

### I-126 Neysa Ely

**I-126-1** The County acknowledges the comment as an introduction to comments that follow. This comment is included in the Final EIR for review and consideration by the decision-makers prior to a final decision on the project. No further response is required or necessary.

**I-126-2** The comment asks what the health impacts will be from blasting on the existing residents and wildlife in the area. A Health Risk Assessment (HRA) was prepared as part of the Draft EIR and can be found in Appendix G, Air Quality Technical Report. Also see **Topical Response AQ-1 (Blasting Impacts)**.

The comment also asks what the impact from blasting will be on house foundations, water wells, and septic tanks of existing residences. The following statement is provided in Section 2.10, Noise on page 2.10-24: “Due to the geologic character of the project Site, explosive blasting and/or on-site rock breaking is anticipated during Site preparation activities. Thus, construction activities may result in significant groundborne vibrations or groundborne noise impacts. At the current stage of project design, a blasting study has not been completed, and no specific blasting timelines, blast numbers, or locations are proposed or available.” Impacts were determined to be potentially significant

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**I-126-3** The comment asks what the impact will be to I-15 and states that there are no plans in the Draft EIR regarding the interchange. The project applicant is to coordinate with Caltrans to improve the interchange based on the lane configuration ultimately approved by Caltrans. Because implementation of the I-15 interchange improvements is within the jurisdiction and control of Caltrans, and the County cannot assure their implementation, the Draft EIR properly identifies the impact as significant and unavoidable. However, the project applicant to date has been coordinating closely with Caltrans regarding the interchange improvements and, therefore, it is reasonable to conclude as a practical matter that the improvements will be in place prior to the triggering of a significant impact. See Topical Response to Comment **TR-TRA-2 (Interchange Phasing)**.

The County will include the comment as part of the Final EIR for review and consideration by the decision-makers prior to a final decision on the project. No further response is required or necessary.

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**I-126-4** The comment expresses concern over evacuation during a fire because there's really only two ways in/out of the project not three. Appendix N-2 is the Evacuation Plan for Newland Sierra, which was prepared in coordination with the Deer Springs Fire Protection District and County of San Diego, and does not conflict with existing evacuation and pre-plans. From Page 2.8-20 of the DEIR, "the intent of the evacuation plan is to guide implementation of an evacuation procedure such that the process of evacuating people from the Site is facilitated in an efficient manner and according to a pre-defined, practiced evacuation protocol." Appendix N-2 identifies the proposed project's evacuation road network, including internal roads which connect to three primary ingress/egress roads, and ultimately connect to major evacuation routes, including, Deer Springs Road, Sarver Lane, North Twin Oaks Valley Road, Buena Creek Road and Interstate 15. In addition, the proposed project includes improvements to Deer Springs Road which would increase capacity of the main evacuation route compared to the existing condition. Further, improvements to North Twin Oaks Valley Road and Buena Creek Road would expand capacity of the network to assist evacuation efforts for the surrounding community. Please see Topical Response to Comment **TR-HAZ-1 (Evacuation)** for a more detailed explanation of evacuation.

**I-126-5** The comment states that any evacuation time analysis that is based on switching the lane configurations so that all four lanes flow out of the project site is likely to be widely inaccurate, because at least a lane or two would be needed to get fire suppression assets in to the project site. The County does not concur with this comment. Please refer to Response to Comments O-1.13-6 and O-1.3-9, which explain that the Proposed Project's Wildland Fire Evacuation Plan considered a conservative approach to evacuation, anticipated potential bottlenecks and other delays, and resulted in an evacuation time estimate that is considered consistent with similar communities. As discussed in response to comments O-1.13-3 and O-1.13-5 through O-1.13-8, the Proposed Project would focus on early evacuations when ample time is available to safely move residents to designated safety zones, with a total evacuation time estimate consistent with that presented in the comment. When it is considered less safe to evacuate residents, such as when a wildfire is burning under extreme weather conditions near the community, all or portions of the Project will be directed to remain in their well-defended, ignition resistant homes.

For purposes of accuracy, the County corrects the comment as its analysis incorrectly states the Wildland Fire Evacuation Plan assumed that four Mesa Rock Road lanes would be used for egress, and all assumed to be used for left hand turns onto Deer Springs Road. The Wildland Fire Evacuation Plan utilized Traffic Engineer data which showed that each Mesa Rock Road lane could handle up to 2,400 vehicles per hour. Since there are two outbound lanes, that would provide up to 4,800 vehicles per

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hour. Note that this assumes free traffic flow and a best case condition. Traffic from this point was assumed to be entering Deer Springs Road with traffic control in place so that the right lane would turn right and the left lane would turn left. This example assumed there would not be a traffic flow issue to the south of the Project site, but also accounted for potential delays with its overall evacuation time estimate.

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Note that the evacuation plan did not rely on the maximum vehicles per hour for determining evacuation time estimates. If it had, then the evacuation time would have been estimated to be around one hour maximum for the conservatively calculated 4,697 vehicles that could be evacuating. In fact, the evacuation plan used the most restrictive vehicle per hour segment from each segment (as discussed in Section 4.2 of the Wildland Fire Evacuation Plan) to estimate the amount of time it would take to move all residents out of the Project to areas away from the wildlands.

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- I-126-6** The comment asks how VWD can support increased water demands from thousands of homes and significant commercial space. The DEIR analyzes water supply in Section 2.14.1, Water Supply and Service. The proposed project would increase overall demand for potable water; however, the DEIR compares the planned water usage for the project Site (based on General Plan land uses) with the estimated water demand based on the proposed project land uses and water conservation measures and concludes the impacts to water supplies would be less than significant. For additional detail refer to **Topical Response UTL-1 (Water Shortage)**.

This comment is included in the Final EIR for review and consideration by the decision-makers prior to a final decision on the project. No further response is required or necessary.

- I-126-7** The comment states that the General Plan zoned the area for 99 homes and asks on what grounds is a 20x increase in density allowed. See **Topical Response LU-1 (General Plan Consistency)**. The County will include the comment as part of the Final EIR for review and consideration by the decision-makers prior to a final decision on the project.

- I-126-8** The comment states that millions of dollars was spent on the General Plan that opposes increased density in the area and that a development was already considered

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and turned down for this area (Merriam Mountains). See **Topical Response LU-1 (General Plan Consistency)**. Regarding the previous project denial, it has no bearing on the current project or its environmental analysis because: (a) the prior project was considered and rejected more than seven years ago under different factual and legal circumstances, (b) the prior project was subject to different environmental analyses, and (c) the prior project involved different features, plans, and amenities. The Draft EIR for the proposed project has been prepared in compliance with CEQA, and represents a substantial size reduction when compared to the prior project, as it would develop approximately 20% fewer homes, preserve an additional 17 acres of open space onsite plus an additional 218 acres off-site, and generate approximately 7,000 fewer daily trips overall. Nonetheless, the County will include the comment as part of the Final EIR for review and consideration by the decision-makers prior to a final decision on the project.