

3.3 Land Use and Planning

This section describes the existing land use and planning setting of the proposed project, identifies associated regulatory requirements, evaluates potential land use impacts, and identifies mitigation measures related to implementation of the Newland Sierra Project (proposed project or project). A full land use consistency analysis was conducted for the proposed project and is included as Appendix DD.

Comments received in response to the Notice of Preparation (NOP) included concerns regarding consistency with the General Plan and smart growth principles, community character, leapfrog development, and neighborhood compatibility. A copy of the NOP and comment letters received in response to the NOP is included in Appendix A of this EIR.

3.3.1 Existing Conditions

3.3.1.1 *Existing Land Uses*

As described in Chapter 1 of this EIR, the proposed project Site is currently undeveloped. A number of dirt roads, access trails, and service roads for existing water infrastructure traverse the project Site. Portions of the Site have been and continue to be used for various unauthorized land uses, including off-roading, motorcycling, shooting, occasional dumping, horseback riding, hiking, and mountain biking. An abandoned quarry is located in the northwest portion of the Site fronting Twin Oaks Valley Road, and an abandoned private landing strip is located in the north central portion of the Site.

Surrounding residential uses to the north, west, and south of the project Site include large-lot, single-family residential development and agricultural uses. Many of the prominent ridges and valleys surrounding the Site are occupied by existing homes. Lawrence Welk Village and the community of Hidden Meadows are located to the east of the project Site across Interstate (I) 15. South of the Site is a mobile home park, the Golden Door Properties LLC, and large-lot residential development along the border of the City of San Marcos and the unincorporated portion of San Diego County (County).

Development along Deer Springs Road generally consists of lots featuring one- or two-story homes and, typically, several accessory structures surrounded by landscaping, disturbed vegetation, and vacant fields. Generally, lots are visibly maintained, and landscaping appears to be tended to on a regular basis, but some property owners have elected to use the vacant portions of their property for the storage of personal items, including seemingly inoperable vehicles and trailers. Although generally hidden from view due to perimeter fencing and landscaping, the multiple buildings, gardens, and groves of the Golden Door Properties LLC are also located along Deer Springs Road.

Development along Twin Oaks Valley Road generally consists of 1- to 10-acre lots featuring modest one-story single-family residential structures intermixed with tall oak, pine, eucalyptus, and palm trees east and west of Twin Oaks Valley Road. A community market, floral stands, tool repair shop, active agricultural fields, and Twin Oaks Elementary School are also located along the Twin Oaks Valley Road corridor. In addition to nurseries and farm lands located farther east and west of the corridor, small, gated residential development and denser, tract-style single-family residential neighborhoods are located along Twin Oaks Valley Road. The North Twin Oaks Valley Road landscape consists of undeveloped, hilly terrain; large nurseries and growing operations; active agricultural fields; large residential lots featuring expansive two-story homes, equestrian rings and stable facilities; and more modest one- and two-story homes.

3.3.1.2 Land Use Element Regional Category

The proposed project Site lies within the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan area and the Bonsall Community Plan area, as shown in Figure 1-38, Existing Regional Land Use Categories, Chapter 1, of this EIR. The existing General Plan Regional Category for the proposed project is Village, Semi-Rural, and Rural Lands. The proposed project includes approximately 1,888 acres in the North County Metropolitan Plan area and about 97 acres in the Bonsall Community Plan area.

The 1,985-acre project Site currently includes four land use designations: General Commercial (4.6 acres), Office Professional (53.6 acres), Semi-Rural 10 (19.6 acres), and Rural Land 20 (1,907.8 acres). Of those 1,985 acres, 1,888 acres are located within the community of Twin Oaks in the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan area, and the remaining 97 acres are located in the Bonsall Community Plan area. The 97 acres in the Bonsall Community Plan area are entirely designated with the Rural Lands 20 Land Use Designation and are designated open space in the proposed Newland Sierra Specific Plan. Please refer to EIR Chapter 1, Figure 1-40, Existing Community Plan Land Use Designations.

The project Site is zoned General Commercial (C36), Office Professional (C30), Rural Residential (RR), Limited Agricultural (A70), Extractive (S82), and General Rural (S92) Use Regulations. The 97 acres within the Bonsall Community Plan area are zoned Rural Residential (RR), as shown in Figure 1-42, Existing Zoning, Chapter 1, of this EIR.

3.3.1.3 Community and Subregional Planning Areas

From 2000 to 2007, all of the community planning areas and subregional planning areas in unincorporated San Diego County experienced some growth (County of San Diego 2011a). Overall, the unincorporated County of San Diego (County) population grew from 442,919 in 2000 to 481,216 in 2007 (or 9 percent). Historically, the fastest-growing areas were those west of

the San Diego County Water Authority's (Water Authority) boundary that is close to infrastructure. The project's proposed planning areas are situated within the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan area (County of San Diego 2011a).

Specifically, the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan area is located along the I-15 and State Route (SR) 78 corridors, and is approximately 56,200 acres. Primary access to and from this subregion is provided by I-15, SR-78, Deer Springs Road, Twin Oaks Valley Road, Champagne Boulevard, and Mountain Meadow Road. In addition, a Sprinter light rail station is located within the subregion near SR-78 southwest of the Twin Oaks community. With the exception of approximately 25,000 acres just east of Escondido, the majority of the subregion is located within the Water Authority's boundary, and bordered by the unincorporated community planning areas of Bonsall to the north, Valley Center to the north and east, Pala Pauma and North Mountain to the far east, and Ramona and San Dieguito to the south.

The North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan area includes the communities of Hidden Meadows and Twin Oaks, along with unincorporated territories interspersed among the cities of Escondido, San Marcos, Vista, Oceanside, and San Diego. The North County Metropolitan Subregion is in proximity to unincorporated cities (e.g., San Marcos, Vista, Oceanside) and major transportation routes (e.g., I-15). The geography of this subregion is diverse and characterized by a mixture of steep, rugged terrain, rolling hills and valleys, and agricultural land. The eastern portion of the North County Metropolitan Subregion, located near Lake Wohlford between the Valley Center and Ramona Community Plan areas, contains mostly undeveloped land with slopes greater than 50 percent and sensitive biological resources. There are also notable slopes along the I-15 corridor between the Twin Oaks and Hidden Meadows communities. Floodplains are found in the southern portion of the Twin Oaks community near San Marcos Creek and the central portion of the Hidden Meadows community near Escondido Creek.

The urbanized areas throughout much of the North County Metropolitan Subregion consist of low-density residential development with large lots ranging from 1 to 10 acres, and other areas of higher density single-family residences on lots smaller than 1 acre. Although topographically constrained areas remain largely undeveloped in the Twin Oaks and Hidden Meadows communities, both areas contain single-family residential uses on lots ranging from less than 1 acre to 10 acres. Unincorporated areas interspersed throughout various surrounding cities also are predominately single-family residential areas, but tend to have more multi-family uses. The North County Metropolitan Subregion does not have significant amounts of commercial and industrial uses because these uses are generally found within the neighboring cities (County of San Diego 2011a).

Commercial agriculture is an important industry in the North County Metropolitan Subregion. Agricultural activity includes citrus and subtropical plants and nursery production. Agriculture is found in both the Twin Oaks and Harmony Grove communities. A significant portion of land in the Harmony Grove area is currently used for livestock operations including a large egg ranch and dairy farm. Horse-keeping and other types of smaller-scale animal husbandry characterize portions of the subregion (County of San Diego 2011a).

3.3.2 Regulatory Setting

3.3.2.1 State

Natural Community Conservation Planning Act of 1991

The Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP) Act, Fish and Game Code Section 2800, is designed to conserve natural communities at the ecosystem scale while accommodating compatible land uses. The California Department of Fish Wildlife is the principal state agency implementing the NCCP program. The NCCP Act establishes a process to allow for comprehensive, regional multi-species planning in a manner that satisfies the requirements of the state and federal Endangered Species Acts (through a companion regional Habitat Conservation Plan). The NCCP program has provided the framework for the state, local governments, and private interests to protect regional biodiversity and ecosystems and ensure the long-term conservation of multiple species, while allowing for compatible and appropriate economic activity to proceed. There are currently nine approved NCCPs and 14 NCCPs in the active planning phase, which together cover more than 9.5 million acres and will provide conservation for more than 500 special-status species and a wide diversity of natural habitat throughout California.

City of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) was prepared to meet the requirements of the NCCP Act. The MSCP is a comprehensive planning program that addresses multiple species habitat needs and the preservation of native vegetation communities for a 900-square-mile area in southwestern San Diego County. It is one of the subregional habitat planning efforts in San Diego County. The MSCP allows local jurisdictions to maintain land use control and development flexibility by planning a regional preserve system. Local jurisdictions and special districts implement their respective portions of the MSCP through subarea plans, which contain the implementing mechanisms for the MSCP. The combination of the subregional MSCP and the subarea plans serve as a multiple species Habitat Conservation Plan pursuant to Section 10(a)(1)(B) of the federal Endangered Species Act, the NCCP Act, and the California Endangered Species Act.

The participating jurisdictions and special districts submit these subarea plans to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife in support of applications for development permits and management authorizations to impact listed species and other

species of special concern. Implementing agreements between the wildlife agencies and the local agency responsible for each subarea plan implement the conservation and management responsibilities, guarantees of implementation, and corresponding authorizations. The MSCP and the subarea plans, once approved, replace the interim restrictions on impacts to coastal sage scrub, as a result of the federal listing of the California gnatcatcher (*Poliioptila californica*) as a threatened species, and allows the incidental take of other covered species as specified in the plans. The Implementing Agreement between the City of San Diego and the wildlife agencies was entered into effective July 16, 1997.

The County of San Diego has completed a subarea plan for South County. The County of San Diego has also commenced preparation of a North County Subarea Plan, but it is not yet completed or adopted. The project Site is situated within the not-yet-completed North County Subarea Plan. Please refer to the discussion below regarding the Multiple Species Conservation Plan for more information.

Senate Bill 375

Senate Bill 375, the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act, coordinates land use planning, regional transportation plans, and funding priorities to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from passenger vehicle travel through better-integrated regional transportation, land use, and housing planning that provides easier access to jobs, services, public transit, and active transportation options. Senate Bill 375 specifically requires the Metropolitan Planning Organization relevant to the project Site (here, the San Diego Association of Governments [SANDAG]) to develop a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) in its Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The SCS's intent is to achieve GHG emissions reduction targets set by the California Air Resources Board by reducing vehicle miles traveled from light-duty vehicles through the development of more compact, complete, and efficient communities.

For the area under SANDAG's jurisdiction, including the project Site, the California Air Resources Board adopted regional targets for the reduction of mobile source GHG emissions. Those targets are 7 percent for 2020 and 13 percent for 2035. In preparing its 2015 SCS, also known as San Diego Forward: The Regional Plan, SANDAG stated it would achieve (and exceed) the region's GHG targets, with a 15 percent per-capita reduction by 2020 and a 21 percent per-capita reduction by 2035 (SANDAG 2015). In response, the California Air Resources Board accepted SANDAG's determination that its SCS would achieve its 2020 and 2035 GHG emissions reduction targets.

3.3.2.2 Local

Regional Comprehensive Plan

The SANDAG Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) is the strategic planning framework for the San Diego region. It provides a broad context in which local and regional decisions can be made that foster a healthy environment, a vibrant economy, and a high quality of life for all residents. It balances regional population, housing, and employment growth with habitat preservation, agriculture, open space, and infrastructure needs. The RCP calls for a preferred planning concept that focuses on the following (SANDAG 2004):

1. Improving connections between land use and transportation plans using smart growth principles;
2. Using land use and transportation plans to guide decisions regarding environmental and public facility investments; and
3. Focusing on collaboration and incentives to achieve regional goals and objectives.

SANDAG monitors performance of RCP implementation. The most recent Biennial Performance Monitoring Report was completed for 2012–2013. Based on the data collected for the 2012 to 2013 Monitoring Report, the indicators illustrate those areas where the region appears to be moving in the right direction and those where improvement is needed.

Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy

On October 28, 2011, the SANDAG Board of Directors adopted the 2050 RTP/SCS, which articulates future plans for San Diego's regional transportation system over the next 40 years. The SCS, which is included as part of the RTP, details the regional strategy for reducing GHG emissions to state-mandated levels over time as required by Senate Bill 375, including measures encouraging infill development. The San Diego region is the first in California to produce an RTP with a SCS (SANDAG 2011). The 2011 RTP/SCS is currently the subject of litigation, which is now pending before the California Supreme Court in *Cleveland National Forest Foundation v. San Diego Assn. of Governments* (No. S223603). The trial court invalidated SANDAG's EIR, and the trial court ruling was affirmed on appeal. SANDAG filed a petition for review with the Supreme Court, which was accepted. The Supreme Court is limiting its review to whether or not an EIR for a regional transportation plan must include an analysis of the plan's consistency with the GHG emission reduction goals reflected in Executive Order No. S-3-05, so as to comply with CEQA.

County of San Diego General Plan

The County General Plan Update is the first comprehensive update of the General Plan since the 1970s. The General Plan Update, which applies to all unincorporated portions of the County, directs population growth and plans for infrastructure needs, development, and resource protection. It will guide the growth and development of the unincorporated County using planning principles designed to create “livable” communities and balance environmental objectives with the needs of adequate infrastructure, housing, agriculture, and economic viability. The General Plan Update will focus population growth in the western areas of the County where infrastructure and services are available to reduce the potential for growth in the eastern areas. The objectives of this population distribution strategy are to (1) facilitate efficient, orderly growth by containing development within areas potentially served by the Water Authority and in proximity to existing infrastructure; (2) protect natural resources through the reduction of population capacity in sensitive areas; (3) reduce overall vehicle miles traveled and the associated GHG emissions that contribute to climate change; and (4) retain or enhance the character of communities within the unincorporated County (County of San Diego 2011b).

The northwest and southwest areas of the unincorporated County are more developed than the eastern areas. Most new development is directed toward these more developed areas, including the northwest North County Metropolitan Subregion, where the project Site is situated (County of San Diego 2011b). Compared to existing conditions, the majority of countywide growth is to be directed toward the western areas of the unincorporated County within the Water Authority’s boundary¹ (County of San Diego 2011b).

As reported in the County’s General Plan Update EIR (County of San Diego 2011b), the North County Metropolitan Subregion will experience a significant increase in the number of housing units between 2008 and build-out of the General Plan (82.6 percent) (County of San Diego 2011b, Table 1-3). During this same period, the County’s projected population growth for the North County Metropolitan Subregion will increase by 92.5 percent (County of San Diego 2011b, Table 1-4).

The General Plan’s seven mandatory elements are Land Use, Mobility, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, and Safety. The County General Plan Update contains six elements because the Conservation and Open Space components are combined into one. The General Plan is part of a regulatory framework that includes federal and state laws, regional and inter-regional plans, community plans, and other County policies and ordinances.

¹ The project Site is located within the Water Authority’s boundary.

As stated, the General Plan Update includes the following elements (County of San Diego 2011c):

- **Land Use Element:** Designates the general location and intensity of housing, business, industry, open space, education, public buildings and grounds, waste disposal facilities and other land uses.
- **Mobility Element:** Identifies the general location and extent of existing and proposed major roads, transportation routes, terminals, and other public utilities and facilities. It must be correlated with the Land Use Element.
- **Conservation and Open Space Element:** Addressed the conservation, development, and use of natural resources including water, forests, soils, rivers, mineral deposits, and open space.
- **Housing Element:** Comprehensive assessment of current and projected housing needs for all economic segments of the community and region. It sets forth local housing policies and programs to implement those policies.
- **Safety Element:** Establishes policies and programs to protect the community from risks associated with seismic, geologic, flood, and wildfire hazards.
- **Noise Element:** Identifies and appraises noise problems within the community and forms the basis for distributing new noise-sensitive land uses.

The General Plan Update is based on 10 interrelated principles (objectives) that provide guidance for accommodating future growth while retaining and enhancing the County's rural character, economy, and unique communities, as well as minimizing the environmental impacts of future development. These principles serve as the proposed project's objectives (County of San Diego 2011b):

1. Support a reasonable share of projected regional population growth;
2. Promote sustainability by locating new development near existing infrastructure, services, and jobs;
3. Reinforce the vitality, local economy, and individual character of existing communities while balancing housing, employment, and recreational opportunities;
4. Promote environmental stewardship that protects the range of natural resources and habitats that uniquely define the County's character and ecological importance;
5. Ensure that development accounts for physical constraints and the natural hazards of the land;
6. Provide and support a multi-modal transportation network that enhances connectivity and supports community development patterns;

7. Maintain environmentally sustainable communities and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that contribute to climate change;
8. Preserve agriculture as an integral component of the region's economy, character, and open space network;
9. Minimize public costs of infrastructure and services and correlate their timing with new development; and
10. Recognize community and stakeholder interests while striving for consensus.

A detailed list of County General Plan policies and the proposed project's consistency with those policies is found in this EIR, Table 3.3-1, General Plan and Subregional Plan Consistency Analysis.

Community Plans

Each planning area has a community or subregional plan, which supplements the County General Plan by focusing on a particular planning area. Community and subregional plans contain information and policies concerning land use, housing, circulation, conservation, public facilities and services, recreation, and community character. The majority of the Community is within the Twin Oaks community of the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan area, and a portion is within the Bonsall Community Planning area. Specifically, 97 acres of the project Site, which would be designated as open space, would be located in the Bonsall Community Plan. Each Community and Subregional Plan is described below (County of San Diego 2011d):

- North County Metropolitan Subregion is composed of areas interspersed among the cities of Escondido, San Diego, San Marcos, Vista and Oceanside with the most easterly portion adjacent to Valley Center. The North County Metropolitan Subregion includes the communities of Hidden Meadows and Twin Oaks.
 - The Hidden Meadows community is approximately 10,177 acres and is located east of I-15, adjacent to the Valley Center plan area to the north and portions of the city of Escondido to the south and east.
 - The Twin Oaks community is approximately 7,835 acres and located west of I-15, adjacent to the Bonsall plan area to the north and the cities of Escondido and San Marcos to the south, and a small portion of the city of Vista to the west.

The Bonsall Community Plan encompasses approximately 21,042 acres at the foothills of the Peninsular Mountain Range. The community of Bonsall is characterized by a series of hills, valleys, and drainage areas. This hill and valley topography has resulted in a predominance of low-density estate-type residential lots and agricultural land uses. Also characterizing the Bonsall

Community Plan area is its golf courses and equestrian facilities. Commercial activity in Bonsall is centered in the Mission Road/Olive Hill Road and SR-76 area.

I-15 Corridor Subregional Plan

The I-15 corridor extends approximately 20 miles from the Escondido city limits to the Riverside County line. It contains the 0.5-acre to 2-mile “viewshed” area on either side of I-15, which is generally what can be seen while driving along the corridor. It encompasses approximately 12,600 acres and passes through five different plan areas: North County Metropolitan, Bonsall, Valley Center, Fallbrook, and Rainbow. The I-15 Corridor Plan does not replace the aforementioned plans, but is implemented through amendments to these area plans, as appropriate. The “B” Design Review Area Special Designator is applied to properties within the corridor, which requires the preparation of a Site Plan in accordance with the Scenic Preservation Guidelines. The eastern portion of the project Site has an existing “B” Special Area Designator, as shown in Figure 1-44, Existing North County Metropolitan I-15 Design Corridor, Chapter 1, of this EIR. As part of the proposed General Plan Amendment, the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan I-15 Design Corridor map would be amended to include only the areas of the project visible from I-15, as shown in Figure 1-45, Proposed North County Metropolitan I-15 Design Corridor, in Chapter 1 of this EIR.

County of San Diego General Plan Annual Progress Report

Recently, the County issued its 2015 General Plan Annual Progress Report (County of San Diego 2016a) summarizing planning activities in the unincorporated portions of the County between January 1 and December 31, 2015. According to Government Code Section 65400(a)(2), counties must submit annual progress reports to the State Office of Planning and Research and the State Housing and Community Development Department on the status of General Plan implementation, paying particular attention to the status and progress of implementing the Housing Element. The Annual Progress Report must include information pertaining to the status of the General Plan and its implementation; the County’s progress in meeting its share of the regional housing needs; local efforts to remove governmental constraints to the maintenance, improvement, and development of housing; and the degree to which the County’s approved General Plan complies with state guidelines. The Annual Progress Report states the following (County of San Diego 2016a):

- **Land Use Element:** The County continues to implement planning efforts that facilitate development in accordance with the community development model.
- **Mobility Element:** The County continues to implement planning efforts to facilitate a safe and multi-modal road network.

- **Conservation and Open Space Element:** The County continues to implement planning efforts to purchase preserve lands and agriculture conservation easements; reduce greenhouse gas emissions under the Climate Action Plan; and conserve energy.
- **Housing Element:** The County continues to make progress on meeting regional housing needs and removing governmental constraints to the development of affordable housing. From 2010 through 2015, a total of 3,175 housing units were constructed or permitted.
- **Safety Element:** The County continues to implement safety regulations when processing project applications.
- **Noise Element:** The County continues to enforce its noise compatibility guidelines and noise standards when evaluating proposed development projects.

County of San Diego Zoning Ordinance

The Zoning Ordinance is applicable to all of the unincorporated areas of San Diego County. The use and employment of all land and any buildings or structures located on the land and the construction, reconstruction, alteration, expansion, or relocation of any building or structure on the land must conform to all regulations applicable to the zone in which the land is located. No land, building, structure, or premises can be used for any purpose or in any manner other than is permitted in the zone in which such land, building, structure, or premise is located.

Proposed Newland Sierra Specific Plan

California Government Code Section 65450 authorizes cities and counties to adopt a specific plan. The proposed Newland Sierra Specific Plan provides the land use regulations and guidelines governing the permitted land uses, densities, maximum residential units, required public facilities, infrastructure, open space, and amenities for the Newland Sierra planned Community in compliance with applicable County policies and regulations. It is anticipated that precise refinements such as final road and trail alignments, minor changes in planning area configuration would occur during development of the final map and Site plans. Such refinements, with approval of the Director of Planning & Development Services, would not require amendments to the Specific Plan provided the number of residential dwelling units is not exceeded and the overall character of the project is maintained.

Sphere of Influences

The primary land use policy of the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan is to increase City/County planning cooperation to ensure that future County decisions within the spheres of influence (SOI) will take each city's planning objectives into consideration. The City of Escondido's SOI and City of San Marcos' SOI are shown in Figure 3.3-1, Sphere of Influence.

Within the City of Escondido's General Plan, the City of Escondido notes that the County is responsible for planning within the unincorporated areas that coincide with the City of Escondido's SOI. Similarly, the City of San Marco's General Plan notes County land within its SOI. Coordination with the City of Escondido and the City of San Marcos has minimized conflicts with respective general plans and planning efforts within each city. Each city's concerns and planning efforts have been taken into consideration as the project has moved through the planning process.

City of Escondido General Plan

The County of San Diego is responsible for planning unincorporated areas of the County, which includes approximately 27,200 acres within Escondido's General Plan area. The County General Plan establishes the future growth and development pattern, focusing population growth in the western portion of the County near jurisdictions where infrastructure and services are available. Coordinating land use designations in the unincorporated area allows the city and the County to adequately plan for anticipated facility and service requirements (City of Escondido 2012). The City of Escondido's General Plan includes "Quality of Life Standards," in addition to goals and policies. The Quality of Life Standards were developed to establish minimum thresholds of service levels for various public improvements and facilities. The City of Escondido's Quality of Life Standards are identified below (City of Escondido 2012):

Quality of Life Standard 1: Traffic and Transportation. Circulation Element Streets and intersections shall be planned and developed to achieve a minimum level of service "C" defined by the Highway Capacity Manual as amended or updated, or such other national standard as deemed appropriate by the city. In addition, the city shall support public transportation facilities through such measures as requiring right-of-way for commuter rail or park-and-ride facilities, transit stops or facilities, or for other transportation needs.

Quality of Life Standard 2: Public Schools. The community shall have sufficient classroom space to meet state mandated space requirements and teacher/student ratios, with student attendance calculated on prescribed state and/or local school board standards. Implementation of this standard shall be the responsibility of the school districts and other appropriate agencies.

Quality of Life Standard 3: Fire Service. In urbanized areas of the city, an initial response time of seven and one-half (7½) minutes for all structure fire and emergency Paramedic Assessment Unit (PAU) calls and a maximum response time of ten (10) minutes for supporting companies shall be maintained. A minimum of seven (7) total fire stations each staffed with a PSU engine company

shall be in place prior to General Plan build-out. For outlying areas beyond a five (5) minute travel time or further than three (3) miles from the nearest fire station, all new structures shall be protected by fire sprinkler systems or an equivalent system as approved by the Fire Chief.

Quality of Life Standard 4: Police Service. The city shall maintain personnel staffing levels based on community generated workloads and officer availability.

Quality of Life Standard 5: Wastewater System. The city wastewater system shall have adequate conveyance pipelines, pumping, outfall, and secondary treatment capacities to meet both normal and peak demands to avoid wastewater spills affecting stream courses and reservoirs.

Quality of Life Standard 6: Parks Systems. The city shall provide a minimum of 11.8 acres of active and passive parkland per 1,000 dwelling units. This parkland acreage shall involve a minimum of 5.9 acres of developed active neighborhood and community parks in addition to 5.9 acres of passive park land and/or open space for habitat preservation per 1,000 dwelling units.

Quality of Life Standard 7: Library Service. The public library system shall maintain a stock and staffing of two (2) collection items per capita and three (3) public library staff per 8,000 residents of the City of Escondido. The city shall provide appropriate library facilities with a minimum of 1.6 square feet of library facility floor area per dwelling unit of the city prior to buildout of the General Plan where feasible.

Quality of Life Standard 8: Open Space System. A system of open space corridors, easements, acquisition programs and trails shall be established in the Resource Conservation Element. Sensitive lands including permanent bodies of water, floodways, wetlands, riparian and woodland areas, and slopes over 35 percent inclination shall be preserved.

Quality of Life Standard 9: Air Quality. The city shall establish a Climate Action Plan with feasible and appropriate local policies and measures aimed at reducing regional greenhouse gas emissions.

Quality of Life Standard 10: Water System. The city shall maintain provisions for an adequate water supply, pipeline capacity and storage capacity to meet normal and emergency situations and shall have the capacity to provide a minimum of 540 gallons per day per household or as established by the city's Water Master Plan. Federal and state drinking water quality standards shall be maintained.

Quality of Life Standard 11: The city shall implement programs and support efforts to increase Escondido's median household income and per capita wage. Programs shall focus on actively fostering entrepreneurial opportunities, recruiting new businesses, and encouraging expansion of existing businesses to increase employment densities.

City of San Marcos General Plan

The planning area for San Marcos encompasses the corporate city limits and portions of the County's unincorporated land within the City of San Marcos's SOI. The planning area encompasses approximately 21,162 acres (33.06 square miles), including approximately 15,579 acres (24.3 square miles) within the City of San Marcos's corporate limits and 5,586 acres (8.73 square miles) of unincorporated land within the City of San Marcos's SOI. The General Plan promotes development of strong working relationships between the City of San Marcos and other entities, such as SANDAG, San Diego County, California State University San Marcos (CSUSM), San Marcos Unified School District, local businesses, nonprofit organizations, and other government agencies, to accomplish San Marcos's sustainability goals. The City of San Marcos created a set of Guiding Themes that encapsulate the community's desires and visions for the City of San Marcos's future. The Guiding Themes for the San Marcos General Plan are provided below (City of San Marcos 2012):

Creating a Vibrant Destination City: A central gathering place that is alive with people, shops, restaurants, events, and street life is vitally important to the San Marcos community. Residents share the desire for a "downtown" that attracts people region wide while supporting the local needs of residents.

A Strong Local Economy and Employment Base: The General Plan contains strategies to accommodate a diversity of businesses, an expanded employment base, and greater housing choices, while focusing on the retention of existing and attraction of new businesses that offer high-paying jobs. Opportunities to accommodate business expansion, relocation, or entrepreneurship, and a well-educated workforce are key advantages San Marcos offers.

Connecting People to Places: The General Plan creates a framework where people can connect to the places where they want to travel through an extensive, efficient, and safe network of roadways, transit services, shuttles, bikeways, pedestrian trails, and well-designed sidewalks.

An Educational and Academic Hub: The citizens of San Marcos recognize the academic and financial enrichment that Palomar Community College, CSUSM, and other higher educational institutions provide the community.

A City with Choices: Providing more variety in the City for shopping, dining experiences, cultural venues, entertainment activities, and community events is highly valued by the community. Residents cite the need to frequently travel to destinations outside of San Marcos to meet these needs.

Sustaining Environmental Quality: Residents strongly support the preservation of additional open space, maintaining the City's scenic ridgelines, and expanding the wealth of parks and trails already found in the community.

Building a Greener Community: Addressing water conservation, solar energy, and enhanced recycling opportunities, and promoting energy conservation practices are all strategies that are valued by community members. The General Plan considers a range of environmental initiatives to create a greener San Marcos while taking the associated costs and benefits of these strategies into account.

Healthy and Safe Community: Maintaining very low crime rates and addressing crime prevention through environmental design are addressed in the General Plan.

Continuing Our Agricultural Heritage: Preserving the City's agricultural lands provides opportunities to further local food production and support local farmer's markets, strengthening the City's economy and appeal.

San Diego County Multiple Species Conservation Program

The San Diego County MSCP is a long-term regional conservation plan designed to establish a connected preserve system that ensures the long-term survival of sensitive plant and animal species and protects the native vegetation found throughout San Diego County. The MSCP addresses the potential impacts of urban growth, natural habitat loss, and species endangerment, and creates a plan to mitigate for the potential loss of sensitive species and their habitats (County of San Diego 1998). The County has implemented the MSCP through its South County Subarea Plan adopted in 1997 and Implementing Agreement effective March 1998. The County is currently working on a plan for the northern part of the unincorporated area (draft North County MSCP) that extends from the area around the incorporated cities of Oceanside, Encinitas, San Marcos, Vista, and Escondido, east to Cleveland National Forest and north to Riverside County. The third phase would involve all of the land not included within the first two subarea plans (i.e., South and North County plans). The East County Plan would cover the land from Alpine east to Imperial County and north to Riverside County.

In addition to the Subarea Plan, the Biological Mitigation Ordinance (adopted March 1998) and the Implementing Agreement between the County and Wildlife Agencies (signed March 1998) are the documents used to implement the County's Subarea Plan. The County Biological Mitigation Ordinance regulates implementation of the County's Subarea Plan. The Biological Mitigation Ordinance provides incentives to develop within the less-important habitat areas and to preserve lands identified as biologically important, and contains specific provisions that address the need to protect important populations of rare and endangered species.

The proposed project is within the North County MSCP area, and the site is designated as a "Proposed Hardline Area" in the context of the plan, while the land surrounding the site is designated as Pre-Approved Mitigation Area, or PAMA. The draft PAMA covers approximately 165,294 acres. The proposed project is located within the approximately 7,640-acre San Marcos–Merriam Mountains Core Area of the draft North County MSCP.

The Planning Agreement between the County and the Wildlife Agencies (County of San Diego 2008) is applicable to the project unless the draft North County MSCP is approved. Since the draft North County MSCP is not currently approved, the project has been planned in accordance with the planning principles of the draft North County MSCP as expressed by the Preliminary Conservation Objectives outlined in the Planning Agreement for the draft North County MSCP (County of San Diego 2008).

San Diego County Subdivision Ordinance

Pursuant to the State of California's Subdivision Map Act, the County's Subdivision Ordinance (Section 81.401 et seq. of the County Code of Regulatory Ordinances) regulates the division of property in the County. The ordinance addresses design, standards, and required improvements for approval of proposed subdivisions and tentative maps, and requires minimum lot sizes, setback designators, and lot configurations appropriate for supporting specific land uses. Pursuant to the Ordinance, every lot shall contain the minimum lot area specified in the Zoning Ordinance for the zone in which the lot is located at the time the final map is submitted to the Board of Supervisors for approval.

San Diego County Resource Protection Ordinance

The Resource Protection Ordinance (RPO), administered by the County, regulates biological and other natural resources within the County. These resources include wetlands, wetland buffers, floodways, floodplain fringe, steep slope lands, sensitive habitat lands, and significant prehistoric or historic sites. Generally, the ordinance stipulates that no impacts may occur to wetlands except for scientific research; removal of diseased or invasive exotic plant species; wetland creation and habitat restoration; revegetation and management projects; and crossings of wetlands for roads,

driveways, or trails/pathways when certain conditions are met. The same exemptions apply to impacts to wetland buffer areas and improvements necessary to protect adjacent wetlands. Sensitive habitat lands are unique vegetation communities, support sensitive species, are essential to the healthy functioning of a balanced natural ecosystem, and/or are wildlife corridors. Impacts to sensitive habitat lands are permitted when impacts have been reduced as much as possible and mitigation provides at least an equal benefit to the affected species (County of San Diego 2007).

San Diego County Community Trails Master Plan

On January 12, 2005, the County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved adoption of the County Trails Program (CTP) and the Community Trails Master Plan (CTMP). The CTP is used to develop a system of interconnected regional and community trails and pathways. The components of the CTP include a Regional Trails Plan, the CTMP, a new Trails Ordinance (San Diego Code of Regulatory Ordinances Sections 812.101 through 812.214), and amendments to the County Subdivision Ordinance (County of San Diego Code of Regulatory Ordinances Title 8, Division 1) regarding the dedication and improvement of trails.

The CTMP is the implementing document for the trails program and provides a plan for the development of the trails and pathway system, also known as multi-use, non-motorized public facilities. These trails and pathways are intended to provide recreation, transportation, health, and quality of life benefits associated with hiking, biking, and horseback riding throughout the County. The CTMP's main focus is on its development and management guidelines for community-level trail systems. The Trails Ordinance is Appendix E of the CTMP and provides rules and regulations for the use of County trails and pathways to maximize the public's use and enjoyment of such trails. The County Subdivision Ordinance was amended to make trail dedication a requirement in areas where trails have been identified in the CTP.

County of San Diego Board of Supervisors Policies

The following County Board of Supervisors policies are relevant to the proposed project (County of San Diego 2016b):

- **Policy I-17:** This policy is in place to ensure that all projects involving a zoning reclassification provide public improvements and facilities with the associated lands, easements, and right-of-way necessary to ensure adequate public services and utilities will be provided to serve the project.
- **Policy I-18:** This policy requires all projects pursuing a Major or Minor Use Permit that require any road improvements, drainage, sewage, fire protection, or other public facilities and improvements (including the land, easements, and rights-of-way

therefore) to provide adequate infrastructure and services to the project to ensure that the establishment or maintenance of the requested use will not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare or to the property or improvements in the vicinity.

- **Policy I-63:** General Plan Amendment and Zoning Guidelines, specifies the manner in which amendments to the San Diego County General Plan are initiated. The policy seeks to limit growth by restricting planned density increases to areas that currently have the services to support such growth.
- **Policy I-73:** Hillside Development Policy, establishes hillside development standards to protect visual qualities of significant hillsides and ridges. The purpose of this policy is to minimize the effects of disturbing natural terrain and provide for creative design for hillside developments. The policy provides guidelines to assist the decision makers in the evaluation of hillside development in San Diego County. This policy is intended to serve as a guideline and supplement to any other applicable regulations, including the RPO. This policy also provides advance notice of what may be required when reviewing development proposals in hillside areas.
- **Policy I-84:** The project is subject to Board of Supervisors Policy I-84, which requires that adequate facilities are available concurrent with need before giving final approval to subdivisions and certain other projects requiring discretionary approval by the County. Since 1980, the County has been using standardized letters for the following reasons:
 1. To obtain information from special districts and other facility providers concerning facility availability;
 2. To ensure that this information is provided to the appropriate decision-making body; and
 3. To provide data to the facility provider so that it can determine what capital improvements are required to serve the project. In order to use standard forms effectively, it is necessary to specify what these form letters should contain and to clarify how they will be used.
- **Policy I-136:** This policy requires the County to consider applications requesting the formation of community facilities districts and the issuance of bonds to finance eligible public facilities pursuant to the Mello-Roos Community Facilities Act of 1982 (Mello-Roos Act), as amended. Public facilities and services eligible to be financed by a District include the following:
 - Streets, highways, and bridges
 - Traffic signals, street lighting, and safety lighting
 - Road maintenance

- Parks, pathways, and recreation facilities, including golf courses
- Sanitary sewer, storm drain, potable and reclaimed water facilities, and other public utilities
- Flood control facilities
- Governmental facilities
- Fire and police stations, and paramedic facilities
- Libraries
- Operation and maintenance of recreation facilities including golf courses
- Biological mitigation measures involving land acquisition, dedication and revegetation
- Public rights-of-way landscaping
- **Policy J-33:** Use of the Board of Supervisors' Power of Eminent Domain on Behalf of Private Developers, defines the limitation and circumstances in which the Board of Supervisors can use the power of eminent domain on behalf of project applicants to acquire real property rights for public facilities.
- **Policy J-34:** This policy is intended to ensure Mobility Element road improvements required for major subdivisions, large-scale projects, and major use permits will be completed. Pursuant to this policy, projects are required to complete a traffic study in accordance with the County guidelines to identify project impacts to Mobility Element roads and identify required improvements and, if necessary due to public health, safety and welfare concerns, alternative improvements.

3.3.3 Analysis of Project Effects and Determination as to Significance

3.3.3.1 *Physically Divide a Community*

Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

The following significance guidelines from Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines apply to the direct, indirect, and cumulative impact analyses because the County does not have specific guidelines for determining significance relative to land use.

A proposed project would result in a significant impact to land use if:

- The proposed project would physically divide an established community.

Analysis

Project's that are typically at risk for dividing an established community include airports, freeways, railroad tracks, and sports stadiums. Residential projects, such as the proposed project, typically improve connectivity throughout a community rather than divide it. It is not anticipated that the proposed project would physically divide an established community. The project Site is bound on the east by I-15, which separates the proposed project from the Hidden Meadows Community, and no portion of the proposed development areas would be within the Bonsall Community, which borders the project Site to the north. The project Site is located on the eastern fringes of the community of Twin Oaks in the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan area, and is surrounded by single-family residential developments along the western border of the project Site.

Furthermore, the project Site is currently undeveloped. Numerous dirt roads and trails provide access to existing water infrastructure within the project Site. Portions of the Site have been and continue to be used for various unauthorized land uses, including off-roading, motorcycling, shooting, occasional dumping, horseback riding, hiking, and mountain biking. Because the project Site is undeveloped with limited access, no established community exists within the project Site. In addition, although the project would include several off-site components (e.g., roadway and utilities infrastructure), most of the off-site project components would be located within existing rights-of-way and not physically divide an established community. The proposed off-site improvements to Sarver Lane would require demolition of existing houses located on four parcels. These parcels are located along Sarver Lane and shown in Figure 2.12-1 (see Section 2.12, Population and Housing). The applicant currently owns two of these parcels, one of which is vacant and uninhabited. The applicant also has a recorded option to purchase the other two parcels. The improvements to Sarver Lane would be typical of roadway improvements and not result in physically dividing an established community. Therefore, the proposed project would not physically divide an established community, and impacts would be **less than significant**.

Similarly, the I-15 interchange improvements, which constitute an off-site mitigation measure for the project, will not cause significant land use impacts, as they will not divide an established community and are expected to occur within existing Caltrans right of way. Caltrans, nonetheless, can and should ensure the I-15 interchange improvement project's land use impacts, if any, are evaluated as part of the NEPA/CEQA process.

3.3.3.2 Conflict with Plans, Policies, and Regulations

Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

For purposes of this EIR, Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines applies to the direct, indirect, and cumulative impact analyses. A significant impact would result if:

- The proposed project conflicts with applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (e.g., General Plan; Community or Subregional Plans; and the Zoning Ordinance), adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.
- The proposed project conflicts with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.

Analysis

The proposed project would require a General Plan Amendment. As described in Section 3.3.1 and Section 3.3.2, the project is subject to the goals, policies, and objectives of the County General Plan, the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan, and the Bonsall Community Plan. Refer to Figures 1-38 through 1-41 in Chapter 1 for existing versus proposed land use designations.

Proposed Land Use Element Regional Category

The General Plan Amendment proposes to amend the Regional Land Use Element Map to change a portion of the Rural Lands in North County Metropolitan Plan area to Semi-Rural. The Village Regional Category Designation would remain unchanged from its existing configuration and the Rural Lands Regional Category in the Bonsall Community Plan area would remain unchanged.

Existing Community Plan Land Use Designations

The 1,888 acres within the North County Metropolitan Plan area currently include four land use designations: General Commercial (4.6 acres), Office Professional (53.6 acres), Semi-Rural 10 (19.6 acres), and Rural Land 20 (1,907.8 acres). The 97 acres in the Bonsall Community Plan area are entirely designated with the Rural Lands 20 Land Use Designation.

Proposed Community Plan Land Use Designations

The General Plan Amendment proposes to amend the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan Map to change the General Commercial, Office Professional, Semi-Rural 10, and Rural Land 20 designations. These designations would be changed to Village Core Mixed Use, Semi-

Rural 1 (SR-1) (1 unit per 1, 2, or 4 gross acres depending on slope), and Open Space – Conservation. A portion of the Site (Sierra Farms) located along Sarver Lane would remain under its current designation of SR-10 (1 unit per 10 or 20 gross acres depending on slope). The General Plan Amendment would add appropriate language into the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan text describing the Specific Plan.

The General Plan Amendment would also designate all on-site land within the Bonsall Community Plan area as Open Space-Conservation (OS-C).

The project's proposed Specific Plan would allow a maximum of 2,135 dwelling units (1.08 dwelling units per acre).

Existing Zoning

The 1,888 acres within the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan area is zoned General Commercial (C36), Office Professional (C30), Rural Residential (RR), Limited Agricultural (A70), Extractive (S82), and General Rural (S92). The 97 acres within the Bonsall Community Plan area is zoned Rural Residential (RR). These zoning designations are shown in Figure 1-42, Existing Zoning, in Chapter 1.

Proposed Zoning

To implement the proposed changes resulting from the General Plan Amendment, the zoning in the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan area would be changed to General Commercial/Residential (C34), Single Family Residential (RS), and Open Space (S80), as shown in Figure 1-43, Proposed Zoning, in Chapter 1. The portion of the project within the Bonsall Community Plan area (97 acres) would be zoned S80. The portion of the project Site immediately adjacent to Sarver Lane would retain the Limited Agriculture (A70) zoning.

Existing I-15 Corridor Subregional Plan

The I-15 corridor extends approximately 20 miles from the Escondido city limits to the Riverside County line. It contains the 0.5-acre to 2-mile viewshed area on either side of I-15, which is generally seen while driving along I-15. The "B" Design Review Area Special Designator is applied to properties within the corridor, which requires preparation of a Site Plan in accordance with the Scenic Preservation Guidelines, I-15 Corridor Design Review Board (Appendix C of the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan (County of San Diego 2011d)). The eastern portion of the project Site has an existing "B" Special Area Designator, as shown in Figure 1-44, Existing North County Metropolitan I-15 Design Corridor, in Chapter 1.

Proposed I-15 Corridor Subregional Plan

As part of the General Plan Amendment, the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan I-15 Design Corridor map would be amended to include only the areas of the project visible from I-15, as shown in Figure 1-45, Proposed North County Metropolitan I-15 Design Corridor, in Chapter 1.

Plan Consistency

The project's consistency analysis (Appendix DD) outlines how the proposed project would be consistent with each of the applicable policies found in the General Plan and the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan (which includes the I-15 Corridor Subregional Plan). The following presents an overview of General Plan and Subregional Plan consistency.

General Plan Guiding Principles

1. Support a reasonable share of projected regional population growth.

The project will provide a range of housing types to aid the County in meeting required regional housing needs for projected population growth. The amount and type of housing was assessed in the context of the County's Regional Housing Needs Assessment, housing sites inventory, and other housing projects within the County's jurisdiction.

2. Promote health and sustainability by locating new growth near existing and planned infrastructure, services, and jobs in a compact pattern of development.

The project's parks, recreational opportunities, commercial/retail uses, and school site; mix of housing types, including age-qualified and age-targeted (single-story) housing; walkable and bicycle-friendly neighborhoods; trails and pathways; large blocks of native habitat preserve and open space; a community-sponsored electric bike-share program; and shuttle services within the project Site and to the Escondido Transit Center will make it a community that promotes and enhances the health and sustainability of its residents, guests, employees, and patrons. The project Site is also well-situated to place a range of housing opportunities close to existing regional employment centers. The project will be served by existing and planned infrastructure and services, and will provide alternatives to driving both within and to/from its neighborhoods and nearby transit stations.

3. Reinforce the vitality, local economy, and individual character of existing communities when planning new housing, employment, and recreational opportunities.

The project Site is located within the unincorporated portion of the County of San Diego predominantly within the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan area with a small portion

of the Site's northern most area within the Bonsall Community Plan area. The majority of the Site is located in the community of Twin Oaks. The Town Center will create a town square in the planning area closest to Deer Springs Road. A neighborhood grocery store is anticipated at the Town Center to serve both Twin Oaks and the Community. On the north end of the Town Center, a school is planned to include a joint-use field open to the public during weekends and after school hours during weekdays. The Town Center will provide employment opportunities for future residents and the surrounding area. The Town Center will be compact and walkable, as well as visually appealing and compatible with surrounding development. The Town Center will be accessible by those in the surrounding community due to its location, reinforcing the local vitality and economy of the Twin Oaks community. The natural character and protected biological open space will be promoted as an amenity of the Community and be open to the general public. A Community-wide trail network will unite the various parks, creating a link to open space trails and promoting walkability throughout the Community. Spanning out from the Town Center planning area within the area designated as Village, the project's Semi-Rural areas will contain medium to lower density residential neighborhoods. Farther out, the neighborhoods will be surrounded by Rural Lands characterized by open space, native habitat conservation areas, recreation areas, and other uses associated with semi-rural areas.

To reinforce the vitality, local economy, and individual character of existing neighborhoods, communities, and surrounding land uses, the project will incorporate various elements of each. Like the newly planned communities discussed above and to reinforce natural elements of the area such as the chaparral-covered hills and open space, the project will use environmentally sensitive development patterns to preserve large blocks of native habitat, with nearly three-quarters of the project Site remaining in its natural condition. Like the surrounding communities, the project will provide a range of housing types and lot sizes. Like the more semi-rural areas, the project will incorporate limited agriculture along the perimeter of some of its neighborhoods. Like the more developed areas surrounding the project, the project will incorporate commercial/retail uses, including an anticipated neighborhood grocery store at the Town Center and a school site with a joint-use park. The Town Center will provide employment opportunities, and the mix of uses within the project will reinforce and enhance the vitality and local economy of existing communities and land uses around the project. Ultimately, the project will support more than 6,000 residents, a variety of local jobs within and as a result of the project, and a school site.

4. Promote environmental stewardship that protects the range of natural resources and habitats that uniquely define the County's character and ecological importance.

The project will preserve and permanently protect a wide-range of natural resources and sensitive native habitats that support wildlife habitat and movement, with connectivity between

the project's preserve areas and existing, surrounding off-site open space areas supporting the same and similar habitat types.

The preserve design consists of two large, contiguous blocks of open space preserve situated within the project Site's northern and eastern areas, with a third large block of open space preserve located in the southern half of the project Site. The project's open space preserve areas will connect to open space located west, east, and south of the project Site.

In the context of environmental stewardship, the project's preserve areas will be managed by a preserve management entity in perpetuity. Preserve management responsibilities will include an array of maintenance and monitoring activities, including fencing, signage, trash removal, prevention of runoff and fugitive irrigation, weed and non-native vegetation abatement, and biological monitoring of sensitive species and habitat types found within the project's preserve areas.

In total, the project will preserve and result in the management of approximately 1,209 acres of onsite open space as native habitat. In addition to supporting native plants and animals and their habitats, the project's preserve areas will include a range of environmental features such as ridgetops, hill tops, chaparral-covered hills, and rocky outcrops. The majority of the project's preserve areas will consist of dense chaparral, riparian and oak woodland, and non-native grasslands, as well as a limited amount of coastal sage scrub, all habitat types supporting a wide range of native vegetation communities and species.

5. Ensure that development accounts for physical constraints and the natural hazards of the land.

Key natural elements and constraints of the project Site influenced the design of the project's neighborhoods and road network, including the project's hills, ridgetops, boulder outcroppings, and sensitive native habitat areas; the surrounding offsite road network; and the wildfire risk posed to virtually all new development in San Diego County. The project design preserves many of the hills, ridgetops, boulder outcroppings, and large blocks of native habitat by concentrating development into the flatter, less-constrained areas of the project Site and by incorporating a network of internal roads connecting these neighborhoods that are planned around the project Site's key natural features.

To protect against wildfire risk, the project includes a Fire Protection Plan (Appendix N of the EIR) that identifies various project design requirements to protect people and property against wildfire risks, including 250 feet of fuel modification zones around the perimeter of the each of the project's neighborhoods, an additional 47.5 acres of Special Management Areas in the southwestern corner of the Site and adjacent to existing offsite homes, and other project design

and construction methods and standards for new buildings meeting the highest levels of fire safe design required in the state (e.g., refer to Chapter 7A of the California Building Code). Periodically, new building safety standards are adopted or amended by the state or County. For example, the state now requires new construction to have an indoor fire sprinkler system. All construction within the project Site is required to comply with the latest effective standards in place at the time of building permit submittal. In this way, construction of new buildings in the project will remain in lockstep with the latest state and local codes.

In addition to building safety, the project's Fire Protection Plan identifies fuel modification requirements for the project's development areas where those areas interface with native habitat, restrictions on the types of plants and trees that can be planted within the Site, and requirements for access. For example, the project includes two primary access roads and a third access road, and a fuel modification strategy for all structures adjacent to native habitat. The project's Fire Protection Plan requires routine maintenance with periodic inspections by the Fire Marshall of the project's fuel modification zones for the life of the project.

The project is also required to address any geologic conditions or hazards that exist or arise through grading and development of the Site or any off-site improvements, and likewise to construct all roads, improvements, structures, and walls in accordance with the requirements as specified in the final geotechnical report(s) generated for these improvements. These grading and development-level reports, which will be generated during the construction phases, will contain detailed specifications and requirements for grading, road, utility, storm drain improvements, structures, and walls. These detailed specifications and requirements will be placed on grading and improvement plans to ensure compliance, and the Geotechnical Engineer of Record must sign improvement plans verifying that they comply with the detailed requirements. Grading and improvement plans will address issues such as site-specific soil conditions, remediation of any on-site geologic hazards or constraints in areas planned for development, and any seismic standards unique to the project Site.

6. Provide and support a multi-modal transportation network that enhances connectivity and supports community development patterns and, when appropriate, plan for development which supports public transportation.

The project will provide and support a multimodal transportation network by serving as a multi-use community with a mix of housing types and choices, commercial/retail uses, parks and recreation, and a school site. The Community will be supported by a TDM Program of mobility alternatives, including an internal network of pedestrian pathways, bicycle lanes and bicycle-friendly streets, multi-use trails, a community-sponsored electric bike-share program with kiosks throughout the Community, support for ride-share and car-share programs, subsidized transit passes for the project's residents, shuttle services connecting the project's

residential neighborhoods to its Town Center neighborhood and to the Escondido Transit Center, and marketing and educational services to residents and employees of the project's various mobility alternatives. The project is required to implement the TDM Program measures as conditions of development.

The project's TDM Program, particularly shuttle service within and around the project and to the Escondido Transit Center, a North County transit hub, will support a range of public transportation services operated by NCTD, including six Sprinter stations within 6 miles of the project Site and BREEZE bus and Flex shuttle routes providing access to and between various North County cities and unincorporated communities, as well as Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base and the Fallbrook Naval Weapons Station. These transit services will also connect to the Coaster rail service, which provides access between the Oceanside Transit Center and the Santa Fe Depot train station in downtown San Diego. By providing shuttle service from the project Site to the Escondido Transit Center and space for a potential NCTD transit stop in its Town Center neighborhood, the project supports and reinforces the provision of public transportation in the North County Metropolitan Subregion.

In support of public transportation, in addition to providing shuttle services from the project Site to the Escondido Transit Center, the project includes a location in its Town Center neighborhood to accommodate a future transit stop for potential future NCTD BREEZE and/or other NCTD shuttle services to the project Site. The project applicant is also coordinating with Caltrans, SANDAG, and NCTD on a potential future expanded park-and-ride at the I-15/Deer Springs Road interchange. Presently, there are two park-and-ride lots at the interchange, one on the west side and one on the east side of the freeway. The project applicant has met with Caltrans, SANDAG, and NCTD about whether Caltrans plans to improve or expand the park-and-ride lots, either as stand-alone projects or as part of the process of improving the interchange. The project applicant supports and will advocate for the incorporation of alternative transportation modes such as electric vehicle charging stations, bicycle facilities, storage lockers for travelers, accommodations for ride-share and car-share services, and a possible future transit stop as part of any project to expand or improve park-and-ride facilities at the interchange.

With incorporation of these multimodal transportation solutions and a commitment to support and coordinate with public transportation agencies, the project supports a range of mobility alternatives to single-occupancy-vehicle trips.

7. Maintain environmentally sustainable communities and reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.

The project will maintain an environmentally sustainable community and reduce GHG emissions that contribute to climate change through a variety of project planning and design features and

mitigation measures. The project will offset all of its GHG emissions to achieve and maintain carbon neutrality for the life of the project. This initiative makes the project the first large scale master planned community in San Diego County, and one of the first master-planned communities in the United States, to achieve a 100 percent reduction in the project's construction and operations greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through the life of the project.

In terms of planning and design, the project will feature walkable and bicycle-friendly neighborhoods and streets; a balance of housing types and other land uses, including a school site and commercial/retail uses; integrated pocket, neighborhood, and community parks; and a network of trails and pedestrian pathways that interconnect the project's various neighborhoods to reduce GHG emissions. TDM measures, including a community-sponsored electric bike-share program, shuttle services to connecting its residential neighborhoods to its Town Center neighborhood and to the Escondido Transit Center, a car-share program, a ride-share program, and transit fare passes for residents will also reduce GHG emissions from the project. These will combine with green construction practices, including water-efficient landscapes and buildings throughout the project; pre-plumbing of single-family homes for greywater systems; compliance with California Title 24 building and energy efficiency standards (e.g., the CalGreen Building Code and the California Energy Code); solar on all residential uses; solar-powered street lights; electric vehicle chargers in single-family garages; and other project design features to further reduce GHG emissions.

In terms of project objectives, the project locates new residents near existing and planned infrastructure, services, employment, and regional shopping centers in an environmentally sensitive, balanced development pattern while preserving large blocks of natural open space onsite that connect to offsite open space and preserve areas.

8. Preserve agriculture as an integral component of the region's economy, character, and open space network.

The project Site does not support any agricultural uses; however, building on the North County Metropolitan Subregion's agricultural heritage, the project will include two types of neighborhood/Community-scale agriculture uses, community gardens, and grape vineyards. In so doing, the project will create agriculture uses on a site that does not presently support them, thereby contributing to the preservation of agriculture as an integral component of the region's economy, character, and open space network.

The project's community gardens will be integrated into individual neighborhoods to promote sustainable, community-based agriculture. The project's residents and the general public will be allowed to reserve or rent garden plots within these community gardens, with first priority given to the project's residents. Additionally, on some of the project's more visible slopes within Fuel

Modification Zone 1 areas along the edge of certain neighborhoods, productive grape vineyards will be planted and maintained. These productive landscapes will be maintained by the HOA and will add to the aesthetic appeal of the project's individual neighborhoods. These vineyards will include a variety of species of grapes that are drought-tolerant, resistant to wildfire, and thrive in the local microclimate. The vineyards are expected to produce 3 to 4 tons of grapes per acre.

By including the community gardens and vineyards, the project will increase the amount of agriculture in the region and enhance the availability of locally grown food sources, thereby contributing to the preservation of agriculture as an integral component of the region's economy, character, and open space network.

9. Minimize public costs of infrastructure and services and correlate their timing with new development.

The project will be conditioned to work with the County and public agencies to provide new and expanded infrastructure, facilities, and public services to and within the vicinity of the project Site. These new infrastructure, facilities, and services will be sized to serve the project and/or address existing impacted facilities such as roads, and will be in areas already planned for new and/or expanded infrastructure and facilities. The project's improvements will include road capacity, sewer and water infrastructure, public parks, fire service, undergrounding of utilities in on-site and off-site areas, and a school site. The project will be conditioned to require delivery, construction, and/or funding of these improvements, commensurate with the various phases of project development. The payment of impact fees or the equivalent may be required at the time of building permit issuance.

10. Recognize community and stakeholder interests while striving for consensus.

The applicant held four private workshops and numerous meetings with interested stakeholders. The applicant also met with the Twin Oaks, Hidden Meadows, and Bonsall sponsor groups to solicit their input, and the County held a public scoping meeting to determine the scope of the environmental document. A CEQA-compliant 60-day public review period will also solicit public input as part of the County's environmental review process. Finally, the County will conduct public hearings as part of the approval process of the project.

General Plan Chapter 3: Land Use Element

The proposed project was designed to promote health and sustainability by focusing on a compact pattern of development. The project integrates a range of housing types and densities while conserving open space and natural resources.

The proposed project would include a General Plan Amendment that would allow a greater intensity of clustered development beyond current planned land uses. The project lies within the North County Metropolitan Plan area and the Bonsall Community Plan area. The General Plan Land Use Element Regional Category for the project is Rural Lands in the Bonsall Community Plan area and Village, Semi-Rural and Rural Lands in North County Metropolitan Plan area. The General Plan Amendment proposes to amend the Regional Land Use Element Map to change the Regional Category Designation from Rural to Semi-Rural for a portion of the project Site in the North County Metropolitan Plan area. The boundary of the Village area in the North County Metropolitan Plan area would not be modified; the acreage designated as Village would remain unchanged. No changes in Regional Category are proposed for the Bonsall Community Plan area.

The County of San Diego's General Plan emphasizes sustainable community design principles within its Goals and Policies. By locating the proposed project near existing and planned infrastructure, services, and jobs in a compact pattern of development, while promoting health and sustainability among its residents, the project has been designed around the guiding principles of the General Plan. Consistent with the County's Community Development Model, the proposed Town Center neighborhood would consist of a range of commercial uses that are supported by a dense network of local roads containing bicycle lanes and walkways linking the neighborhoods with public parks, and a proposed school site. The Town Center planning area is within the Village Regional Category. Spanning out from the Town Center planning area, the project's Semi-Rural areas would contain lower-density residential neighborhoods. Farther out, the neighborhoods would be surrounded by Rural Lands characterized by open space, habitat conservation, recreation, and other uses associated with rural areas. Developing the project more compactly meets the critical objectives for compliance with the mandates of Assembly Bill 32 and Senate Bill 375. The project was designed to be consistent with both the Guiding Principles and the individual Goals and Policies of the General Plan.

General Plan Chapter 4: Mobility Element

As mentioned above, the project has been designed to promote health and sustainability by focusing on a compact pattern of development. This compact pattern of development in turn allows for and supports a multi-modal transportation network that enhances connectivity and supports Community development patterns.

Net average daily trips for the proposed project would be approximately 22,209 trips, with an average AM peak-hour volume of 1,601 trips and a PM peak-hour volume of 2,059 trips (see Section 2.13, Transportation and Traffic, for additional detail). The proposed project would have two primary access roads along Deer Springs Road—at Mesa Rock Road and Sarver Lane—with an additional access point at Camino Mayor off Twin Oaks Valley Road to the north. The

primary access road at Mesa Rock Road would be a four-lane entry road with a median that transitions into a four-lane undivided road, and then a two-lane undivided road farther into the project Site. On-site roadways would be constructed within and between the different planning areas where development would occur. These roadways would have a pavement width of 34 feet and mostly travel between the developed planning areas and residential streets that are approximately 32 to 40 feet wide and generally traverse within a planning area. An electric bike share program would be included to further link the neighborhoods to one another and to reduce internal vehicle trips. The electric bike share program would include a kiosk close to/within each planning area to allow electric bikes to be taken from one kiosk and left at another, encouraging sustainable transportation between planning areas within the Community (see Figure 1-24 in Chapter 1 for proposed locations). Additionally, the proposed project would include bike lanes, an extensive trail system consisting of roadside pathways within the linear greenbelts, and multi-use trails. With incorporation of these internal circulation features, the proposed project would provide residents the opportunity to access employment, education, recreational, and commercial uses via multiple modes of transportation.

The proposed project is located at the Deer Springs Road interchange with direct access to I-15, providing regional access to existing job centers in San Marcos, Vista, Rancho Bernardo, Escondido, and Poway. The project is also located near Cal State San Marcos (approximately 5.7 miles south) and Palomar College (approximately 6.4 miles south), and commuting options for residents of the project would be enhanced with proximity to four North County Transit District Sprinter stations within 8 miles of the project Site: the San Marcos Civic Center Sprinter Station, the Buena Creek Station, the Palomar College Station, and the Escondido Transit Center.

General Plan Chapter 5: Conservation and Open Space Element

The location and design of the planning areas strategically preserve natural areas and provide for wildlife movement and connectivity. The proposed open space design consists of two large continuous blocks of key biological resources situated within the northern half, and along the eastern boundary of the project Site. In addition, a large third block of open space in the center of the proposed development connects the abovementioned blocks of open space to open space located east and south of the project Site. In total, the proposed project would permanently preserve and manage approximately 1,209 acres of open space.

The majority of the proposed open space design would be located within the northern half of the project Site. The northern half of the project has the greatest potential to support wildlife due to the east–west connection with the San Marcos Mountains. In addition, the northern half of the project is positioned to take maximum advantage of interconnected blocks of habitat. The northern portion of the proposed open space design provides a diverse representation of the natural and environmental conditions that occur within the larger project area. Open space would

also be designated along the eastern boundary of the project adjacent to I-15, which serves as important habitat for California gnatcatcher and many other wildlife species, as well as internal to the project, which would enhance connectivity to the south.

The proposed open space design includes a diverse array of environmental features, including ridgetops, hilltops, and rocky outcrops. Although the majority of this area consists of dense chaparral, this area also incorporates a diverse representation of the vegetation communities that occur on Site and in the vicinity, including riparian forest and scrub, coastal sage scrub, non-native grassland, and oak woodland. The two largest riparian areas located within the project Site would be included in the open space: the South Fork of Gopher Canyon and the South Fork of Moosa Canyon. The South Fork of Gopher Canyon, which is located along Twin Oaks Valley Road, holds water part of the year. The topography in this area of the open space is highly diverse and includes elevations, from approximately 700 feet above mean sea level to 1,750 feet above mean sea level.

The entire open space area contains a diversity of environmental characteristics including representative populations of special-status plant and animal species observed on Site; existing dirt trails and canyon bottoms currently used by wildlife for movement across the Site; and the north/south-trending tributary to Gopher Canyon along Twin Oaks Valley Road, which provides linkage opportunities to the San Marcos Mountains.

The project's open space design is in direct application with the General Plan goals and policies for an inter-connected preserve system.

General Plan Chapter 6: Housing Element

The proposed project includes seven planning areas, each representing a unique neighborhood consisting of a variety of housing types, lot sizes, and suitable amenities in order to provide housing for a broad range of age groups, family formations, and income levels.

A consumer survey was prepared by John Burns Real Estate Consulting (September 2016) for the project applicant, which is incorporated by reference and available upon request to the County. The survey vetted buyer preferences and demand in order to inform the mix of residential homes proposed in each neighborhood. The survey found San Diego home buyers overwhelming preferred a traditional detached single-family home. However, there was a wide range of home sizes preferred, as well as a wide range of preferred lot sizes depending on preferences related to yard sizes, outdoor space, and price range. Although a traditional detached single-family home appealed to most consumers, 58 percent of those surveyed indicated that they would consider a home on a smaller lot, and 18 percent would consider multi-story townhomes and traditional condominiums.

In addition, there was a strong demand for age-qualified living, especially for those buyers over the age of 55, who indicated that, given the choice, they would prefer to live in an adult-only neighborhood with dedicated amenities as well as access to recreation and programs. Being close to everyday services like grocery stores was important to these buyers, as well as living in a community with ample amounts of natural open space and walking, hiking and biking trails, and other recreational opportunities.

The results from the consumer survey informed the project applicant's land planning for the neighborhoods, resulting in a mix of housing types. The broad range of lot sizes and housing types would provide significant options for North County buyers. Additionally, the project is conveniently located at the Deer Springs Road interchange with direct access to I-15, providing excellent regional access to existing job centers in Rancho Bernardo, Escondido, and Poway, and the SR-78 corridor to Carlsbad and Oceanside. The project is located close to California State University San Marcos and Palomar College. Commuting options for residents of the project would be enhanced with proximity to four Sprinter stations within 6 miles of the project Site—the San Marcos Civic Center Sprinter Station, the Buena Creek Station, Escondido Transit Center, and the Palomar College Station.

General Plan Chapter 7: Safety Element

The project was located, designed, and would be constructed to provide wildfire defensibility and minimize the risk of structural loss. Due to the terrain and topography on the project Site, special attention was paid to locate neighborhoods and structures such that the likelihood of wildfire spread and encroachment would be minimized. All new structures would be constructed to Deer Springs Fire Protection District (DSFPD) and County standards. Each of the proposed buildings would comply with the enhanced ignition-resistant construction standards of the latest County Building Code (Chapter 7A). These requirements address roofs, eaves, exterior walls, vents, appendages, windows, and doors, and result in hardened structures that have been proven to perform at high levels (resist ignition) during the typically short duration of exposure to burning vegetation from wildfires. An additional private access road (Camino Mayor) is proposed to provide both residents and emergency access vehicles with sufficient access to the project Site. Travel times to the project Site meet the County General Plan standard of 5 minutes or less for all structures. Lastly, fuel modification zones have been conservatively sized (250 feet on either side of development—almost 4 times the modeled flame length and 2.5 times greater than the County's standard of 100 feet).

The project's Fire Protection Plan (FPP) (see EIR Appendix N) evaluates and identifies the potential fire risk associated with the project's land uses and identifies requirements for water supply, fuel modification and defensible space, emergency access, building ignition and fire resistance, fire protection systems, and wildfire emergency pre-planning, among other pertinent

fire protection criteria. The purpose of the FPP is to generate and memorialize the fire safety requirements of the DSFPD and the San Diego County Fire Authority (SDCFA) along with project-specific measures based on the Site, its intended use, and its fire environment.

The project would meet or exceed all applicable code requirements with the exception of a minor fuel modification area adjacent to three lots that would be modified (EIR, Appendix N); and even this exception provides an alternative form of fuel modification protection. The FPP's recommendations and conditions are also consistent with the lessons learned from the May 2014 San Diego County Wildfires After Action Report from numerous fires occurring over the last 20 years, including the 2003 and 2007 San Diego County fires.

The Site, in its existing condition, is considered to include characteristics that, under certain conditions, have the potential to facilitate fire spread. Under extreme conditions, wildfires on the Site could burn and result in significant ember production. Once the project is constructed, the on-site fire potential would be lower than its existing condition due to conversion of wildland fuels to managed landscapes, extensive fuel modification areas, improved accessibility to fire personnel, and structures built to the latest ignition-resistant codes (see EIR Appendix N).

The fire safety requirements that would be implemented on Site were integrated into the code requirements based on the results of post-fire assessments, similar to the After Action Report (see EIR Appendix N). These include ignition resistant construction standards, along with requirements for water supply, fire apparatus access, fuel modification and defensible space, interior fire sprinklers, and 5-minute or less fire travel times. When taking into consideration the critically important components of structure survivability (e.g., building design, fuel modification zones, travel time, water availability), the Fire and Building Codes were revised appropriately. DSFPD and San Diego County now have some of the most restrictive codes for building within Wildland Urban Interface areas that focus on preventing structure ignition from heat, flame, and burning embers (see EIR Appendix N).

The entire project has been designed with fire protection as a key objective. The improvements are designed to facilitate emergency apparatus and personnel access throughout the Site. Driveway and road improvements with fire engine turnouts and turnarounds provide access to within 150 feet of all sides of every building. Water availability and flow would be consistent with DSFPD requirements, including fire flow and hydrant distribution. These features, along with the ignition resistance of all buildings, the interior sprinklers, and the pre-planning, training and awareness, would assist responding firefighters through prevention, protection and suppression capabilities.

Early evacuation for any type of wildfire emergency on the project Site is the preferred method of providing for resident safety, consistent with the DSFPD's current approach for other

communities and neighborhoods within the DSFPD. As such, the project's Homeowner's Association would formally adopt, practice, and implement a "Ready, Set, Go!" approach to Site evacuation. The "Ready, Set, Go!" concept is widely known and encouraged by California and most fire agencies. Pre-planning for emergencies, including wildfire emergencies, focuses on being prepared, having a well-defined plan, minimizing potential for errors, maintaining a site's fire protection systems, and implementing a conservative (evacuate as early as possible) approach to evacuation and Site uses during periods of fire weather extremes. In addition, an evacuation plan that includes a community-wide approach rather than a project-specific approach has been prepared (see EIR, Appendix N). The community-wide approach is consistent with the district-wide plan from DSFPD and addresses off-site evacuation routes. The evacuation plan would dovetail with existing County evacuation plans, such that potential evacuation impacts from the project are lessened and existing resident evacuation planning is enhanced (see EIR, Appendix N).

General Plan Chapter 8: Noise Element

The project was designed to ensure that noise considerations are incorporated into the land use decision-making process. The quality of life for residents of the project and nearby residents is a significant consideration in protecting that quality of life is ensuring that noise-generating uses such as traffic and construction are considered in project design. Construction of the project would be conducted in such a way that disturbance to adjacent sensitive receptors is minimized. Land uses associated with the project have been located in such a way that noise from adjacent roadways is minimized, and where appropriate sound-attenuating architectural design and building features have been incorporated.

North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan

The North County Metropolitan Plan area provides several goals for growth within this rapidly growing area, including accommodating urban development in appropriate areas, promoting agriculture in non-urban areas, and preserving scenic rugged terrain that is not suitable for urbanization (County of San Diego 2011d). The proposed Town Center neighborhood consists of a range of commercial uses that are supported by a network of local roads containing bicycle lanes and walkways linking the neighborhoods with parks, a proposed school site, and public areas; therefore, the proposed project includes urban development in the appropriate areas consistent with the North County Metropolitan Plan. Community agriculture would be promoted through the creation of community gardens. Garden plots would be rented or reserved by the public, with first priority given to project residents. This would promote locally grown organic food sources for project residents and provide a link to the region's agricultural heritage. In addition, scenic resources are being conserved, in an open space system encompassing approximately 1,209 acres. The majority of the proposed open space design would be located

within the northern half of the project Site. The northern half of the Site has the greatest potential to support wildlife due to the east/west connection with the San Marcos Mountains. Therefore, the proposed project would accomplish the goals of accommodating urban development and preserving scenic rugged terrain, and be consistent with the environmental goals of the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan.

Spheres of Influence

Coordination with both the City of Escondido and the City of San Marcos would minimize conflict with respective general plans and planning efforts within each city. Each city's concerns and planning efforts would be taken into consideration as the project moves through the planning process. The following subsections provide a consistency analysis with the City of Escondido's Quality of Life Standards and the City of San Marco's Guiding Themes.

City of Escondido General Plan Quality of Life Standards

The portion of the project located within the City of Escondido's SOI is the Town Center and the Terraces neighborhood. The project is consistent with the City of Escondido's Quality of Life Standard No. 1 because the project would ensure that new and existing roadways operate at an acceptable level of service, and the project proposes transit stops and expansion of a park-and-ride facility. The project proposes a school site within the City of Escondido's SOI and would pay all applicable school fees, consistent with Quality of Life Standard No. 2, which encourages sufficient classroom space. The proposed project would receive primary fire service from DSFPD and would meet the five minute travel time standard. In addition, it would provide fire sprinkler systems per the Consolidated Fire Code and pay fair-share contributions for fire and emergency medical facilities, as well as police services, consistent with Quality of Life Standards No. 3 and 4. Adequate water and wastewater facilities would be provided by the project, consistent with Quality of Life Standards No. 5 and 10. Consistent with Quality of Life Standards No. 6 and 8, the proposed project would provide adequate public and private park acreage to meet the demand of future residents and an open space preserve of 1,209 acres would be provided. The proposed project would not involve construction or expansion of any library facilities; however, the project would not conflict with or prevent the city from achieving its goal of providing 1.6 square feet of library facility floor area per dwelling unit prior to build-out of the General Plan, as indicated in Quality of Life Standard No. 7. Furthermore, the project would not conflict or prevent the city from establishing a Climate Action Plan, as encouraged by Quality of Life Standard No. 9. Lastly, consistent with Quality of Life Standard No. 11, the proposed project would introduce new businesses and commercial space, which would encourage expansion of existing businesses and increase employment densities within the City of Escondido's SOI (City of Escondido 2012).

Overall, the proposed project would not conflict with the City of Escondido's General Plan Quality of Life Standards.

City of San Marcos General Plan Guiding Themes

Consistent with the City of San Marcos's Guiding Themes, the proposed project would create a new Town Center with shops and restaurants, which would attract residents and visitors while expanding the employment base and encouraging businesses to grow or relocate. The Sierra Town Center would provide a variety of shopping and dining experiences for residences and visitors to the area. As encouraged by one of the City of San Marcos's Guiding Themes, a trail and pedestrian network would help connect people and places with safe and effective routes of travel throughout the project Site.

The proposed project would help to further the City of San Marcos's Guiding Theme of building a "greener" community (City of San Marcos 2012). Solar panels would be included on all residential units (both attached and detached). All light fixtures along public roads would be solar powered. Detached homes shall be plumbed for grey water for re-use in residential yards. Each detached home may include a multi-fixture dual plumbing system connected to an in-ground collection tank system. Garages in all single-family residential units will include the installation of EV charging equipment, and EV charging stations will be installed in 3 percent of the Town Center's commercial core parking spaces. An electric bike share program will locate eight kiosks at various locations in the project Site and provide a minimum of 80 electric bicycles for residents to ride through the community, with additional bicycle racks distributed along main travel corridors, adjacent to commercial developments, at public parks and open spaces, and at multi-family buildings. The Town Center area will also include three car share stations. Turf grass would be prohibited in residential front yards and within the Community street rights-of-way.

The proposed project would help sustain environmental quality by preserving 1,209 acres, minimizing impacts to scenic ridgelines, and expanding the trail network throughout the Community. The proposed project would encourage a healthy and safe Community by addressing crime prevention through environmental design and ensuring adequate emergency and evacuation procedures are in place. In addition, the proposed project would encourage and support local agriculture. The project would include professionally managed vineyards and Community gardens in park areas that promote an agriculture character, provide a productive agricultural use on the Site, and further separate active agricultural uses from incompatible land uses.

Overall, the proposed project would not conflict with the City of San Marcos's General Plan Guiding Themes.

I-15 Corridor Subregional Plan

The I-15 transportation corridor forms the eastern boundary of the proposed project. With implementation of the proposed project, the character of the project would change from that of an undeveloped assemblage of parcels to that of a master-planned community with clustered residential development and open space. Given the existing separation of the Site from land uses east of I-15 and the retention of the majority of the project in open space, implementation of the proposed project is not anticipated to result in land use incompatibilities with respect to existing land uses to the east. Implementation of the proposed project would improve the scenic quality of the I-15 corridor by converting the project from vacant land to a master-planned community with clustered residential and commercial development and managed open space.

The project incorporates several project features to conform with the I-15 Corridor Subregional Plan development guidelines, including balanced grading, focusing project development to lower elevation valley areas on the project Site, conservation of open space, landscaping, and grade-adaptive architecture would help to reduce the visual impacts created by the proposed project by minimizing grading (to the extent feasible), retaining the natural characteristics of portions of the Site, partially screening structures, and incorporating natural terrain in project design. As discussed in EIR Section 2.1, Aesthetics, construction and operation of the proposed project would introduce features that would contrast with the existing visual character of the project, including when viewed from I-15. However, the proposed project conforms with the development standards of the I-15 Corridor Subregional Plan, and will undergo review by the I-15 Corridor Design Review Board to ensure conformance prior to approval of Site Plans, as required by the I-15 Corridor Subregional Plan.

Summary

The proposed project would be consistent with the County of San Diego General Plan and North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan, and I-15 Corridor Subregional Plan, and impacts would be **less than significant**.

Zoning Ordinance

The proposed project would require a zone change from its existing zoned use regulations (General Commercial (C36), Office Professional (C30), Rural Residential (RR), Limited Agricultural (A70), Extractive (S82) and General Rural (S92) Use Regulations). The zoning would be changed to General Commercial/Residential (C34), Single Family Residential (RS) and Open Space (S80) Use Regulations. Detailed development standards for the project Site are also set forth in the Specific Plan.

The regulatory provisions of the County Zoning Ordinance apply to all areas of the project and regulate buildings or structures and the construction, reconstruction, alteration, expansion, or relocation of any building, structure, or use in the project. The project advances the goals and objectives of the General Plan by incorporating the guidelines for development described previously in this section. The proposed project maintains compatibility with the existing surrounding land uses by retaining the northern 1,209 acres of the Site as open space and by locating the densest proposed neighborhood in the southern portion of the Site, nearest Deer Springs Road and existing development. Therefore, impacts related to conflicts with the zoning ordinance would be **less than significant**.

Resource Protection Ordinance

The County's RPO identifies environmental resources present within the County, including wetlands, and provides measures to preserve these resources. The project must also be in conformance with the RPO. However, the project is not strictly in conformance with RPO; therefore, the project includes a proposed amendment to the RPO that would exempt the project from the requirements of the RPO with implementation of functionally equivalent plan that provides for protection and enhancement of resources qualitatively equivalent and functionally superior to that which would occur under RPO. The project's Resource Protection Plan would serve as the functional equivalent of the County RPO for the proposed project.

The project's Resource Protection Plan is a comprehensive plan addressing the preservation, enhancement, and management of sensitive resources (habitat, wetlands, slopes, cultural) within the 1,985-acre project Site. It has been designed specifically for the proposed project as it relates to sensitive biological resources. The plan provides assurances and funding for long-term resource protection, management, restoration, and enhancement of the proposed biological open space. As part of the proposed project, the preserve would assemble 1,209 acres of habitat into three cohesive, contiguous blocks, restore existing disturbed habitat areas (dirt roads and trails, rock quarry, airstrip) to functioning natural areas, and protect the biological open space from future encroachment through organized habitat management and land stewardship in perpetuity.

Refer to EIR Section 2.4, Biological Resources, and Section 2.5, Cultural Resources, for detailed analysis.

County Trails Program

Objective #4 of the proposed project states:

“Provide a range of recreational amenities and facilities that are accessible to residents of both the Community and the surrounding area.”

A community-wide linear park and trail network acts as the connective thread that unites the various neighborhood parks, creating a link to open space trails and a sense of walkability throughout the Community, as shown in Figure 1-3, Park and Trail Plan, in Chapter 1. Multi-use pathways along the loop road would contain creeks or swales to provide water quality treatment and aesthetic appeal. Along Community trails, parks, and within open space, key landforms and boulders would be identified at scenic vistas and trail rest points to increase the public's connection to the natural features found throughout the Site. The project also includes 14 parks, of which 11 are available for public use, and six pocket parks, all of which are public parks. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with the County Trails Program and impacts would be **less than significant**.

Board of Supervisors Policies

- **Policy I-17:** This policy is in place to ensure that all projects involving a zoning reclassification provide public improvements and facilities with the associated lands, easements, and right-of-way, necessary to ensure adequate public services and utilities will be provided to serve the project (County of San Diego 2016b).

Any existing Vallecitos Water District (VWD) pipelines located within the boundary of the project that are in conflict with the proposed development would require relocation within the public right-of-way or VWD easement. VWD policy requires all newly created parcels have frontage on the VWD main easement, and extensions of facilities to serve each newly created parcel would be required. Water or sewer facilities not within the public right-of-way would require a minimum 20-foot-wide easement granted to VWD. A Master Plan of Sewer for the Newland Sierra Project (Appendix W) and A Master Plan of Water for the Newland Sierra Project (Appendix U) have been prepared and identify the expected sewer and water facilities necessary to serve the project Site. With the exception of two sewer lines which are anticipated to bisect through a portion of the open space preserve area, all new sewer and water facilities would be located within street ROW and other anticipated development areas. Accordingly, all impacts from these facilities are analyzed within this EIR. VWD may require additional easements through the project Site or private properties for future extensions; however, no physical impacts are anticipated as a result of easements. Similarly, the project has identified the locations of all anticipated storm drain facilities, the impacts of which are analyzed throughout this EIR. Final easements for storm drains and other facilities will be coordinated with various agencies provided as part of the improvement plan and Final Map processes.

- **Policy I-18:** This policy requires all projects pursuing a Major or Minor Use Permit that require any road improvements, drainage, sewage, fire protection or other public facilities and improvements (including the land, easements and rights-of-way therefore) to provide adequate infrastructure and services to the project to ensure that the

establishment or maintenance of the requested use will not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare or to the property or improvements in the vicinity (County of San Diego 2016b).

The proposed project would provide all necessary public infrastructure required to support the project.

- **Policy I-63:** The General Plan Amendment Initial Review policy specifies the manner in which amendments to the San Diego County General Plan are initiated. The policy seeks to assure applicants are fully informed of potential issues and risks associated with filing a privately initiated General Plan Amendment (County of San Diego 2016b).

The project applicant has completed the required General Plan Amendment Pre-Application Meeting with County Staff, conforming to this policy.

- **Policy I-104:** The Policy and Procedure for Preparation of Community Design Guidelines establishes procedures to ensure adequate community support and citizen involvement in the preparation of community design guidelines (County of San Diego 2016b).

The applicant held four private workshops and numerous meetings with interested stakeholders. The applicant also met with the Twin Oaks, Hidden Meadows, and Bonsall sponsor groups to solicit their input, and the applicant held a public scoping meeting to determine the scope of the environmental document. A CEQA-compliant 60-day public review period will also solicit public input as part of the County's environmental review process and will include a public meeting during the public review period. Finally, the County will conduct public hearings as part of the approval process of the project. Policy I-73, Hillside Development Policy, establishes hillside development standards to protect visual qualities of significant hillsides and ridges. The purpose of this policy is to minimize the effects of disturbing natural terrain and provide for creative design for hillside developments. The policy provides guidelines to assist the decision makers in the evaluation of hillside development in San Diego County. This policy is intended to serve as a guideline and supplement to any other applicable regulations, including the RPO. This policy also provides advance notice of what may be required when reviewing development proposals in hillside areas (County of San Diego 2016b).

The project must also be in conformance with the RPO, which includes protection of slopes. However, the project footprint is not strictly in conformance with RPO; therefore, the project includes a proposed amendment to the RPO exempting the project from the requirements of the RPO with implementation of a functionally equivalent Resource Protection Plan that provides for protection and enhancement of resources qualitatively equivalent and functionally superior to that which would occur under RPO.

The project would be consistent with this policy.

- **Policy I-84:** The project is subject to Board of Supervisors Policy I-84, which requires that adequate facilities are available concurrent with need before giving final approval to subdivisions and certain other projects requiring discretionary approval by the County. Since 1980, the County has been using standardized letters for the following reasons:
 1. To obtain information from special districts and other facility providers concerning facility availability;
 2. To ensure that this information is provided to the appropriate decision-making body; and
 3. To provide data to the facility provider so that it can determine what capital improvements are required to serve the project. In order to use standard forms effectively, it is necessary to specify what these form letters should contain and to clarify how they will be used (County of San Diego 2016b).

The proposed project would have or provide for adequate public facilities and services in place concurrent with need. The DSFPD has indicated that adequate fire facilities and services would be available within allowable travel times with implementation of a Fire Fee Payment Agreement. Adequate law enforcement services would be available concurrent with need according to the Law Enforcement Services letter received from the County Sheriff's Department (County of San Diego 2014). In addition, according to the water and sewer reports prepared for the project (Appendix U and Appendix W, respectively), adequate water and sewer facilities would be provided with the completion of necessary system improvements.

- **Policy I-136:** This policy requires the County to consider applications requesting the formation of community facilities districts (CFD) and the issuance of bonds to finance eligible public facilities pursuant to the Mello-Roos Community Facilities Act of 1982 (Mello-Roos Act), as amended. Public facilities and services eligible to be financed by a District include the following:
 - Streets, highways, and bridges
 - Traffic signals, street lighting, and safety lighting
 - Road maintenance
 - Parks, pathways, and recreation facilities, including golf courses
 - Sanitary sewer, storm drain, potable and reclaimed water facilities, and other public utilities
 - Flood control facilities
 - Governmental facilities

- Fire and police stations, and paramedic facilities
- Libraries
- Operation and maintenance of recreation facilities including golf courses
- Biological mitigation measures involving land acquisition, dedication and revegetation
- Public rights-of-way landscaping (County of San Diego 2016b)

The proposed project would form a CFD consistency with BOS Policy I-136.

- **Policy J-33:** Use of the Board of Supervisors' Power of Eminent Domain on Behalf of Private Developers, defines the limitation and circumstances in which the Board of Supervisors can use the power of eminent domain on behalf of private developers to acquire real property rights for public facilities (County of San Diego 2016b).

The project applicant would work with County staff to ensure proper procedures for eminent domain are followed. The project would be consistent with this policy for public facilities.

- **Policy J-34:** This policy is intended to ensure Mobility Element road improvements required for major subdivisions, large-scale projects, and major use permits will be completed. Pursuant to this policy, projects are required to complete a traffic study in accordance with the County guidelines to identify project impacts to Mobility Element roads and identify required improvements and, if necessary due to public health, safety and welfare concerns, alternative improvements (County of San Diego 2016b).

The project's Traffic Impact Analysis was prepared in accordance with County guidelines (Appendix R). Mobility Element road improvements would be completed concurrent with need as identified in the Traffic Impact Analysis.

Habitat Conservation Plans/Natural Community Conservation Plans

The proposed project would not preclude or prevent preparation of the subregional NCCP/MSCP because the project has been planned in accordance with the planning principles of the draft North County MSCP Subarea Plan, as expressed in the Preliminary Conservation Objectives outlined in the Planning Agreement for the draft North County MSCP Subarea Plan (County of San Diego 2008a). In addition to these preliminary conservation objectives, the Planning Agreement identifies an interim project review process, including a set of preserve design principles for interim projects during the period when the draft North County MSCP Subarea Plan is in preparation. As detailed in the Biological Resources Technical Report (Appendix H), the habitat loss resulting from the proposed project would not preclude or prevent the County from preparing the draft North County MSCP Subarea Plan because it has been developed

consistent with the interim project preserve design guidelines. Further, the draft North County MSCP Subarea Plan identifies conservation goals for each of the planning units. The project has been designed to be consistent with the draft conservation goals for the San Marcos–Merriam Mountains Core Area.

The proposed project is currently designated as “Proposed Hardline Area” in the North County MSCP. The proposed project seeks to establish a project footprint consistent with the preserve design principles under the NCCP/MSCP. The proposed open space would assemble approximately 1,209 acres (approximately 61 percent) of habitat into three cohesive, contiguous blocks (providing habitat value for proposed MSCP-covered species), and protect the biological open space from future encroachment through habitat management and land stewardship in perpetuity. The project conforms to the goals and requirements as outlined in the applicable regional planning efforts (NCCP/MSCP, draft North County MSCP Subarea Plan, HLP, General Plan, and North County Metro Subarea Plan) and described in detail in the Biological Resources Technical Report (EIR Appendix H). There are no habitat management plans or special area management plans for the project; therefore, there would be no impacts.

As outlined in EIR Appendix H, Table 7-1, the habitat loss from the project would not preclude or prevent the draft North County MSCP Subarea Plan from achieving the preliminary conservation objectives from the 2008 draft North County MSCP Planning Agreement. Refer also to EIR Section 2.4, Biological Resources, and Appendix H. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

Regional Comprehensive Plan

The RCP includes the following goals related to smart growth principles (SANDAG 2004):

1. Focus future population and job growth away from rural areas and closer to existing and planned job centers and public facilities to preserve open space and to make more efficient use of existing urban infrastructure.
2. Create safe, healthy, walkable, and vibrant communities that are designed and built accessible to people of all abilities.
3. Integrate the development of land use and transportation, recognizing their interdependence.

The Town Center would consist of a range of commercial uses that are supported by a dense network of local roads containing bicycle lanes and walkways linking the neighborhoods with parks, a proposed school site, and public areas. Farther out, the neighborhoods would be surrounded by Rural Lands characterized by open space, habitat conservation, recreation, and other uses associated with rural areas. Developing the project more compactly meets the critical objectives for compliance with the mandates of Assembly Bill 32 and Senate Bill 375. The

project is located in close proximity to Cal State San Marcos and Palomar College. Commuting options for residents of the project are enhanced with proximity to three North County Transit District Sprinter stations within 6 miles of the project Site: the San Marcos Civic Center Sprinter Station, the Buena Creek Station, and the Palomar College Station. The project would be consistent with smart growth principles and impacts would be **less than significant**.

SANDAG RTP/SCS

The project design and components support the goals and policies outlined in SANDAG's RTP/SCS, as detailed in Section 2.7, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Table 2.7-15, Regional Plan/SCS Consistency Analysis. Therefore, the project would be consistent, and impacts would be **less than significant**.

The I-15 interchange improvements also would not conflict with an adopted plan, policy or regulation; thus, no analysis of potential impacts is necessary. Caltrans, nonetheless, can and should ensure the I-15 interchange improvement project's land use impacts, if any, are evaluated as part of the NEPA/CEQA process.

3.3.4 Cumulative Impact Analysis

Although land use and planning impacts tend to be localized, and specific impacts are tied either directly or indirectly to specific action, the proposed project may have the potential to work in concert with other past, present, or future projects to either cause unintended land use impacts such as reducing available open space or accommodate increased growth that may result in more intensive land uses. Therefore, the geographic extent for cumulative analysis tends toward larger policy areas, such as those found in the San Diego County General Plan and North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan, as opposed to more focused project-specific impacts.

For the threshold regarding physical division of an established community, the cumulative analysis focuses on the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan area, whereas the project's cumulative impacts are considered from a countywide perspective when assessing conflicts with an applicable land use plan. The proposed project and related cumulative projects in the immediate vicinity are subject to the goals and policies of the San Diego County General Plan, North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan, Bonsall Community Plans, the I-15 Corridor Subregional Plan, and other planning documents as applicable for its overall policy framework. The location of cumulative projects is depicted in this EIR, Chapter 1, Figure 1-46, Cumulative Projects Map, and listed in Table 1-10. Specific projects are discussed below.

3.3.4.1 *Physically Divide a Community*

The project, in combination with other related cumulative projects, would not disrupt or divide the established community of Twin Oaks or any other established communities within the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan area. As stated above, the proposed project would not physically divide an established community. The project Site is bound on the east by I-15, which separates the proposed project from the Hidden Meadows Community, and no portion of the proposed development areas would be within the Bonsall Community, which borders the project Site to the north. The project Site is located on the eastern fringes of the community of Twin Oaks in the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan area, and is surrounded by single-family residential developments along the western border of the project Site. The improvements to Sarver Lane would be typical of roadway improvements and not result in physically dividing an established community. In addition, adequate access to roadways and other rights-of-way would be maintained during all phases of the proposed project and each cumulative project to ensure proper circulation.

Furthermore, residential development projects identified in the cumulative projects list, such as Lilac Hills Ranch, Campus Park West, Warner Ranch, Harmony Grove Village South, Meadowood, and Valiano, are not located in close proximity to the proposed project, such that they would combine to physically divide an established community. All of these cumulative projects, including the proposed project, are located within different communities throughout the County. Therefore, the proposed project **would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact** to physical division of an established community.

3.3.4.2 *Conflict with Plans, Policies, and Regulations*

Of the projects shown in EIR Chapter 1, Figure 1-46 and Table 1-10, there are several cumulative projects similar to the proposed project in terms of proposed land uses and amendments or rezones. Lilac Hills Ranch, Campus Park West, Warner Ranch, Harmony Grove Village South, Meadowood, and Valiano are all large-scale developments with a residential component that require General Plan Amendments, rezones, and/or Specific Plans. Some of these larger developments, such as Lilac Hills Ranch and Campus Park West, also include commercial and office components. Approval and development of these cumulative projects, in combination with the proposed project, would result in an intensification of land uses beyond those shown in the General Plan and applicable community plans. Other nearby projects, such as the North County Environmental Recycling Center, Canyon Villas Welk, the Mountain Gate Rezone, and multiple smaller development projects throughout the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan area and surrounding areas would contribute to overall urbanization of the area. This planning is consistent with the County's General Plan Update's population distribution strategy, which focused on planning population growth and increased

densities in the western areas of the County where existing infrastructure and service by the Water Authority are available.

Build-out of a project, formerly known as the Merriam Mountains Project, was included in the County's General Plan Update Cumulative Impacts Analysis (see General Plan Update EIR Table 1-11). This project was proposed at the same location as the proposed project; however, the proposed project includes 565 fewer residential units (i.e., 2,700 units compared to the 2,135 units proposed by the Newland Sierra project). Therefore, the General Plan Update Cumulative Impact Analysis already accounted for development of the project Site with approximately 20 percent more residential units than proposed by the proposed project.

Prior to approval, the proposed project, and all related cumulative projects, must be found consistent with the General Plan. The cumulative projects requiring General Plan Amendments also would require approval by the County's Board of the Supervisors. Specific to the North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan area, the County has developed specific goals and policies for accommodating urban development in appropriate areas, such as the North County Metropolitan Plan area. Consistency with applicable General Plan and Community Plan policies (and any other applicable planning documents) would ensure compliance and orderly development of the proposed project and other related cumulative projects. Therefore, the proposed project **would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact** concerning conflicts with applicable plans, policies, and regulations.

3.3.5 Significance of Impacts Prior to Mitigation

Impacts to the physical division of an established community and plan and policy conformance would be **less than significant**.

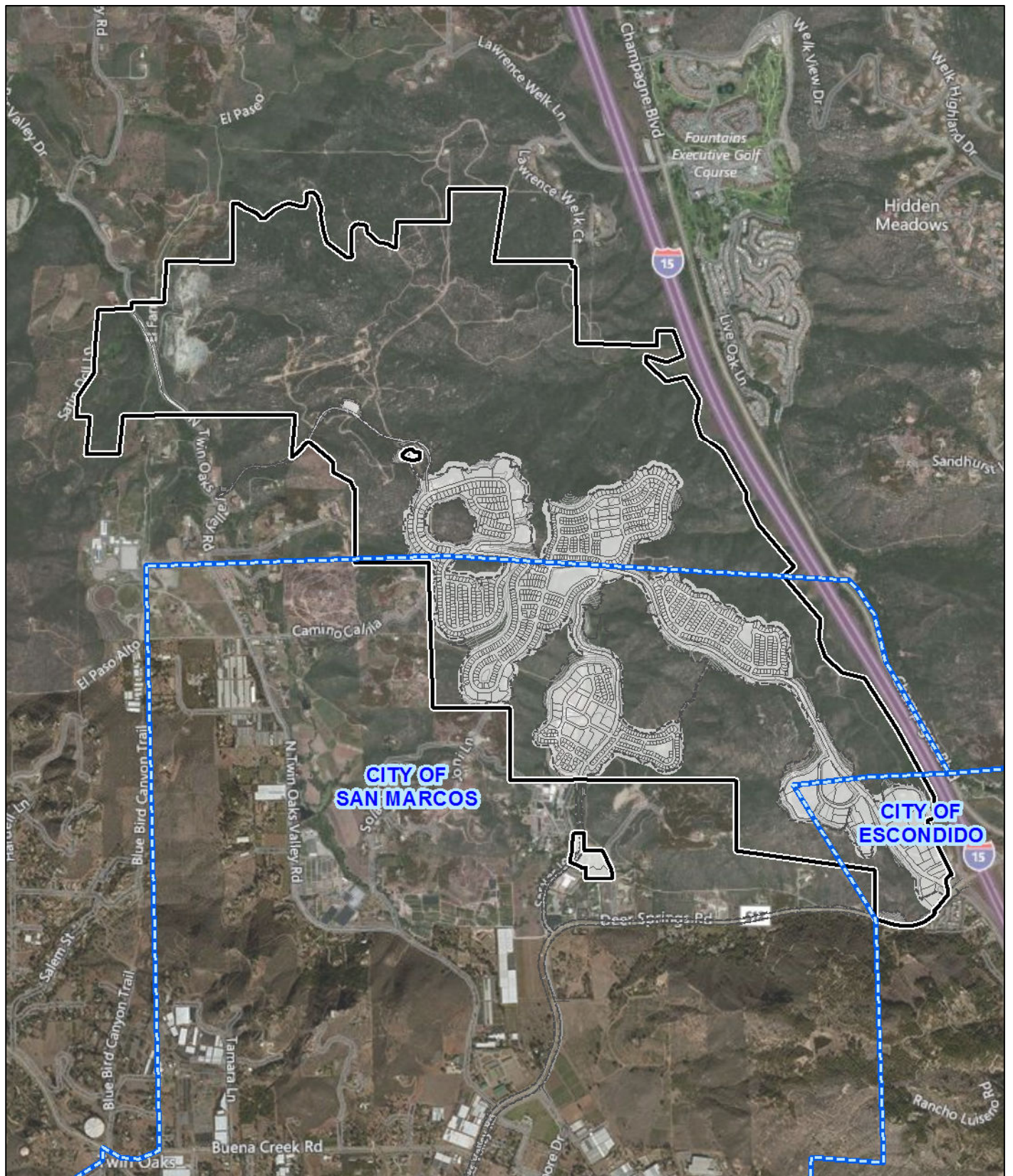
3.3.6 Mitigation Measures

Impacts related to land use and planning would be less than significant, and, therefore, CEQA does not require mitigation measures.

3.3.7 Conclusion

Impacts would be less than significant and no mitigation is required.

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0 1,000 2,000 Feet



Sphere of Influence



Project Site

SOURCE: SAN DIEGO LAFCO 2008

FIGURE 3.3-1
Sphere of Influence

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