4.3 MINERAL RESOURCES

This section describes the existing mineral resources in the project area, potential environmental impacts, recommended mitigation measures to help reduce or avoid impacts to identified mineral resources, and the level of significance of those impacts after mitigation. Information presented in this section is primarily derived from the City of Santa Paula *General Plan* (April 13, 1998) and *General Plan Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR)* (February 1998), Santa Paula Municipal Code (SPMC), County of Ventura *General Plan* (November 15, 2005) and *Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance* (2005) and the proposed *East Area 1 Specific Plan* (September 2007).

4.3.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

4.3.1.1 Local Setting

The Santa Paula area[1] contains substantial aggregate (sand and gravel) mineral resources. Most of the aggregate produced is extracted from Santa Paula Creek and the Santa Clara River. This resource is in demand because much of this rock material meets the criteria[2] for Caltrans highway and other development projects throughout southern California. Mining the Santa Clara River for rock is also important to flood control efforts because debris removal allows for an improved river flow. However, due to the intensive mining of this valuable and non-renewable resource, mining restrictions were eventually imposed by a joint resolution of the Board of Supervisors of Ventura County and the Ventura County Watershed Protection District in 1985.[3] The total resource of aggregate materials in the Western Ventura County production-consumption region is estimated at 4,077 million tons (California Department of Mines and Geology, 1993).[4] Large volume of this resource is not available for mining due to the 1980 mining restrictions which regulates removal of in-river rock and soil by requiring persons to obtain a Ventura County Conditional Use Permit.[5] Similarly, the City of Santa Paula also limits aggregate removal from the river by requiring the preparation of a Reclamation Plan and a Conditional Use Permit in accordance with the Surface Mining and Reclamation requirements of the Public Resources Code.[6]

There are also important petroleum resources in the Santa Paula area, particularly in the hills and mountains surrounding the City of Santa Paula. According to the City of Santa Paula General Plan (GP), Conservation and Open Space Element, Santa Paula's petroleum resources are costly to refine locally because of high sulfur content and level of thickness. This has lead to transporting Santa Paula's petroleum resources to Los Angeles, Bakersfield or Texas for refining, which has consequently led to a decline in local petroleum refinement.[7] However, the oil industry is still an important part of Santa Paula's economy and could potentially increase if foreign supplies to the United States were cut. According to Figure CO-5 of the GP Conservation and Open Space Element, there are no recorded

[1] Note: Based on Ventura County General Plan Land Use Appendix, Section 3.2 (Land Use Plans) and associated Figure 3.2.1. For statistical purposes, Ventura County is divided into geographical sub-regions (areas).
[2] Note: These materials are used in roadway construction and meet Caltrans' Standard Special Provisions (SSP) guidelines. http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/ConDemo/Roads/CalTrans.htm
[3] In 1985 the County Board of Supervisors and Ventura County Watershed Protection District passed a joint resolution establishing District jurisdiction over "red-line" streams in order control and regulate aggregate mining and other modifications. Red-line streams generally include those streams and drainages that are not identified on a United States Geological Survey topographical quadrangle and more commonly referred to as "blue-line" streams.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] Public Resource Code §§ 2710, et seq.; SPMC § §§ 16.102.010 to 16.102.060.
[7] *City of Santa Paula General Plan*, Conservation and Open Space Element. April, 1998.

petroleum resource areas within the East Area 1 property. Petroleum resource areas identified in this figure are located either to the south or far-north of the property.

According to the City of Santa Paula GP, mining of mineral resources is allowed in the Mineral Overlay Zone.[8] The Mining Resource Overlay is applied to those areas defined by the California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology as mineral resources having statewide importance. In Santa Paula, this overlay applies to aggregate resources associated with Santa Paula Creek and the Santa Clara River. However, the City's GP indicates that the overlay will be further defined in the Santa Clara River Enhancement and Management Plan (SCREMP).[9] The SCREMP indicates that most appropriate area for mining is located upstream of Santa Paula.[10]

4.3.1.2 Regional Setting

Ventura County contains valuable aggregate and petroleum resources which are vital to the physical and economic development of the County. The aggregate resources for the respective production consumption regions (PCRs)[11] are located in very different geographic settings. The aggregate resources in the Western Ventura County PCR are almost exclusively located in, and adjacent to, the Santa Clara River. Additional aggregate resources are also located in the hills northwest of Moorpark and in the hills to the north and south of Simi Valley. The site proposed for the East Area 1 Specific Plan (proposed project) is located within the Western Ventura County PCR, but is located some 3,000 feet (approximately one-half mile) north of the Santa Clara River. There are no active aggregate extraction operations currently in-place within this area of the Santa Clara River either within the City of Santa Paula or unincorporated Ventura County.

Ventura County's aggregate resources are classified as one of several different mineral resource zone categories (MRZ-1, MRZ-2, MRZ-3, MRZ-3(a) and MRZ-4). These classifications are generally based upon the relative knowledge concerning the resource's presence and the quality of the material. The State-adopted definition of each classification follows:

MRZ-1 - Areas where adequate information indicates that no significant mineral deposits are present, or where it is judged that little likelihood exists for their presence. This zone shall be applied where well developed lines of reasoning, based upon economic, geologic principles and adequate data demonstrate that the likelihood for occurrence of significant mineral deposits is nil or slight.

MRZ-2 - Areas where adequate information indicates that significant mineral deposits are present or where it is judged that a high likelihood for their presence exists. This zone shall be applied to known mineral deposits or where well developed lines of reasoning, based upon economic, geologic principles and adequate data demonstrate that the likelihood for occurrence of significant mineral deposits is high.

MRZ-3 - Areas containing mineral deposits, the significance of which cannot be evaluated from available data.

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[8] Note: The SPMC does not currently contain a Mineral Overlay Zone. In addition, the General Plan appears to utilize the terms Mineral Overlay Zone and Mineral Resources Overlay interchangeably.

[9] Source: *City of Santa Paula General Plan* (1998), pages LU-14 and LU-44. It should be noted that the City's General Plan does not identify where the Mineral Overlay Zone is located, although reference in the General Plan is made indicating that this area will be further defined in the SCREMP. A review of the SCREMP did not identify maps or figures which specifically denotes this location.

[10] Source: *Santa Clara River Enhancement and Management Plan*. May 2005. A review of the SCREMP did not identify maps or figures which specifically denotes this location.

[11] A PCR is a geographic area defined by the California Geological Survey as containing mineral and/or aggregate resources. http://www.consrv.ca.gov/CGS/information/publications/ms/MS_52.pdf

MRZ-3(a) - Areas, judged on the basis of the limited available geologic data and field work, to have higher potential as sources of aggregate material suitable for Portland Cement Concrete[12] than other deposits classified MRZ-3.

MRZ-4 - Areas where available information is inadequate for assignment to any other MRZ zone.

Based on these classifications, there is relatively little land within Ventura County which is known to have significant deposits of construction grade aggregate resources (MRZ-2).

4.3.1.3 Site Condition

The proposed project is located on three different basic geologic formations and is situated at the eastern edge of the City of Santa Paula. The northern steep portion of the project site is comprised of bedrock formation of silts and sands prone to erosion. Alluvium and older alluvium deposits, relatively rocky in character, form the flatter portions of the project site. The project site is varied in land gradient with a low point in the southeast corner at an elevation of 300 feet above mean sea level (AMSL) and a high point in the northern portions of the project site with an elevation of 785 feet AMSL. This constitutes a total site elevation change of almost 500 feet.

The northern portion of the property is mountainous and is comprised of a series of generally north/south trending hills and a minor canyon. With the exception of the northern portion of the project site, the land slopes gently to the southeast with slopes between 0 and 5 percent on a majority of the southern portion of the project site. The steep hills in the northern portion of the project site have slopes between 15 and 30 percent. A transitional plateau between these steep hills and the lower portion of the project site contains slopes between 5 and 15 percent. The project site has traditionally been used for agricultural uses, although native vegetation communities and trees are contained on-site primarily within the northern portion of the property.

The area considered for development of the proposed project consists of the following Assessor Parcel Numbers (APN):

- APN-040-0-180-435
- APN-040-0-180-565
- APN-107-0-200-115
- APN-107-0-045-015

According to the Ventura County General Plan Resource Protection Map (South Half) and Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance none of these parcels are located within a mineral resource zone.[13] Similarly, none of these parcels are located within the Santa Clara River or its tributaries or the areas defined by the SCREMP as appropriate for mineral extraction (as noted previously). The closest mineral resources extraction zone is located in, and adjacent to, the Santa Clara River approximately 3,000 feet (one-half mile) south of the project site. The primary vehicular access point to this area is via State Route (SR) 126 and 12th Street.

[12] Portland cement is the most common type of cement in general usage.
[13] Ventura County General Plan, Goals, Policies and Programs. Figure 1 – South Half Resources and Protection Map, Amended December 10, 1996.

4.3.2 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Based upon the thresholds contained in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the proposed project would have a significant impact on the environment if it would:

- Results in the loss of mineral resources that are of value to the region or the residents of the State of California or which are locally important for recovery as delineated on a local General Plan, Specific Plan or other land use plan;[14] or
- Precludes access to an important mineral resource by changing the land use such that a mineral resource can no longer be removed or creates zoning restrictions such that access to the mineral resource is no longer allowed;[15]
- Is located in or immediately adjacent to any known aggregate resource area, or adjacent to a principal access road to an existing aggregate conditional use permit (CUP).[16]

4.3.3 METHODOLOGY RELATED TO MINERAL RESOURCES

The California Geological Survey (CGS) provides objective geologic expertise and information about California's diverse non-fuel mineral resources. Maps, reports and other data products developed by CGS in recognizing, developing and protecting important mineral resources were used to locate mineral extraction areas in the project area. In addition, the Ventura County GP and the City of Santa Paula GP were used to determine the location of possible mineral extraction areas.

4.3.4 POTENTIAL IMPACTS

4.3.4.1 Loss of Important Mineral Resources

Based on a review of the City's GP and SCREMP, the proposed project is not located within an area identified for mineral extraction, currently undergoing mineral extraction, or within a petroleum resource area. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a significant adverse impact relative to the loss of mineral resources.

According to the Ventura County GP Resource Protection Map (South Half), the project site is not located in a mineral resource zone. The closest mineral resources extraction zone is located in, and adjacent to, the Santa Clara River approximately 3,000 feet (approximately one-half mile) south of the project site. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a significant adverse impact relative to the loss of mineral resources.

4.3.4.2 Deposits Covered by Changed Land Use Conditions

The site for the proposed project is located north of any identified mineral resource area, where there are known, and previously mined, aggregate resources. In addition, none of the project components, actions and/or approvals needed or requested by the proposed project would result in either direct or indirect impacts to this area that would preclude its use for mineral resource extraction, as currently designated by the City of Santa Paula or County of Ventura GPs. Therefore, the proposed project would not impact any known mineral resources as a result of changed land use conditions.

[14] Appendix G, California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, 2007.
[15] Ventura County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines, 2006, Page 23.
[16] *Ibid.*

4.3.4.3 Zoning Restrictions

The proposed project does not include zoning changes that would limit or restrict access to known mineral resources. Therefore, there would be no impacts on mineral resources related to changes in zoning restrictions as a result of the proposed project.

4.3.4.4 Loss of Access

As noted previously, the proposed project is not located in a County of Ventura GP-designated mineral resource zone or City of Santa Paula GP-designated or SCREMP-designated mineral extraction area. The proposed project is however, located approximately 3,000 feet (one-half mile) north of the Santa Clara River in which a County of Ventura GP-designated mineral resource zone is located. Currently, access to the County-designated mineral resource zone is limited to SR 126 and 12th Street which will remain accessible during construction and operation of the proposed project. Even though SR 126 also serves as the regional access to the project site (during construction and operation), it will not preclude access to mineral extraction activities located approximately 3,000 feet (one-half mile) south of the project site. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a significant adverse impact associated with access to mineral resources.

4.3.5 MITIGATION MEASURES

Implementation of the proposed project would not result in significant adverse impacts related to mineral resources and mitigation measures would not be required.

4.3.6 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

Implementation proposed project would not result in significant adverse impacts related to mineral resources.