Plan, City of Menifee, California, September 2023*
- **Appendix C:** *Air Quality CalEEMod Outputs*, LSA Associates, Inc., November 2022
- **Appendix D-1:** *Menifee Valley Center Biological Resources and MSHCP Consistency Report, Menifee, California*, Rocks Biological Consulting, January 24, 2022, Revised December 8, 2022
- **Appendix D-2:** *Menifee Valley Project – Off-Site Improvements Footprint Biological Resources and MSHCP Consistency Report, Menifee, California*, Rocks Biological Consulting, July 29, 2022, Revised December 8, 2022
- **Appendix D-3:** *Menifee Valley Project Jurisdictional Delineation Report, Riverside County, California*, Rocks Biological Consulting, July 15, 2019
- **Appendix D-4:** *Menifee Valley Project Jurisdictional Delineation Report Addendum*, Rocks Biological Consulting, October 25, 2022

- **Appendix D-5:** *Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) Sections 6.1.2 and 6.3.2 Determination of Biologically Equivalent or Superior Preservation (DBESP) for the Menifee Valley Project*, Rocks Biological Consulting, February 13, 2023
- **Appendix D-6:** *Menifee Valley Project – Focused Burrowing Owl Survey Report, Menifee, California*, Rocks Biological Consulting, July 29, 2022
- **Appendix D-7:** *Addendum to the Determination of Biologically Equivalent or Superior Preservation (DBESP) for the Menifee Valley Project (Additional Offsite Areas and Additional Jurisdictional Feature)*, VCS Environmental, September 18, 2023
- **Appendix D-8:** *Biological Technical Report and MSHCP Consistency Analysis: Menifee Valley Project (Additional Offsite Areas)*, VCS Environmental, September 2023
- **Appendix E-1:** *Updated Cultural Resource Study for the Menifee Valley Specific Plan Project in the City of Menifee, Riverside County, California*, PaleoWest LLC, March 3, 2022
- **Appendix E-2:** *Supplemental Cultural Resource Study of Off-Site Improvement Areas for the Menifee Valley Specific Plan Project, City of Menifee, Riverside County, California*, PaleoWest, November 9, 2022
- **Appendix E-3:** *Cultural Resource Assessment of the Brookfield Minor Ranch Project in the City of Menifee, Riverside County, California*, Tiffany Clark, PhD, RPA and Dennis McDougall, Applied Earthworks, Inc., April 2019
- **Appendix E-4:** *Supplemental Cultural Resource Study of Additional Off-Site Improvement Areas for the Menifee Valley Specific Plan Project, City of Menifee, Riverside County, California*, PaleoWest, August 10, 2023
- **Appendix F:** *Energy CalEEMod Outputs*, LSA Associates, Inc., November 2022
- **Appendix G-1:** *Preliminary Geotechnical Evaluation and Design Recommendations for the Proposed Approximately 580-Acre “Menifee Valley” Residential Development, City of Menifee, California*, LGC Geotechnical, Inc., May 25, 2018
- **Appendix G-2:** *Addendum Report Regarding Geotechnical Recommendations for the Proposed Approximately 580-Acre “Menifee Valley” Residential and Commercial Development, City of Menifee, California*, LGC Geotechnical, Inc., October 11, 2021
- **Appendix G-3:** *Updated Paleontological Resource Study for the Menifee Valley Specific Plan Project, City of Menifee, Riverside County, California*, PaleoWest, November 17, 2022
- **Appendix G-4:** *Supplemental Paleontological Resource Study of Off-Site Improvement Areas for the Menifee Valley Specific Plan Project, City of Menifee, Riverside County, California*, PaleoWest, November 17, 2022

- **Appendix G-5:** *Supplemental Paleontological Resource Study of Off-Site Improvement Areas #2 for the Menifee Valley Specific Plan Project, City of Menifee, Riverside County, California*, PaleoWest, August 4, 2023
- **Appendix G-6:** *Paleontological Resource Assessment for the Brookfield Menifee Valley Project, City of Menifee, Riverside County, California*, Applied EarthWorks, Inc., April 2019
- **Appendix H-1:** *Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, Menifee Valley, Northeast Corner of Menifee Road and Case Road, Menifee, California 92585*, Hillmann Consulting, February 10, 2021
- **Appendix H-2:** *Limited Phase II Subsurface Investigation Report, Menifee Road and Case Road*, Hillmann Consulting, LLC, September 12, 2019
- **Appendix H-3:** *Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, Menifee Valley, Menifee Road, Pinacate Road, Matthews Road, and Briggs Road, Menifee, California*, Hillmann Consulting, LLC, November 8, 2022
- **Appendix H-4:** *Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, McCall Boulevard, McLaughlin Avenue, and Matthews Road, Menifee, California*, Hillmann Consulting, LLC, July 5, 2023
- **Appendix H-5:** *Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission Development Review Determination, File No. ZAP1549MA22*, November 16, 2022
- **Appendix I-1:** *Preliminary Hydrology Analysis, Menifee Valley Project, City of Menifee*, Hunsaker & Associates, November 2021
- **Appendix I-2:** *Project-Specific Water Quality Management Plan, Menifee Valley Specific Plan*, Hunsaker & Associates, October 2021, Revised January 2023
- **Appendix I-3:** *Water Supply Assessment Report, Menifee Valley Specific Plan*, Eastern Municipal Water District, September 15, 2021, updated December 9, 2021
- **Appendix I-4:** *California Stormwater BMP Handbook Portal Construction*, California Stormwater Quality Association, July 2012
- **Appendix J:** *Supplemental Noise Data*, LSA Associates, Inc., January 2023
- **Appendix K-1:** *Menifee Valley Specific Plan Traffic Study, Menifee, Riverside County, California*, LSA Associates, Inc., September 2023
- **Appendix K-2:** *Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Analysis, Menifee Valley Specific Plan, Menifee, Riverside County, California*, LSA Associates, Inc., October 2023

The documents incorporated by reference in this EIR are available for review at the following location:

City of Menifee
Community Development Department
29844 Haun Road
Menifee, California 92586
Phone: (951) 672-6777
Monday–Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
and
<https://www.cityofmenifee.us/325/Environmental-Notices-Documents>

2.6 PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS

2.6.1 Notice of Preparation

The NOP was distributed to the State Clearinghouse, as well as agencies and organizations that may provide comment on the proposed Project and the potential environmental impacts that may result from the construction and operation of the proposed on-site uses. The 30-day public comment period extended from March 10 to April 8, 2022. Comments received during the public review of the NOP have been previously identified in **Table 1.A**, located in **Chapter 1.0** of this EIR, and were utilized to identify potential impacts addressed in **Chapter 4.0** of this EIR. The NOP and all comments received are provided in **Appendix A-1**.

2.6.2 Public Scoping Meeting

A public scoping meeting was held on March 29, 2022, at 5:30 pm, in the City of Menifee City Hall. **Table 1.B** in **Chapter 1.0** of this EIR provides a general summary of public scoping comments received on the Project. The public scoping meeting materials are provided in **Appendix A-2**.

2.6.3 Tribal Consultation

The proposed development is a project under CEQA and includes a General Plan Amendment and implementation of a Specific Plan; therefore, consultation provisions pursuant to both SB 18 and Assembly Bill (AB) 52 are required. The City requested a Sacred Lands File (SLF) Search and Native American Contact List from the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) on March 29, 2021. While the NAHC responded that the SFL search indicated “negative results,” it did not preclude the presence of cultural resources in the Project area. On September 21, 2021, pursuant to provisions of SB 18 and AB 52, the City provided consultation requests (via certified mail) to Native American entities identified in **Table 1.C** in **Chapter 1.0** of this EIR

2.6.4 Draft Environmental Impact Report

This EIR was distributed to responsible and trustee agencies, other affected agencies, and interested parties. The EIR has been provided to all parties who have previously requested copies.¹⁰ The Notice of Completion (NOC) and Notice of Availability (NOA) of the EIR have been distributed as required by CEQA. During the 45-day public review period, the Draft EIR and technical appendices have been

¹⁰ Public Resources Code §21092(b)(3).

made available for review. The Draft EIR will be available for review on the City’s website (i.e., <https://www.cityofmenifee.us/325/Environmental-Notices-Documents>) and at City Hall, Community Development Department during the public review period.

Written comments and email comments related to this EIR should be addressed to:

City of Menifee
Community Development Department
29844 Haun Road
Menifee, CA 92586
Phone: (951) 672-6777
Contact: Ryan Fowler
rfowler@cityofmenifee.us
Monday–Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

After the 45-day public review period, written responses to all comments on the Draft EIR will be prepared. These responses will be available for review for a minimum of 10 days prior to the public hearings before the City’s Planning Commission and City Council, at which time the certification of the Final EIR will be considered. The City will respond as appropriate to comments made at public hearings on the Project and this EIR. The Final EIR (which will include the Draft EIR, its appendices, the public comments and responses to the Draft EIR, and findings) will be included as part of the environmental record used during the consideration of the Project by the City decision-makers.

2.7 MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM

When mitigation measures are required to avoid or reduce the severity of significant impacts, State law requires the adoption of an MMRP. The monitoring program is intended to ensure compliance during implementation of the program. An MMRP will be prepared for this EIR to comply with the requirements of State law¹¹ and considered by the City Council concurrent with certification of the Final EIR for the proposed Project.

2.8 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time. Under CEQA, “cumulative impact” is defined as two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts. These effects may occur individually from environmental changes resulting from a single project or from a number of separate projects. The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment that results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects.¹² An EIR must provide a discussion of a project’s cumulative impact when a project’s incremental effect is cumulatively considerable.

An EIR is *not* required to discuss impacts that do not result, in part, from the project evaluated in the EIR. For incremental effects determined *not* to be cumulatively considerable and not significant, a

¹¹ Public Resources Code §21081.6.

¹² *State CEQA Guidelines* §15355.

brief discussion must be provided in the EIR supporting such a conclusion. An EIR may determine that a project's contribution to a cumulative effect is rendered less than cumulative considerable and is not significant if the project is required to implement or fund its fair share of measure(s) designed to alleviate the cumulative impact.¹³ Again, the EIR must provide the facts and analysis supporting such a conclusion.

The discussion of cumulative impacts in an EIR must reflect the severity of the impacts and their likelihood of occurrence, but the discussion need not provide as great detail as is provided for the effects attributable to the project alone. The discussion of cumulative effects is guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness and should focus on the cumulative impact to which the identified other projects contribute rather than the attributes of other projects which do not contribute to the cumulative impact. Under CEQA, the assessment of cumulative impacts contained in EIRs is typically based on either a list of past, present, and probable future projects, which are either approved or being considered for approval by the City or other municipalities (or anticipated to be submitted for consideration, including projects in the design phase or under construction); or a summary of growth projections set forth in regional plans, including regional modeling plans.¹⁴ Due to the size and nature of the Project proposed, this EIR has utilized both methods. For the assessment of cumulative transportation-related effects, cumulative projects from the cities of Perris, Lake Elsinore, Hemet, San Jacinto, Canyon Lake and unincorporated portions of Riverside County were considered. The cumulative project lists and associated cumulative project mapping are provided in **Appendix A-3**.

The methodology used to collect and refine the cumulative project data for this effort is provided in the Project-specific Traffic Study (see **Appendix J**). In turn, the cumulative project information from this effort was used, in part, to assess potential cumulative impacts related to other environment issues presented in the EIR (i.e., air quality, energy, greenhouse gas, noise). Due to the nature of individual environmental issues considered in the EIR, the cumulative area for each issue addressed in this EIR may not be identical. For example, the cumulative area for air quality impacts is reasonably assumed to be the entire South Coast Air Basin, which is much larger than the cumulative area for transportation impacts (i.e., the area foreseeably affected by project traffic), or water supply impacts (i.e., the Eastern Municipal Water District [EMWD] service area.)

The criteria for evaluating the significance of the Project's impacts, the geographic extent affected, and applicable policies/programs are identified for each environmental issue in **Chapter 4.0**. These criteria, which are based on resource sensitivity, quality, and quantity, are also instructive when evaluating whether the environmental effect resulting from implementation of a particular project is cumulatively considerable. The timing and duration of each activity is also an important consideration for evaluating the potential cumulative effects of activities that may occur only for a limited period. In such cases, a cumulative effect may occur only when two or more of the activities are occurring simultaneously.

¹³ *State CEQA Guidelines* §15130(a).

¹⁴ *State CEQA Guidelines* §15130(b).

Mitigation measures identified in this EIR may result in reducing the Project's cumulative impact to a less than significant level. The analyses in **Sections 4.1 through 4.20** indicate to what degree the Project makes a significant contribution to cumulatively considerable impacts for each environmental issue.

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