

I-326 Alan Rings

- I -326-1** The commenter explains that they are a member of the Hidden Meadows Community Sponsor Group, but the following comments are his personal opinions as a private citizen and resident of Champagne Village.

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 -326-2** The commenter describes the Project as a development of 2,135 multi-story single family and multi-family attached units in five urban neighborhood clusters, with a school site and up to 81,000 square feet of developed commercial space.

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 -326-3** The commenter explains that the Project would have an enormous impact on the surrounding communities and would double the population along the I-15 corridor. The comment states that the developer has given little consideration of impacts to existing residents living beyond the Project boundaries and is unwilling to mitigate a number of serious impacts.

This comment is general in nature and does not raise any specific issue regarding any particular analysis in the DEIR. Therefore, no specific response can be provided or is required. (*Paulek v. California Dept. Water Resources* (2014) 231 Cal.App.4th 35, 47 [a general response is all that is required to a general comment]). This comment is included in the Final EIR for review and consideration by the decision-makers prior to a final decision on the project.

- I -326-4** The commenter explains that none of the impacts would occur and no public money would need to be spent if the Project was denied and property is developed in compliance with the General Plan in the future.

The County acknowledges the comment and notes it expresses the opinions of the commentator, and does not raise an issue related to the adequacy of any specific section or analysis of the Draft EIR. 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.

Comment Letter Responses

I -326-5 The commenter explains that the Project conflicts with the General Plan. The comment states that the existing surrounding communities are generally single-story, detached single-family homes on large open lots which maintain the rural character of the County development objectives. The comment states that the General Plan designates the Project site and surrounding area as rural and semi-rural and the current zoning calls for only 99 lots.

Please refer to **Topical Response LU 1**. The comment does not raise any specific issue regarding that analysis and, therefore, no more specific response can be provided or is required. 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 -326-6 The commenter explains that the Project site is rough, mountainous terrain which is not easily developed; therefore the cost to develop the site would be enormous. The comment states that the EIR states that a third of a kiloton of explosives would be required for project blasting, which the commenter says might not be enough. The comment states that blasting would be continuous for years and would destroy the natural vegetation and habitat. The comment states that the EIR estimates that the project would require almost 11 million cubic yards of material would be cut and exported, which would be seven times more material than it took to build the Hoover Dam.

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 -326-7 The commenter explains that the blasting, grading, and rock crushing would result in extreme air, dust, and noise pollution and the Draft EIR states that the project would exceed criteria air pollutant thresholds after implementation of mitigation. The commenter explains that there are several senior citizens in the area that suffer from chronic pulmonary lung disease, emphysema, and other breathing disorders. The comment states that the pollution and dust generated by the project could travel into resident's homes and could shorten lives

The Draft EIR's Air Quality chapter, and particularly **Section 2.3.5, Impact Analysis** therein, comprehensively evaluates the project's construction-related air quality impacts, including those attributable to blasting. Please refer to **Topical Response Air Quality – Blasting Impacts**. As the comment does not raise any specific issue regarding that analysis, no more specific response can be provided or is required. The

Comment Letter Responses

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 -326-8** The commenter explains that the Draft EIR claims that the project is superior to the existing General Plan because the project would include more parks, public recreations areas, and trails and would include 273 more acres of open space. The commenter states that this is false because the Draft EIR included a concept of how the 99 homes would be distributed on the site, but has no way of accurately predicting how these homes would be distributed, if consistent with the General Plan.

The County acknowledges the comment and notes it expresses the opinions of the commentator, and does not raise an issue related to the adequacy of any specific section or analysis of the Draft EIR. 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.

- I -326-9** The comment states that the Draft EIR states that the Caltrans has no plan to deal with the congestion on the I-15, and therefore, the developer will not participate in the cost of the improvements. The comment states that the developer would pay for the improvements to the I-15/Deer Springs Road interchange and improvements to Deer Springs Road and Twin Oaks Valley Road. The comment states that Deer Springs Road is classified as LOS F during peak commute times, which is mainly attributed to residents commuting from Riverside County who wish to bypass the I-15 and SR-78 interchange.

The comment states that the widening of Deer Springs and Twin Oaks Valley Road to four lanes would only encourage more commuters to use this alternate route. The comment states that the proposed stop light at Sarver Lane would cause further congestion. The comment states that the DEIR states that most of the traffic impacts are significant and unavoidable and the addition of 10,000 vehicle trips per day would make congestion worse.

As stated in Section 2.13, Transportation and Traffic, the improvements necessary to mitigate the impacts to the I-15 mainline are to provide additional mainline capacity along this stretch of I-15. However, there is no Caltrans program in place to provide funding and implement the necessary improvements into which the Project could contribute a fair share, and, thus, there is no feasible mitigation that would reduce the identified impacts to less than significant. Therefore, the impacts are considered **significant and unavoidable**.

The County acknowledges that adding capacity to Deer Springs Road would result in additional trips on the road with a corresponding reduction of trips on the I-15

Comment Letter Responses

mainline. Please refer to the **Response to Comment O-1-239** and **Response to Comment O-1.16-4**. As shown in the LLG Four-Lane Deer Springs Road Traffic Results (Appendix JJ-7 to the Final EIR), widening Deer Springs Road and Twin Oaks Valley Road from two lanes to four lanes would divert approximately 1,100 ADTs in the near-term (year 2020) off of the I-15 mainline and onto Deer Springs Road. Despite this added traffic on Deer Springs Road that would be expected to result from improving the road, the project's direct and cumulative impact analysis and mitigation would remain unchanged. With this added traffic and with implementation of the project's proposed mitigation, the road would operate at an acceptable LOS in the near-term.

The proposed project would not involve the addition of a traffic signal at a Sarver Lane intersection.

The project has identified feasible mitigation to fully mitigate all of its direct and cumulative impacts with the exception of impacts to portions of the I-15 mainline and a closely spaced double intersection at Robelini Drive—S. Santa Fe—Buena Creek Road approximately 6 miles from the project Site. In the case of the I-15 mainline, the project proposes to construct a new interchange with acceleration and deceleration lanes, ramp meters, and park and ride improvements at the I-15/Deer Springs Road interchange ("interchange improvements"), the net effect of which will improve the performance of the mainline. The project's proposed improvements to Deer Springs Road and Twin Oaks Valley Road would also reduce daily traffic on the I-15 mainline by approximately 1,100 ADT in the near-term as improvements to Deer Springs Road would provide a shorter, more direct route for a certain amount of traffic presently using I-15 to reach the same destinations (refer to the LLG Four-Lane Deer Springs Road Traffic Results in Appendix JJ-7 to the Final EIR). Therefore, the project's proposed interchange improvements in conjunction with improvements to Deer Springs Road and Twin Oaks Valley Road would partially offset the project's addition of traffic to the same segment of the I-15 mainline, serving as partial mitigation for the project's impacts.

In the case of the double intersection of Robelini Drive—S. Santa Fe—Buena Creek Road, mitigation of the project's traffic impacts would involve impacts to private property, including residences, for road improvements that would be temporary and potentially throw-away. Further, the County's Traffic Impact Fee (TIF) Program identifies planned improvements to realign and widen the roadways intersecting in that same area (i.e., to connect Buena Creek Road and Sycamore Avenue Direction and close Robelini to through traffic), the County has initiated preliminary engineering and design of these improvements, and the project would contribute to

Comment Letter Responses

these improvements in a manner that was proportional to the project's impacts through participation in the County TIF Program.

- I -326-10** The comment states that there is inadequate access to the project site and the Draft EIR is misleading by implying there are two distinct exit roads. The comment explains that Camino Mayor connects to North Twin Oaks Valley Road, but does not connect to the northern portion of the project site. The comment states that no consideration was given to connect the project to Lawrence Welk Lane.

The County does not concur with the comment. The proposed Project includes three access points, Mesa Rock Road, Sarver Lane, and Camino Mayor. The DEIR analyzes the proposed Project using these three access points and associated trip distribution. No further response is required or necessary.

- I -326-11** The comment states that the project would almost contain as many housing units as the City of Del Mar. The comment states that Del Mar is similar to the project site, but includes three interchanges off of I-5 and more surface roads than the project.

The County acknowledges the comment and notes it expresses the opinions of the commentator, and does not raise an issue related to the adequacy of any specific section or analysis of the Draft EIR. 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.

- I -326-12** The comment states that if the project is approved, the County must commit the funds necessary to acquire the right of way and improve North Twin Oaks Valley Road to County standards and connect to Gopher Canyon Road.

The County does not agree with this comment. The project's proposed access at N. Twin Oaks Valley Road meets the County's line of site requirements. The project also not does generate enough traffic on N. Twin Oaks Valley Road to trigger any improvements to the road. Therefore, no additional analysis of the project's traffic generation on N. Twin Oaks Valley Road or potential future improvements to N. Twin Oaks Valley Road, which the project does not trigger, is necessary.

- I -326-13** The comment states that the Draft EIR assumes that the majority of the project traffic would travel south on I-15. The comment states that the Deer Springs Road interchange is beyond capacity and if the project is approved, it would need to be improved. The comment states that occupancy permits must not be issued until this improvement is completed.

Comment Letter Responses

The project has identified feasible mitigation in the form of building a new interchange and that mitigation measure is identified herein as M-TR-1. The process of implementing the mitigation for the interchange is subject to a three-phase process under the jurisdiction of Caltrans. The first phase involves the preparation of a Project Initiation Document (PID) consisting of a Project Study Report-Project Development Support (PSR-PDS) document. The purpose of the PSR-PDS document is to define the purpose and need for any proposed improvements, identify a reasonable range of alternatives (i.e., interchange configurations), and develop an action plan for implementation of the improvements. In 2014, in response to the project's traffic impact analysis, which identified significant direct and cumulative impacts to the Interchange, the project applicant initiated the PID process with Caltrans to begin evaluating different configurations for mitigating impacts to the Interchange.

After completion of the PID phase and approval of the PSR-PDS document, the process advances to the second phase known as the Project Approval and Environmental Document (PA&ED) process. The PA&ED process includes an appropriate CEQA/NEPA environmental document for the proposed improvements, including consideration of alternative configurations and a Project Report (PR), which constitutes an engineering technical document that serves as the basis for detailed construction plans.

At the conclusion of the PA&ED process, Caltrans will select an Interchange configuration and the process enters the third phase, which involves the Plans Specification and Engineering Phase (PS&E), where detailed engineering documents and construction plans are prepared for the Interchange. Finally, the PS&E phase is followed by the acquisition, if any, of any required right-of-way and construction of the new Interchange.

All aspects included in the process of implementing the mitigation for the Interchange improvements are subject to Caltrans' review, oversight, and approval. As of this writing, Caltrans is within the first PID phase. Caltrans has not completed this phase nor initiated the PA&ED phase. To date, the PSR-PDS document includes preliminary interchange alternatives consisting of an expanded diamond interchange, a diverging diamond interchange, and a roundabout interchange.

The comment does not raise any specific issue regarding that analysis and, therefore, no more specific response can be provided or is required. 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 -326-14 The comment states that there should be consideration to diverting traffic from the I-15 away from the Deer Springs intersection, which could be accomplished by adding

Comment Letter Responses

a southbound on ramp and northbound off ramp at the Mesa Rock Road undercrossing and installing a signal at the intersection with Center City Parkway.

This improvement, suggested by the commenter, was not included in the Draft EIR and is not being proposed as part of the project; therefore, no further response can be provided. 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 -326-15** The comment states that the project is located in a fire hazard severity zone. The comment states that the Draft EIR assumes that because no fires have occurred in the area in 100 years that it will not happen in the future. The comment states that the EIR relies on the fire resistant construction materials to protect residents. The comment states that the EIR states that the FPP does not provide a guarantee that all residents and visitors will be safe at all times because of the advance fire protection features it requires.

The County does not agree with this comment. Potential impacts associated with fire hazards and evacuations have been adequately analyzed in **Section 2.8 Hazards and Hazardous Materials** as well as, **Appendix N, Fire Protection Plan and Evacuation Plan**. Mitigation has been provided when necessary to avoid or lessen potentially significant impacts. For information regarding evacuation during a wildfire, refer to Draft EIR Appendix N-2, which includes the Evacuation Plan for Newland Sierra. Also refer to **Topical Response HAZ-1**. 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.

- I -326-16** The comment states that the Draft EIR presumes that residents would evacuate via Sarver Lane or Mesa Rock Road onto Deer Springs Road. The comment states that the EIR claims that if a fire were to approach from the south the only option would be shelter in place. The comment states that traffic gridlock would prevent emergency vehicles from accessing the project site.

The County does not agree with this comment. As stated on page 82 of Appendix N-1 (Fire Protection Plan):

“This project is not to be considered a shelter in place community. However, the fire agencies and/or law enforcement officials may, during an emergency, as they would for any new community provided the layers of fire protection as Newland Sierra, determine that it is safer to temporarily refuge residents on the site. When an evacuation is ordered, it will occur according to pre-established evacuation decision points (as detailed in the Newland Sierra

Comment Letter Responses

Evacuation Plan), or as soon as notice to evacuate is received, which may vary depending on many environmental and other factors.”

Further as stated on page 13 of Appendix N-2 (Evacuation Plan):

Like most new master planned communities incorporating ignition resistant construction, wide fuel modification zones, and providing defensibility throughout, responding fire and law enforcement personnel will be able to direct residents to temporarily refuge in their homes at Newland Sierra, in the rare situation where that alternative is determined to be safer than evacuating.

Although the Project is not a shelter in place community, safeguards have been implemented that would allow residents to refuge in their homes should it be determined safer than evacuation.

- I -326-17** The comment states that the Draft EIR notes that North Twin Oaks Valley Road, north of the project is not a dependable evacuation route. The comment states that the County must commit funds to acquire right of way and improve North Twin Oaks Valley Road to County standards and connect to Gopher Canyon Road.

As described in Appendix N of the Draft EIR, travel to the north on North Twin Oaks Valley Road may be directed by law enforcement. However, residents are not advised to utilize this route without law enforcement direction because it is a gated road and should not be assumed passable. In an emergency evacuation, any of the neighborhoods may be directed to utilize Camino Mayor or the Camino Mayor alternative, but based on proximity, Summit is the only neighborhood likely to use either of these routes to North Twin Oaks Valley Road.

- I -326-18** The comment states that building codes require all structures to have at least two different exits and the project should be held to those same standards.

The County does not concur with the comment. The proposed Project includes three access points, Mesa Rock Road, Sarver Lane, and Camino Mayor.

- I -326-19** The comment states that according to Section 2.14, there appears to be sufficient water supply for the project. The commenter provides a summary of this analysis and states that it is difficult to believe that anything near a 36% district wide savings could be achieved.

Please refer to GR-UTL-1 (Water Shortage/Drought). The comment addresses utilities and service systems, which received extensive analysis in the Draft EIR, specifically in Section 2.14 Utilities and Service Systems. The comment does not raise any specific issue regarding that analysis and, therefore, no more specific

Comment Letter Responses

response can be provided or is required. 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 -326-20** The comment states that the project would consume 7.2% of all water delivered to the Vallecitos Water District and states that this is excessive for the benefit of one single development. The comment states that lack of future water supplies could result in the curtailment of future growth in San Marcos.

Please refer to GR-UTL-1 (Water Shortage/Drought). The comment addresses utilities and service systems, which received extensive analysis in the Draft EIR, specifically in Section 2.14 Utilities and Service Systems. The comment does not raise any specific issue regarding that analysis and, therefore, no more specific response can be provided or is required. 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 -326-21** The comment states that in a sewer availability form from 2014 it was demonstrated that Vallecitos Water District does not have facilities to serve the project. The comment states that the EIR states that there is adequate offsite wastewater treatment capacity. The comment states that a document submitted to the County from Dexter Wilson Engineering dated January 20, 2017, titled “Master Plan on Water for the Newland Sierra Project” barely mentioned off-site sewer requirements.

The comment addresses wastewater systems, which received extensive analysis in the Draft EIR, specifically in Section 2.14 Utilities and Service Systems. The comment does not raise any specific issue regarding that analysis and, therefore, no more specific response can be provided or is required. 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 -326-22** The comment provides an excerpt from the “Master Plan on Water for the Newland Sierra Project” and states that no further information on wastewater was provided in that document.

The comment addresses wastewater systems, which received extensive analysis in the Draft EIR, specifically in Section 2.14 Utilities and Service Systems. The comment does not raise any specific issue regarding that analysis and, therefore, no more specific response can be provided or is required. 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.

Comment Letter Responses

I -326-23 The comment describes the sewer system on the project site and where the wastewater is currently treated. The comment states that the Meadowlark Reclamation Facility should be removed from consideration in the Draft EIR, because it is at capacity. The comment states that the Encina Water Pollution Control Facility might not have capacity to serve the project. The comment states that either Vallecitos Water District or Encina Water Pollution Control Facility would need to construct additional facilities.

As described in Section 2.14, Utilities and Service Systems of the Draft EIR, projects must obtain a commitment letter from the wastewater service provider prior to final map approval or building permit issuance to ensure that there is existing capacity to service the needs of the project. As previously stated, a small portion of the project Site is already within the Vallecitos Water District sewer service boundary, and the remainder of the development areas would require annexation to Vallecitos Water District Sewer Improvement Districts 5 and 6 for sewer service. According to the Vallecitos Water District Project Facility Availability dated November 7, 2016, the Vallecitos Water District does not have adequate capacity to service the future needs of the proposed project based solely on Vallecitos Water District's capital facility plans. However, as demonstrated by the Vallecitos Water District Offsite Water and Sewer Study (included as Appendix X to the Draft EIR), specific improvements required to serve the project have been identified but are not contained in the capital facility plans; construction of these facilities would ensure the Vallecitos Water District could provide service to the proposed project and the impacts resulting from the construction of these facilities have been disclosed throughout this EIR. Impacts would be **less than significant** and no mitigation would be required.

I -326-24 The comment states that the Draft EIR concludes that the emissions associated with project construction would be temporary. The comment states that 10 years is not temporary and emissions would exceed thresholds, resulting in a significant and unavoidable impact.

The County acknowledges the comment, and notes it does not raise any issue concerning the adequacy of the Draft EIR. For that reason, the County provides no further response to this comment.

I -326-25 The comment states that the reason so many units are proposed is to cover the costs associated with construction. The comment states that the County rejected the Merriam Mountains project and the original developers sold the land "dirt cheap" to the new developers.

The County acknowledges the comment and notes it expresses the opinions of the commentator, and does not raise an issue related to the adequacy of any specific

Comment Letter Responses

section or analysis of the Draft EIR or within the meaning of CEQA. 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.

- I -326-26** The comment states that the Draft EIR includes a curious statistic, that the development under existing zoning would include 2,008,116 square feet of commercial space. The comment states that this number is very specific, suggesting it is based off another proposal and requests that information to justify this claim be presented. The comment states that it is illogical that 99 homes under the General Plan would cause more vehicle trips than the proposed project.

Regarding the calculation of existing yields, Section 1.6.1, Existing Land Use Designations, of the Specific Plan (Appendix C to the EIR) outlines how the residential, office, and commercial yields were calculated for the project Site based on the existing General Plan land use designations and existing zoning. Table 1, Commercial and Residential Yield Analysis (Existing Land Use Regulations), of the Specific Plan shows that, based on a floor area ratio of 0.70 for 4.6 acres of the area designated as C-1 and 0.80 for the 53.6 acres of the area designated as C-2 under the County's General Plan, up to 2,008,116 square feet of commercial and office space are permitted on the project Site. These calculations are based on the gross acreage and the maximum allowable floor area ratio of the land within these two zones.

- I -326-27** The comment states that it is illogical that 99 homes under the General Plan would use more water than the proposed project.

Please refer to Table 3-2 and 3-3 of the Water Supply Assessment, Appendix S of the Draft EIR. The 2015 UWMP and the WSA account for the Newland Sierra project's projected water demand based on County-approved General Plan land uses and zoning maps and VWD's water demand factors in compliance with Water Code Sections 10910(c)(2) (see, e.g., 2015 UWMP, pages 4-2 through 4-3). The County, as lead agency, may use the 2015 UWMP and the project's WSA (see Draft EIR, Appendix S).

The County acknowledges the comment and notes it expresses the opinions of the commentator, and does not raise an issue related to the adequacy of any specific section or analysis of the Draft EIR. 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.

- I -326-28** The comment states that neither the above traffic or water usage claim was included in the Draft EIR.

Comment Letter Responses

Please refer to **Response to Comment I-326-26 and I-326-27.**

I -326-29 The comment states that big box retail, as proposed in the General Plan, are not large water users.

Please refer to **Response to Comment I-326-27.**

I -326-30 The commenter explains that they have spoken with an attorney who represents Golden Door and stated that the project site would only be likely to yield 80,000 square feet of commercial space. The comment states that coincidentally, Newland has proposed 81,000 square feet of commercial at the Town Center portion of the project.

Please refer to **Response to Comment I-326-26.**

I -326-31 The commenter asks if Newland has intentionally misled the citizens and County with the estimate of 2,008,116 square feet of commercial space in the General Plan scenario.

Please refer to **Response to Comment I-326-26.**

I -326-32 The comment states that the project is incompatible with the character of the surrounding communities and would be better sited in an urban area near public transportation and an adequate road network.

The County acknowledges the comment and notes it expresses the opinions of the commentator, and does not raise an issue related to the adequacy of any specific section or analysis of the Draft EIR. 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.

I -326-33 The comment states that the most appropriate use of the property is what the General Plan calls for.

The County acknowledges the comment and notes it expresses the opinions of the commentator, and does not raise an issue related to the adequacy of any specific section or analysis of the Draft EIR. 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.

I -326-34 The comment states that the project would cause disruption and the public expenditure of millions of dollars, which would be avoided if the General Plan was adhered to.

Comment Letter Responses

The County acknowledges the comment and notes it expresses the opinions of the commentator, and does not raise an issue related to the adequacy of any specific section or analysis of the Draft EIR. 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.

- I -326-35** The comment states that the project would take 10 years to build and is too long for people in the area to tolerate. The comment states that plans for Caltrans to redesign the I-15/Deer Springs Road interchange do not exist; therefore, it is unknown how long it would take to make these improvements. The comment states that the project should not be approved until that issue is resolved.

The project has identified feasible mitigation in the form of building a new interchange and that mitigation measure is identified herein as M-TR-1. The process of implementing the mitigation for the interchange is subject to a three-phase process under the jurisdiction of Caltrans. The first phase involves the preparation of a Project Initiation Document (PID) consisting of a Project Study Report-Project Development Support (PSR-PDS) document. The purpose of the PSR-PDS document is to define the purpose and need for any proposed improvements, identify a reasonable range of alternatives (i.e., interchange configurations), and develop an action plan for implementation of the improvements. In 2014, in response to the project's traffic impact analysis, which identified significant direct and cumulative impacts to the Interchange, the project applicant initiated the PID process with Caltrans to begin evaluating different configurations for mitigating impacts to the Interchange.

After completion of the PID phase and approval of the PSR-PDS document, the process advances to the second phase known as the Project Approval and Environmental Document (PA&ED) process. The PA&ED process includes an appropriate CEQA/NEPA environmental document for the proposed improvements, including consideration of alternative configurations and a Project Report (PR), which constitutes an engineering technical document that serves as the basis for detailed construction plans.

At the conclusion of the PA&ED process, Caltrans will select an Interchange configuration and the process enters the third phase, which involves the Plans Specification and Engineering Phase (PS&E), where detailed engineering documents and construction plans are prepared for the Interchange. Finally, the PS&E phase is followed by the acquisition, if any, of any required right-of-way and construction of the new Interchange.

All aspects included in the process of implementing the mitigation for the Interchange improvements are subject to Caltrans' review, oversight, and approval. As of this

Comment Letter Responses

writing, Caltrans is within the first PID phase. Caltrans has not completed this phase nor initiated the PA&ED phase. To date, the PSR-PDS document includes preliminary interchange alternatives consisting of an expanded diamond interchange, a diverging diamond interchange, and a roundabout interchange.

The comment does not raise any specific issue regarding that analysis and, therefore, no more specific response can be provided or is required. 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 -326-36 The comment states that the density for the project is speculative and higher densities have been rejected in the past. The comment states that the project is out of compliance with the General Plan.

Please refer to **Topical Response LU 1**. The comment does not raise any specific issue regarding that analysis and, therefore, no more specific response can be provided or is required. 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.