

7.0 LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

7.1 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES WHICH WOULD BE INVOLVED IN THE PROPOSED ACTIONS SHOULD THEY BE IMPLEMENTED

Approval of the *Lyons Canyon Ranch* project would cause irreversible environmental changes. Those changes associated with implementation of the Lyons Canyon Ranch project include the following:

- ◆ Permanent commitment of land that would be physically altered to support residential development.
- ◆ Vegetation removal for grading and construction activities. Replanting of native and non-invasive ornamental landscaping is proposed as part of the project.
- ◆ Alteration of the human environment as a consequence of the development process. The proposed project represents a commitment to constructing residential units, which intensifies land uses within the project site.
- ◆ Utilization of various new raw materials, such as lumber, sand and gravel for construction. The energy consumed in development and maintenance of the project site may be considered a permanent investment.
- ◆ Incremental increases in vehicular activity in the surrounding circulation system, resulting in associated increases in air emissions and noise levels.
- ◆ Construction of circulation and public utility infrastructure which may facilitate future development within the neighboring undeveloped parcels to the west and northwest.

7.2 GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS

In accordance with State *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.2(d), the following discussion addresses ways in which the proposed project could foster employment, housing or population growth, whether directly or indirectly in the surrounding environments. In addition, growth-inducing impacts of the proposed project are assessed in terms of whether the project remove obstacles to development, requires construction of expanded facilities that could serve other future development, or otherwise facilitates or encourage development of other activities that

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could significantly affect the environment. It must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.

Growth-inducing impacts fall into two general categories: direct and indirect. Direct growth-inducing impacts are generally associated with the provision of urban services to an undeveloped area. The provision of these services to a site and the subsequent development can serve to induce other landowners in the vicinity to convert their property to urban uses. Indirect, or secondary growth-inducing impacts, consist of growth induced in the region by the additional demands for housing, goods and services associated with the population increase caused by, or attracted to, a new project.

7.2.1 DIRECT GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

Direct growth-inducing impacts are generally associated with the provision of urban services to an undeveloped area, which can serve to induce other landowners in the vicinity to convert their property to urban uses. Currently, the majority of the project site is vacant and therefore the majority of the project site does not contain infrastructure for water, sewer, gas and electricity. In addition, the subject site does not include paved roads that would meet County of Los Angeles public street standards. The proposed project would result in an increase demand of approximately 177 acre-feet per year (AFY) of water. The increase in water demand would require the development of a water system infrastructure in order to accommodate the proposed residential uses. In addition, it is reasonable to assume that Valencia Water Company will require the project to install water system infrastructure of appropriate size to provide Valencia Water Company with the opportunity to accommodate increased water demand throughout the Santa Clarita Valley.

The proposed project would generate a total of 114.3 AFY of wastewater. The proposed project would utilize an on-site wastewater collection system to convey wastewater flow from the site. The wastewater collection system would consist of a lower and upper branch of sewer pipe. All flows from the site would be conveyed through the two proposed branches of on-site gravity sewer pipe toward The Old Road. Approval of points of connection and quantification of the available capacity in the affected portions of the County of Los Angeles local sewer system need to be completed prior to further wastewater system master planning. Therefore, the proposed project would require the development of sewer lines within the project site. In addition, it is reasonable to assume that County of Los Angeles will require the project to install sewer system infrastructure of appropriate size to provide Santa Clarita Valley Sanitation District with the opportunity to accommodate programmed growth within the Santa Clarita Valley.

The proposed project would also increase the demand for electricity and natural gas. The project is projected to result in an increase in demand of 1,069 megawatt-hours (MWh) of electricity per year. The electrical loads of the proposed project are within the parameters of projected load growth, which Southern California Edison (SCE) is planning to meet in the area.¹ All on-site

¹ California Energy Commission. California Energy Demand 2000-2010. Technical Report to California Energy Outlook 2000. Docket #99-CEO-1. June 2000.

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electricity lines would be installed to serve proposed uses, at the expense of the project applicant. No other improvements related to electricity would be necessary.

Development of proposed uses would result in the consumption of approximately 1,027.5 thousand cubic feet (kcf) of natural gas per month. According to the Southern California Gas Company (SCGC) two medium-pressure natural gas pipelines exist adjacent to the project site in The Old Road (one four-inch and one six-inch pipeline). These existing pipelines are considered adequate to serve the proposed project's natural gas demands. All on-site natural gas distribution pipelines would be installed to serve proposed uses, at the expense of the project applicant. No other improvements related to natural gas are necessary.

On-site vehicle circulation infrastructure will be constructed on the project site to accommodate the proposed residential development. This circulation infrastructure will be consistent with County of Los Angeles Public Street standards. The subject site is currently encumbered with existing reciprocal access easements granting vehicle access to adjacent property owners to the west and northwest. These easements were recorded well in advance of the current development proposal. Per these existing easements, any development on the subject property would need to maintain reasonable access to these adjacent property owners. As a result, development of the subject property would provide improved vehicle access consistent with public street standards which is well beyond the level of circulation improvements currently in existence. It is important to note that the proposed project would not be responsible for the construction of any off-site roadway improvements designed to serve these property owners. The proposed project is only responsible for maintaining the access easement over the subject site. If and when these properties were ever proposed for development, it would be the responsibility of the adjacent property owner to design a feasible connection point and physically construct the roadway improvements. Nevertheless, the project's improvements could potentially influence landowners adjacent to the subject site to convert their property to urban uses.

In summary, the proposed project would require the extension of natural gas and electric lines into the project site. Water and sewer lines would have to be developed in order to support the increase of demand as a result of the proposed project. Vehicle circulation improvements designed to public street standards would also be required as part of this development. The extension of these public utilities and roadway infrastructure may induce growth within the area, considering the undeveloped nature of the project site and the areas surrounding to the west, northwest, and south. The proposed project's increased demand for public services would require that existing infrastructure be expanded, which may provide additional capacity for development of the undeveloped area surrounding the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would result in direct growth-inducing impacts. These impacts are considered a less than significant consequence of project development

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7.2.2 INDIRECT GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

Information in this section is based on the *2020 Regional Growth Forecasts*, published by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), adopted April 2001, 2000 U.S. Census data; 2004 Population/Housing data published by the California Department of Finance; and data from the City of Santa Clarita. Existing planning documents, such as the *Los Angeles County Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan*, adopted December 1990, and the *Los Angeles County Housing Element*, adopted 2001, are also referenced.

SCAG is the agency that develops and adopts regional growth forecasts for Los Angeles County. SCAG *2020 Regional Growth Forecasts* is used as the basis of analysis for population, housing, and employment forecasts within the County. Population, housing and employment characteristics for the County of Los Angeles and the City of Santa Clarita are provided below.

REGIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Los Angeles County encompasses approximately 4,082 square miles. It is bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the south, Orange County to the southeast, San Bernardino County to the east, Ventura County to the west and Kern County to the north. Los Angeles County also includes the islands of San Clemente and Santa Catalina.

POPULATION

Los Angeles County is one of the six counties that comprise the Southern California Associations of Governments (SCAG) region. According to SCAG, since the 1990 Census, population in the six-county region (Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Ventura, and Imperial Counties) has grown from 14.6 million to 16.5 million persons, an increase of 13 percent. All of the counties in the SCAG region experienced at least 12 percent growth in population, with the exception of Los Angeles County, which grew by 7.4 percent.² The population projection for the year 2010 for the SCAG region is an estimated 20.5 million persons, representing a population increase of approximately 25 percent (4.2 million persons) between 1998 and 2010. SCAG attributes the growth in population for the region to natural increases and net in-migration.³

The County of Los Angeles' 2000 population was an estimated 9,716,100 persons, representing a 7.4 percent increase over the 1990 population of 8,863,164 persons.⁴ Los Angeles County has the largest population of any county in the nation with approximately 29 percent of California's residents living in the County. As of January 2005, the County's population was an estimated 10,226,506 persons.⁵ SCAG projects the County's population to reach 11,714,038 by the year

² SCAG forecasts are the 2001 RTP (April 2004) Population, Household, and Employment forecasts for Los Angeles County.

³ Natural increase is defined as the excess of births over deaths. Net in-migration is defined as the total number of people entering the region minus the people leaving the region.

⁴ 1990 and 2000 Census Data.

⁵ Los Angeles County website www.lacounty.info, June 24, 2005.

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2020. According to the U.S. Census, the Santa Clarita Valley had a total population of 213,178 persons in 2000. The population within the Valley is projected to grow by approximately 4.7 percent by 2020 to 313,290 persons.⁶

HOUSING

According to 2000 U.S. Census data, the housing stock in Los Angeles County was an estimated 3,270,909 housing units. This represents an increase of approximately 3.4 percent over the estimated 3,163,343 housing units reported in the 1990 U.S. Census. As of January 2004, the County's housing stock was an estimated 3,323,630 housing units with a vacancy rate of 4.19 percent.⁷ The average number of persons per household in the County was 3.117 (May 2004). The number of households within Los Angeles County is forecast to increase by 12 percent (274,100 to 307,500) from 1998 to 2005².

EMPLOYMENT

In 2000, the civilian labor force in the County of Los Angeles totaled approximately 4,307,762 persons. An estimated 8.2 percent of the County's civilian labor force (354,347 persons) was unemployed at the time of the Census. The majority of the County's labor force (approximately 34.3 percent) was employed in management, professional and related occupations. The next highest concentration of the labor force (approximately 27.6 percent) was found in sales and office occupations.⁸ Employment projections for Santa Clarita Valley show that there will be 125,901 jobs within the Valley by the year 2010 and 162,537 jobs by the year 2020.⁹

LOCAL CHARACTERISTICS

POPULATION

The population, housing, and employment projections through 2030 for the Santa Clarita Valley (SCV) Planning Area are based on the Southern California Association of Governments' 2002 projections, which are still in the review process with local jurisdictions, including the City of Santa Clarita and Los Angeles County. Los Angeles County provides the projections for the unincorporated area of the Santa Clarita Valley.

The projections suggest that population in the Santa Clarita Valley Planning Area will grow at an average annual rate of about 2.5 percent over the next thirty years, faster than projected employment (2.1 percent). Households in the Planning Area are projected to grow about the same as population, at an average rate of 2.5 percent. The population of the SCV Planning Area

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ State of California, Department of Finance, *City/County Population and Housing Estimates, 2004, Revised 2001-2003, with 2000 DRU Benchmark*. Sacramento, California, May 2004.

⁸ Los Angeles County Housing Element 1998-2005. October 2001.

⁹ 2000 U.S. Census Data.

¹⁰ North Los Angeles County Subregion 2020 Growth Projection Report, October 1995 Los Angeles County Sanitation District.

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from the U.S. Census figures demonstrates that the year 2000 population of the Planning area was 212,611. The combined incorporated and unincorporated population growth projection for the year 2030 is 441,704.

HOUSING

According to 2000 U.S. Census data, the total housing stock in the City of Santa Clarita was an estimated 52,442 housing units. This represents an increase of approximately 27 percent over the estimated 41,133 housing units reported in the 1990 U.S. Census. From 1990 to 2000, the City of Santa Clarita's housing stock grew at an annual growth rate of 2.2 percent a year. In January 2004, the State estimated the City's housing stock was 54,810 housing units with a vacancy rate of 3.16 percent.¹⁰

Based on forecasts developed by the City, the number of households in the City is expected to grow from 54,810 to 64,675 by 2010, and to 75,078 by 2020. City housing, therefore, would represent 70.2 and 61.8 percent of the projected housing for the Santa Clarita Valley for those years, respectively. According to SCAG projections, the number of housing units is expected to increase to 61,101 units by 2010, 67,939 units by 2015 and 75,479 units by 2020, representing an approximately 38 percent increase in housing units between 2004 and 2020.¹¹

Between 1990 and 2000, the number of available housing units increased by 108,859 units countywide, representing a 3.4 percent increase from 1990 to 2000. In the same time period, the number of households (occupied housing units) also increased by 3.4 percent, while population increased at a more rapid rate of 12 percent. Total households within the County of Los Angeles are projected to increase between 1998 and 2005, from 274,100 units to 307,500 units¹³.

7.2.3 SIGNIFICANCE THRESHOLD CRITERIA

Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines* contains the Initial Study Environmental Checklist form used during preparation of the project Initial Study, which is contained in Appendix A of this EIR. The Initial Study includes questions relating to population, employment, and housing. The issues presented in the Initial Study Checklist have been utilized as thresholds of significance in this Section. Accordingly, a project may create a significant environmental impact if one or more of the following occurs:

- ◆ Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure);

¹¹ State of California, Department of Finance, *City/County Population and Housing Estimates, 2004, Revised 2001-2003, with 2000 DRU Benchmark*. Sacramento, California, May 2004.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Los Angeles County Housing Element 1998-2005. October 2001.

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- ◆ Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere; or
- ◆ Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

7.2.4 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

POPULATION

- ◆ ***PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION COULD INDUCE SUBSTANTIAL POPULATION GROWTH IN THE COUNTY.***

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact.

Impact Analysis: Implementation of the proposed project would involve the development of a total of 93 single-family residential units and 93 senior condominium units. The proposed project does not have any components that would be considered substantially growth inducing (such as regional commercial uses or regional infrastructure). However, the subject site is encumbered with an existing access easement benefiting the adjacent property owner to the west. Therefore, two “tap” streets (“H” Street and “I” Street) are proposed along the subject site’s southwesterly property boundary to provide two future points of ingress and egress to the westerly property owner. If the property to the west is ever proposed for development, it is likely that vehicle traffic from this development would utilize the roadway system proposed for the Lyons Canyon project. The existing land use designations on this westerly property are similar to those present on the subject site. Therefore, it is anticipated that future development would be a relatively low density residential uses. The population growth attributable to a low-density residential subdivision would not be considered substantial on a regional basis. Therefore, impacts from project related future population growth are considered less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are proposed.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Less than significant.

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HOUSING

- ◆ ***PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION COULD DISPLACE SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF EXISTING HOUSING, NECESSITATING THE CONSTRUCTION OF REPLACEMENT HOUSING ELSEWHERE; OR DISPLACE SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF PEOPLE, NECESSITATING THE CONSTRUCTION OF REPLACEMENT HOUSING ELSEWHERE.***

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact.

Impact Analysis: The site is currently undeveloped and the project would not displace existing housing or require the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. Therefore, the proposed project would have a less than significant housing impact under the significance criteria.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are proposed.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Less than significant.

7.2.5 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

- ◆ ***IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT, IN CONJUNCTION WITH RELATED PROJECTS IN THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES AND THE CITY OF SANTA CLARITA, WOULD NOT RESULT IN SIGNIFICANT CUMULATIVE POPULATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND HOUSING IMPACTS.***

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation: Less than Significant Impact.

Impact Analysis: Implementation of all cumulative projects, including the proposed project, would result in additional population, housing development, and employment in undeveloped portions of the Santa Clarita Valley. The combination of the Lyons Canyon Ranch Project and the Cumulative Project list in Tables 4-1 and 4-2 would produce a potential population of 133,632 persons based on the 43,374 single family and multi-family dwelling units in the cumulative list multiplied by the population per dwelling unit ratio of 3.081. The potential employment developed from that population is derived by using the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) jobs/housing ratio for the 6-county SCAG Region of 1.21:1. The potential employment produced would be approximately 52,482 jobs. The proposed project's anticipated growth of 585 persons and 190 dwelling units would represent 0.4 percent of the cumulative population growth, and 1.3 percent of the cumulative housing growth. Therefore, the project's contribution to population and housing impacts in the Santa Clarita Valley is not cumulatively considerable.

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However, after considering the cumulative population and housing impacts of all related projects it was determined that:

- ◆ It is not possible to evaluate total cumulative population growth impact significance relative to official regional or local population projections because General Plan buildout is expected to occur well beyond the buildout of the proposed project and related projects. It is therefore assumed, for the purposes of this EIR, that all growth management goals and policies necessary to reduce cumulative population and housing impacts to a less than significant level throughout Los Angeles County will be incorporated into the Updated Los Angeles County General Plan and General Plan Environmental Impact Report.
- ◆ The buildout of the proposed project and related projects will create jobs and there will be no net loss of jobs. Cumulative development would not result in a significant impact relative to the net loss of jobs.
- ◆ In the course of SCV area buildout, existing housing (including affordable housing) could possibly be displaced. This may occur to make way for new development that may be more compatible with local land use designations, to replace aging housing, or for other reasons. Overall, however, the housing stock in the County is expected to grow considerably as the SCV Area Plan states; it can be reasonably assumed that any loss of affordable housing that may occur would be replaced. Therefore, cumulative development would not result in a significant impact relative to loss of existing affordable housing stock.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Less than significant.