5.0 OTHER CEQA CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS WHICH CANNOT BE AVOIDED IF THE PROPOSED PROJECT IS IMPLEMENTED

The CEQA Guidelines require that an EIR disclose the significant environmental effects of a project that cannot be avoided if a proposed project is implemented (CEQA Guidelines § 15126[b]). As described in detail in Section 4.0 of this EIR, the proposed Project would result in three impacts to the environment that cannot be reduced to below a level of significance after the implementation of relevant standard conditions of approval, compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and application of feasible mitigation measures. The significant environmental effects of the proposed Project that cannot be feasibly mitigated are as follows:

- Air Quality Threshold a: Significant Unavoidable Direct and Cumulatively-Considerable Impact. As shown in Table 4.2-18, *Summary of Peak Operational Emission (With Mitigation)*, with implementation of the required mitigation, the Project's emissions of NO_x would exceed the SCAQMD Regional Threshold of Significance for this pollutant. NO_X is a pre-cursor to ozone, for which the region is considered non-attainment under both State and Federal standards. Although the Project would not exceed the regional growth forecasts because the Project would only result in the addition of two new employees on-site, the Project's level of NO_X emissions represents a conflict with the SCAQMD 2012 AQMP; this is evaluated as a significant direct and cumulatively-considerable impact of the proposed Project for which no additional, feasible mitigation is available.

- Air Quality Threshold b and c: Significant Unavoidable Direct and Cumulatively-Considerable Impact. As shown in Table 4.2-18, *Summary of Peak Operational Emission (With Mitigation)*, the Project's emissions of NO_X still would exceed the SCAQMD's Regional Thresholds even with the incorporation of mitigation. NO_x emissions would contribute to the region's non-attainment status for ozone. Accordingly, the Project's impact due to a violation of air quality standards for an ozone precursor (NO_x), a contribution to air quality violations for ozone, and a cumulatively considerable net increase of ozone precursors represent significant and unavoidable impacts of the proposed Project on both a direct and cumulatively-considerable basis for which additional feasible mitigation is not available.

- Biological Resources Thresholds e, and f: Direct Significant and Unavoidable Impact. The Project would result in direct impacts due to non-compliance with City Ordinance 1124 and the MSHCP. Although the Project would mitigate its impacts to biological resources to below a level of significance, the Project's non-compliance with Ordinance 1124 and the MSHCP nonetheless represents significant and unavoidable direct impacts of the proposed Project that cannot be mitigated to below a level of significance. However, because the vast majority of properties within the MSHCP area and that are subject to Ordinance 1124 (or other the implementing ordinance of other local jurisdictions) would be required to comply with the provisions of the MSHCP and all MSHCP-related requirements, the Project's non-compliance with Ordinance 1124 and the MSHCP would be less-than-cumulatively considerable.

- Noise Thresholds a, c, and d: Direct and Cumulatively Considerable Significant and Unavoidable Impact. ~~Although i~~Implementation of Mitigation Measures MM 4.8~~3~~-1 through

MM 4.8~~3~~-3 would reduce the Project's operational-related noise impacts during the extended nocturnal hours~~,~~; however, during daytime operations nearby residential structures located within 794 feet of mining activities within the EDA would be exposed periodically to noise levels exceeding the Riverside County daytime noise standard of 50 dBA L_{50}. Thus, a significant impact would occur during the phases of mining within the southeastern portions of the proposed Expanded Disturbance Area (EDA) that are located within 794 feet of the residential structures and when a minimum headwall of 15 feet in height cannot be maintained between mining areas and nearby residential structures ~~located within approximately 500 feet of mining activities~~. During this phase of mining operations, the nearby residences located within approximately 794 ~~500~~ feet of mining activities would be exposed to noise levels exceeding 55 dBA L_{50} ~~Leq (10 min)~~, which represents a significant and unavoidable impact of the proposed Project on both a direct and cumulatively-considerable basis.

- Transportation and Circulation Threshold a: Cumulatively Significant and Unavoidable Impact. As detailed in Table 4.9-30, *Intersection Analysis for EAPC (2016) Conditions with Improvements*, with implementation of Mitigation Measures MM TR-1 and MM TR-2 and installation of traffic signals, the LOS for the intersection of the I-15 Northbound ramps at Nichols Road would improve from LOS F to LOS D during the AM and PM peak hours under Year 2016 conditions. Additionally, with implementation of Mitigation Measures MM TR-1 and MM TR-2, the LOS for the intersection of the I-15 Southbound Ramps at Nichols Road would improve from LOS F to LOS D during the AM and PM peak hours under Year 2016 conditions. Similarly, and as shown in Table 4.9-31, *Intersection Analysis for Horizon Year (2035) Conditions With Improvements*, with implementation of Mitigation Measures MM TR-1 and MM TR-2 and installation of traffic signals, the LOS for the intersection of I-15 Northbound ramps at Nichols Road would operate at an acceptable LOS D with implementation of the Project under long-term (Year 2035 conditions). With implementation of Mitigation Measures MM TR-1 and MM TR-2, the LOS for the intersection of the I-15 Southbound Ramps at Nichols Road would operate at LOS C in the AM peak hour and LOS D in the PM peak hour under long-term (Year 2035) conditions. Thus, with improvements, the Project's cumulatively-considerable impacts to the intersections of the I-15 Northbound On- and Off-Ramps at Nichols Road and I-15 Southbound On- and Off-Ramps at Nichols Road under Year 2016 and Year 2035 conditions would be reduced to less-than-significant levels. However, no schedule is prescribed by the TUMF or TIF program for these improvements, and it is not practical to assume that the improvements would be installed by 2016 (when operations pursuant to SMP 2015-01 and RP2006-01A2 are expected to commence). Improvement schedules for these improvements are partially dependent on the pace of new development and associated pace of fee collection that occurs under the TUMF and the TIF. Under CEQA, a fair-share monetary contribution to a mitigation fund is adequate mitigation if the funds are part of a reasonable plan that the relevant agency (in this case WRCOG and the City of Lake Elsinore) is committed to implementing. As such, while the proposed Project can mitigate its cumulatively considerable contribution to these impacts through the payment of fees, the improvements would likely not be in place at their time of need (before the deficiency occurs). As such, this EIR recognizes a short-term and unavoidable cumulatively considerable impact at these locations, which would occur until the TUMF and TIF improvements are in place.

  The proposed Project would contribute to, but would not cause, impacts to the I-15 Northbound freeway segments (LOS F in the AM peak hour and LOS E during the PM peak hour) and the

I-15 Southbound freeway segments (LOS F in the PM peak hour) under Horizon Year (2035) conditions. Although the Project's level of traffic affecting these facilities would be below the threshold at which Caltrans normally would require a traffic study, the Project's contribution to these deficiencies are nonetheless considered cumulatively considerable. Long-range plans by Caltrans for the I-15 Freeway include the construction of two tolled Express Lanes from Cajalco Road to Central Avenue (SR-74), which are improvements that are subject to available funding. Planned improvements to the I-15 Northbound and Southbound mainlines would improve LOS along these freeway segments. With improvements, the I-15 Southbound freeway segments would improve to LOS C in the AM peak hour and LOS E during the PM peak hour. Additionally, the Northbound freeway segments would improve to LOS E during the AM peak hour and LOS D during the PM peak hour. Thus, while planned Caltrans improvements to these freeway segments would improve the LOS, both the Northbound and Southbound freeway segments would continue to operate at a deficient LOS during at least one peak hour. There is no additional feasible mitigation to reduce these cumulatively-considerable impacts to below a level of significance. Moreover, the timing of Caltrans' improvements is not currently known. Therefore, the EIR recognizes the Project's cumulatively-considerable impacts to the I-15 Northbound and Southbound freeway segments as cumulatively-considerable and unavoidable impacts of the proposed Project.

~~The Project would contribute more than 50 peak hour trips to the merge/diverge ramp junction of I-15 Northbound at Nichols Road under Horizon Year (2035) conditions.~~ Project-related traffic would contribute to, but would not directly cause, the deficient LOS at the merge/diverge ramp junctions of I-15 Northbound Off-Ramp at Nichols Road (LOS E in the AM peak hour) and the I-15 Southbound On- and Off-Ramps at Nichols Road (LOS E in the PM peak hour) under Horizon Year (2035).~~;~~ Although the Project's level of traffic affecting these facilities would be below the threshold at which Caltrans normally would require a traffic study, the Project's contribution of traffic to ~~accordingly, the Project's impacts to this~~ these merge/diverge ramp junction under Horizon Year (2035) conditions nonetheless would be cumulatively considerable. Long-range plans by Caltrans for the I-15 Freeway include the construction of two tolled Express Lanes from Cajalco Road to Central Avenue (SR-74), which are improvements that are subject to available funding. As shown in Table 4.9-31, with construction of the planned improvements, the queuing issues at the I-15 Northbound Off-Ramp at Nichols Road and I-15 Southbound On- and Off-Ramps at Nichols Road would be reduced to acceptable levels. However, it is possible that queuing deficiencies may still be experienced in the interim period prior to the completion of the improvements to I-15. As such, the Project's impacts to the I-15 Freeway ~~n~~Northbound ~~o~~Off-~~r~~Ramp and the I-15 Freeway Southbound On- and Off-Ramps under Horizon Year (2035) represents a near-term significant and unavoidable impact of the proposed Project for which no feasible mitigation is available.

Under Horizon Year (2035) conditions, the Project would contribute to, but would not directly cause queuing issues during the weekday peak 95th percentile traffic flows at the I-15 Freeway Northbound and Southbound Freeway Off-Ramps. Although the Project's level of traffic affecting these facilities would be below the threshold at which Caltrans normally would require a traffic study, t~~T~~he Project's contribution to this projected deficiency is evaluated as a cumulatively considerable impact. As noted above, long-range plans by Caltrans for the I-15 Freeway include the construction of two tolled Express Lanes from Cajalco Road to Central

Avenue (SR-74), which are improvements that are subject to available funding. As shown in Table 4.9-32, *Basic Freeway Segment Analysis for Horizon Year (2035) Conditions with Improvements*, even with the planned Express Lanes, the I-15 Nnorthbound ~~segment at the~~ and Southbound ~~o~~Off-~~r~~Ramps ~~with~~ at Nichols Road would continue to operate at a deficient LOS during at least one peak hour. ~~experience a deficient LOS E during the AM peak hour, and the southbound freeway off-ramp at Nichols Road would experience a deficient LOS E during the PM peak hour. There are no additional improvements planned along these segments of the I-15, nor are there any funding mechanisms identified by Caltrans for such cumulatively considerable impacts. However, and as noted previously, the Project would contribute fewer than 50 peak hour trips to these freeway mainline segments.~~ As such, the Project's contribution to the ~~projected freeway mainline~~I-15 Northbound and Southbound Off-Ramps queuing deficiencies under Horizon Year (2035) conditions represents ~~a less than~~ cumulatively ~~-~~considerable impacts of the proposed Project for which no feasible mitigation is available.

- Transportation and Circulation Threshold b: Cumulatively Significant and Unavoidable Impact. As discussed above under the discussion of Transportation and Circulation Threshold a., the Project would result in cumulatively considerable impacts for which feasible mitigation is not available at the following facilities:

  - EAPC (2016) Conditions:
    - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Northbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection (LOS F AM and PM peak hours);
    - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Southbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection (LOS F in the AM and PM peak hours);
    - Cumulatively considerable impact due to the need to signalize the I-15 Northbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection; and
    - Cumulatively considerable impact due to the need to signalize the I-15 Southbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection.

  - Horizon Year (2035) Conditions:
    - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Northbound Ramp/Nichols Road intersection (LOS F during both AM and PM peak hours);
    - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Northbound Ramp/Nichols Road intersection (LOS F during both AM and PM peak hours);
    - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Southbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection (LOS F for both AM and PM peak hours);
    - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Southbound Freeway Segments (LOS F during the PM peak hour);
    - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Northbound Freeway Segments (LOS F during the AM peak hour and LOS E during the PM peak hour);
    - Cumulatively considerable freeway off-ramp queuing impact to the I-15 Northbound Off-Ramp at Nichols Road (2,838 ft. queue during the AM peak hour and 3,520 ft. queue during the PM peak hour);
    - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Southbound Off-Ramp/Nichols Road Freeway Ramp Junction Merge/Diverge (LOS F during the PM peak hour);

- Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Northbound On-Ramp/Nichols Road Freeway Ramp Junction Merge/Diverge (LOS F during the AM peak hour and LOS E during the PM peak hour);
- Cumulatively considerable impact due to the need to signalize the I-15 Northbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection; and
- Cumulatively considerable impact due to the need to signalize the I-15 Southbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection.

~~• at the junction of Nichols Road and the I-15 northbound ramps; would contribute to the need for signalization of Nichols Road at the I-15 northbound ramps; would contribute to queuing issues during the weekday peak 95th percentile traffic flows at the I-15 Freeway Northbound Off-Ramp; and would contribute to, but would not cause, the projected deficiency at the freeway merge/diverge junctions of I-15 Northbound Ramps at Nichols Road. This facility is part of the CMP roadway network. Although with implementation of the improvements programmed as part of TUMF and/or TIF these impacts would be reduced to less than significant levels (with exception of the Project's cumulatively considerable junction merge/diverge impacts, which would remain significant and unavoidable), improvement schedules for these improvements are partially dependent on the pace of new development and associated pace of fee collection that occurs under the TUMF and the TIF. Under CEQA, a fair-share monetary contribution to a mitigation fund is adequate mitigation if the funds are part of a reasonable plan that the relevant agency (in this case WRCOG and the City of Lake Elsinore) is committed to implementing. As such, while the proposed Project can mitigate its cumulatively considerable contribution to these impacts through the payment of fees, the improvements would likely not be in place at their time of need (before the deficiency occurs). As such, this EIR recognizes a short-term and unavoidable cumulatively considerable impact at these locations, which would occur until the TUMF, TIF, and planned Caltrans improvements are in place.~~

5.2 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES WHICH WOULD BE CAUSED BY THE PROPOSED PROJECT SHOULD IT BE IMPLEMENTED

The CEQA Guidelines require EIRs to address any significant irreversible environmental changes that would be involved in the proposed action should it be implemented (CEQA Guidelines § 15126.2(c)). An environmental change would fall into this category if: a) the Project would involve a large commitment of non-renewable resources; b) the primary and secondary impacts of the Project would generally commit future generations to similar uses; c) the Project involves uses in which irreversible damage could result from any potential environmental accidents; or d) the proposed consumption of resources are not justified (e.g., the Project results in the wasteful use of energy).

Determining whether the proposed Project may result in significant irreversible environmental changes requires a determination of whether key non-renewable resources would be degraded or destroyed in such a way that there would be little possibility of restoring them. Natural resources in the form of energy resources would be used during the proposed Project, but mining of the Project site as proposed is not expected to negatively affect the availability of such resources, including resources that may be non-renewable (e.g., fossil fuels). The Project would allow continued use of the property's aggregate resources, which are of value to the State and the region. The proposed Project would not involve the use of large sums or sources of non-renewable energy.

As demonstrated in the analysis presented throughout EIR Section 4.0, the proposed Project would not result in significant physical environmental effects to nearby properties. Although the Project would cause or contribute to significant unavoidable impacts associated with air quality (unavoidable direct impact); biological resources (unavoidable direct impact), traffic and circulation (cumulatively significant and unavoidable) and noise (unavoidable direct and cumulatively-considerable impact), these effects would not commit surrounding properties to land uses other than the uses currently planned by the City of Lake Elsinore. In fact, continued mining of the property could potentially increase the range of land uses that ultimately could be developed on the site, although no such uses are proposed as part of the Project.

The Project would be required to comply with federal, state, and local regulations related to hazardous materials, which would ensure that continued mining activities at the Mine as a result of the proposed Project would not have the potential to cause significant irreversible damage to the environment, including damage that may result from upset or accident conditions.

To reduce the Project's energy needs and fossil fuel consumption, and thereby reduce air emissions, the Project is required to ensure mandatory compliance with applicable regulatory requirements imposed by the State of California and the SCAQMD (as summarized in EIR Subsections 4.2 and 4.6), which would reduce the Project's level of demand for energy resources. Additionally, the Project would result in a net decrease in water usage at the Mine, which would in turn help conserve energy resources utilized to transport water. Therefore, the proposed Project would not result in the wasteful use of energy or the consumption of resources that are not justified based on the scale of the proposed Project.

5.3 GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

CEQA requires a discussion of the ways in which the proposed Project could be growth inducing. The CEQA Guidelines identify a project as growth inducing if it would foster economic or population growth or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment (CEQA Guidelines § 15126.2(d)). New employees and new residential populations represent direct forms of growth. These direct forms of growth have a secondary effect of expanding the size of local markets and inducing additional economic activity in the area.

A project could indirectly induce growth at the local level by increasing the demand for additional goods and services associated with an increase in population or employment and thus reducing or removing the barriers to growth. This typically occurs in suburban or rural environs where population growth results in increased demand for service and commodity markets responding to the new population. Because the Project proposes to expand existing mining operations at the Nichols Canyon Mine, the Project would not involve expansion of existing utilities, facilities or develop buildings or housing that could induce growth.

Under CEQA, growth inducement is not considered necessarily detrimental, beneficial, or of little significance to the environment. Typically, growth-inducing potential of a project would be considered significant if it fosters growth or a concentration of population in excess of what is assumed in pertinent master plans, land use plans, or in projections made by regional planning agencies such as the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). Significant growth impacts could also occur if the project provides infrastructure or service capacity to accommodate growth beyond the levels currently permitted by local or regional plans and policies. In general, growth induced by a project is considered

a significant impact if it directly or indirectly affects the ability of agencies to provide needed public services, or if it can be demonstrated that the potential growth significantly affects the environment in some other way.

The expansion of existing mining activities proposed would not directly promote growth or development on adjacent and surrounding properties. Because development on nearby parcels would be consistent with the City's General Plan, growth-inducing impacts of the Project would be less than significant.

Furthermore, continued aggregate processing would fill a market demand for aggregate materials within the region, and would not result in an increase in demand for aggregate materials. The fact is that aggregate will be consumed with or without the proposed Project. The Project would not have an effect on demand for aggregate but would have an effect on the distance that aggregates travel within the region. Project aggregate would replace materials hauled from farther distances and supply new demand for aggregate that will occur in the Riverside County region. This rationale is supported by Dr. Peter Berck's "Working Paper No. 994 – A Note on the Environmental Costs of Aggregate" (Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Policy, Division of Agricultural and Natural Resources, University of California Berkley, January 2005). (Urban Crossroads, 2016a, p. 31)~~(Urban Crossroads, 2015a, p. 23)~~ Dr. Berck states that:

> *"The opening of a new quarry for aggregates will change the pattern of transportation of aggregates in the area served by the quarry. In this note, we will show that, so long as aggregate producers are cost minimizing, the new pattern of transportation requires less truck transport than the pattern of transportation that existed before the opening of the new quarry. Since the costs of providing aggregates falls, it is reasonable to assume that the price of delivered aggregates also will fall. This note also shows that the demand expansion effect is of very small magnitude. Since the demand increase from a new quarry is quite small, the dominant effect is that the quarries are on average closer to the users of aggregates and, as a result, the truck mileage for aggregate hauling decreases. To summarize the effects of a new quarry project:*
>
> *a) The project in itself will not significantly increase the demand for construction materials in the region through market forces, which include the downward pressure on pricing.*
>
> *b) Truck traffic (i.e. vehicle miles traveled) in the region will not increase and may decrease as a result of the project."* (Berck, 2005, p. 3)

Furthermore, a study prepared by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) found that when aggregate is transported by truck to the point of use, the price of the material increases about 15 cents per ton for every mile hauled, and concluded that "…the point of diminishing marginal benefit – that is, where the largest number of projects can be served with the least additional distance – occurs at the 20- to 25-mile driveshed" (SANDAG, 2011, pp. ES-4 and 3-9).

Indirect growth-inducing impacts at the local level result from a demand for additional goods and services associated with the increase in people in the area, including employees. This occurs in suburban or rural environments where population growth results in increased demand for service and commodity markets responding to the new population. This type of growth is, however, a regional phenomenon resulting from introduction of a major employment center or regionally significant

housing project. The implementation of the proposed Project would not result in indirect growth-inducing impacts of the region because the Project proposes expansion of existing mining activities, and would only result in the introduction of two new employees on-site. The introduction of two new employees would not be growth inducing.

5.4 ENERGY CONSERVATION

Energy conservation generally refers to efforts made to reduce energy consumption in order to preserve resources for the future and reduce environmental pollution. Public Resources Code Section 21100(b)(3) and CEQA Guidelines Appendix F requires a description (where relevant) of the wasteful, inefficient, and unnecessary consumption of energy caused by a project. State CEQA Guideline § 15126.4(a) (1) states that an EIR shall describe feasible measures which could minimize significant adverse impacts, including where relevant, inefficient and unnecessary consumption of energy. CEQA Guidelines *Appendix F: Energy Conservation*, states the following:

> *"in order to assure that energy implications are considered in project decisions, the California Environmental Quality Act requires that EIRs include a discussion of the potential energy impacts of proposed projects, with particular emphasis on avoiding or reducing inefficient, wasteful, and unnecessary consumption of energy (see Public Resources Code Section 2100(b)(3)). Energy conservation implies that a project's cost effectiveness be reviewed not only in dollars, but also in terms of energy requirements. For many projects, cost effectiveness may be determined more by energy efficiency than by initial dollar costs. A lead agency may consider the extent to which an energy source serving the project has already undergone environmental review that adequately analyzed and mitigated effects of energy production."*

To the extent relevant and applicable to the proposed Project, significant energy implications are considered herein and in other applicable EIR sections.

5.4.1 REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

The proposed Project would be required to directly and indirectly comply with all mandatory regulatory requirements aimed at energy conservation and fuel use that would lessen the energy demands of the proposed Project. There are many such regulatory requirements, with the primary ones discussed briefly below.

A. Federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA)

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) promoted the development of inter-modal transportation systems to maximize mobility as well as address national and local interests in air quality and energy. ISTEA contained factors that Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) were to address in developing transportation plans and programs, including some energy-related factors. To meet the new ISTEA requirements, MPOs adopted explicit policies defining the social, economic, energy, and environmental values guiding transportation decisions. Transportation and access to the Project site is provided primarily by the local and regional roadway systems.

Project Consistency: The Project would not interfere with, nor otherwise obstruct intermodal transportation plans or projects that may be realized pursuant to the ISTEA because the Southern

California Association of Governments (SCAG) is not planning for intermodal facilities on or through the Project site.

B. Federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21)

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) was signed into law in 1998 and builds upon the initiatives established in the ISTEA legislation, discussed above. TEA-21 authorizes highway, highway safety, transit, and other efficient surface transportation programs. TEA-21 continues the program structure established for highways and transit under ISTEA, such as flexibility in the use of funds, emphasis on measures to improve the environment, and focus on a strong planning process as the foundation of good transportation decisions. TEA-21 also provides for investment in research and its application to maximize the performance of the transportation system through, for example, deployment of Intelligent Transportation Systems, to help improve operations and management of transportation systems and vehicle safety.

Project Consistency: The Project site is located near major transportation corridors with proximate access to the Interstate freeway system. The location of the Project site facilitates access, acts to reduce vehicle miles traveled by expanding an existing mining operation that is located near a major transportation corridor (I-15), takes advantage of the existing and planned infrastructure systems, and promotes land use compatibilities through collocation of similar uses. The proposed Project supports the strong planning processes emphasized under TEA-21. The Project is therefore consistent with, and would not otherwise interfere with, nor obstruct implementation of TEA-21.

C. California Integrated Energy Policy Report

Senate Bill 1389 (Bowen, Chapter 568, Statutes of 2002) requires the CEC to prepare a biennial integrated energy policy report that assesses major energy trends and issues facing California's electricity, natural gas, and transportation fuel sectors and provides policy recommendations. The most recent report, 2014 Integrated Energy Policy Report Update (2014 IEPR Update), focuses on next steps for transforming transportation energy use in California. The 2014 IEPR Update addresses the role of transportation in meeting state climate, air quality, and energy goals; the Alternative and Renewable Fuel and Vehicle Technology Program; current and potential funding mechanisms to advance transportation policy; the status of statewide plug-in electric vehicle infrastructure; challenges and opportunities for electric vehicle infrastructure deployment; measuring success and defining metrics within the Alternative and Renewable Fuel and Vehicle Technology Program; market transformation benefits resulting from Alternative and Renewable Fuel and Vehicle Technology Program investments; the state of hydrogen, zero-emission vehicle, biofuels, and natural gas technologies over the next 10 years; transportation linkages with natural gas infrastructure; evaluation of methane emissions from the natural gas system and implications for the transportation system; changing trends in California's sources of crude oil; the increasing use of crude-by-rail in California; the integration of environmental information in renewable energy planning processes; an update on electricity reliability planning for Southern California energy infrastructure; and an update to the electricity demand forecast.

Project Consistency: 2014 IEPR Update is a State Policy report. An individual development project such as the proposed Project has no ability to comply with or conflict with this report.

D. State of California Energy Plan

The CEC is responsible for preparing the State Energy Plan, which identifies emerging trends related to energy supply, demand, conservation, public health and safety, and the maintenance of a healthy economy. The Plan calls for the state to assist in the transformation of the transportation system to improve air quality, reduce congestion, and increase the efficient use of fuel supplies with the least environmental and energy costs. To further this policy, the plan identifies a number of strategies, including assistance to public agencies and fleet operators and encouragement of urban designs that reduce vehicle miles traveled and accommodate pedestrian and bicycle access.

Project Consistency: The Project site is located in close proximity to I-15. As such, use of the site for expanded mining activities would reduce vehicle miles traveled for delivery of aggregate materials, take advantage of existing infrastructure systems, and would not result in land use incompatibilities because the Project represents the expansion of mining activities already occurring on the site (Berck, 2005; SANDAG, 2011)~~(Berck, 2005)~~. The Project therefore supports urban design and planning processes identified under the State of California Energy Plan, is consistent with, and would not otherwise interfere with, nor obstruct implementation of the State of California Energy Plan.

E. California Code Title 24, Part 6, Energy Efficiency Standards

California Code Title 24, Part 6 (also referred to as the California Energy Code), was promulgated by the CEC in 1978 in response to a legislative mandate to create uniform building codes to reduce California's energy consumption. To these ends, the California Energy Code provides energy efficiency standards for residential and nonresidential buildings. California's building efficiency standards are updated on an approximately three-year cycle. The 2013 Standards would continue to improve upon the current 2008 Standards for new construction of, and additions and alterations to, residential and nonresidential buildings. The 2013 Standards went into effect on July 1, 2014, following approval of the California Building Standards Commission.

Project Consistency: The proposed Project does not involve the construction of any new structures, and therefore would not conflict with the provisions of Title 24.

F. Pavely Fuel Efficiency Standards (AB1493)

In California, AB1493 establishes fuel efficiency ratings for model year 2009-2016 passenger cars and light trucks.
Project Consistency: AB 1493 is applicable to the Project because model year 2009-2016 passenger cars and light duty truck vehicles traveling to and from the Project site are required to comply.

G. California Renewable Portfolio Standards (SB 1078)

SB 1078 requires electric corporations to increase the amount of energy obtained from eligible renewable energy resources to 20 percent by 2010 and 33 percent by 2020.

Project Consistency: Energy directly or indirectly supplied to the Project by electric corporations would be required to comply with SB 1078.

5.4.2 ENERGY DEMANDS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Implementation of the proposed Project (i.e. mining activities) would result in energy demands associated with the existing operations trailer, on-site equipment usage, haul truck trips to and from the site, and water usage.

As discussed in the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Report by Urban Crossroads, Inc., the Project would result in a 35.05% increase in electricity usage associated with the aggregate production, which would result in an increased demand for 312 megawatt hours (Mwh) of electricity annually. Additionally, for purposes of analysis in this EIR, 100% of the asphalt batch plant operational characteristics are considered; thus, the Project evaluated herein would result in the consumption of additional natural gas resources. Specifically, the asphalt batch plant would result in the demand for approximately 125,714,000 cubic feet of natural gas per year. (AE, 2016, Section 1; Urban Crossroads, Inc., 2016c, pp. 30,34) ~~would not increase the site's existing electrical energy demands as compared to baseline historic conditions and is not constructing any physical structures that would result in the increase in energy consumption on site (Urban Crossroads, Inc., 2015c, p. 34).~~

Additionally, aggregate will be consumed in the region with or without the proposed Project. The Project would not have an effect on demand for aggregate but would have an effect on the vehicle miles (VMT) travelled for aggregates within the region. Project aggregate would replace materials hauled from farther distances and supply new demand for aggregate that will occur in the Riverside County region, thereby resulting in reduced fossil fuel use associated with the delivery of aggregate materials. Thus, the Project's net effect on fossil fuel consumption would not be wasteful or inefficient. (Urban Crossroads, Inc., 2016c, p. 32; Berck, 2005, pp. 2-3; SANDAG, 2011) ~~(Urban Crossroads, Inc., 2015c, p. 29; Berck, 2005, pp. 2-3)~~

Furthermore, and as discussed in EIR Subsection 3.3.2.~~G~~H, *Project-Related Water Consumption*, implementation of the Project would result in a net reduction in water used for dust suppression activities on-site as compared to historic baseline conditions by approximately 46.99~~45.84~~%. Thus, the Project would result in a net decrease in energy consumption associated with water consumption as compared to historic baseline conditions.

5.4.3 CONCLUSION

Implementation of the proposed Project would consume energy, but not in a wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary manner. In some cases, such as the Project's water consumption reduction and reduced VMTs in the region associated with aggregate haul distances would represent a net decrease in energy consumption as compared to historic baseline conditions.

5.5 EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT AS PART OF THE INITIAL STUDY PROCESS

CEQA Guidelines § 15128 requires that an EIR:

> *"…contain a statement briefly indicating the reasons that various possible significant effects of a project were determined not to be significant and were therefore not discussed in detail in the EIR."*

An Initial Study was prepared for the proposed Project, which is included as *Technical Appendix A* to this EIR. Through the Initial Study process, the City of Lake Elsinore determined that the proposed Project could potentially cause adverse effects, and an EIR is required. Seven (7) environmental issues were found not to have the potential to cause significant adverse effects: Agricultural Resources; Hazards and Hazardous Materials; Land Use and Planning; Mineral Resources; Population and Housing; Public Services; and Recreation. Therefore, these issue areas are not required to be discussed in Section 4.0, *Environmental Analysis*, of this EIR. A brief summary of issues found not to be significant is presented below, with a more detailed analysis provided in *Technical Appendix A*.

5.5.1 AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

The Nichols North site, including the Project's expanded disturbance area (EDA), is identified by the California Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program as "Grazing Land" and "Farmland of Local Importance," while the Nichols South site is designated as "Farmland of Local Importance" and "Urban and Built-Up Land." There are no portions of the Mine or its immediate surroundings that are classified as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland). Therefore, the Project does not have the potential to directly or indirectly convert Farmland to non-agricultural use, and no impact would occur. (CDC, 2012a)

The Mine and surrounding areas are not subject to Williamson Act contracts. The Mine and surrounding areas are zoned for residential, public institutional, commercial, and open space land uses. There are no lands subject to Williamson Act contracts or that are zoned for agricultural use within the Project vicinity. Therefore, the proposed Project has not potential to conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or with an existing Williamson Act contract. (CDC, 2012b)

The Project site does not contain forest land, and no forest land is located adjacent to or within the vicinity of the Project site. Furthermore, no portion of the proposed Project site or surrounding area is zoned for forest land or timberland. Accordingly, the Project has no potential to result in the loss of forest land or convert forest land or a non-forest use. (Lake Elsinore, 2011a, Figure 2.1A)

Therefore, for the reasons stated above, the Project would result in no impacts to Agricultural Resources.

5.5.2 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

The only hazardous materials associated with existing and planned operations of the Nichols Canyon Mine are associated with oils and fuels for mining-related equipment. However, no such fuels or oils are stored on-site, as fuel is delivered to the Mine on an as-needed basis. The proposed Project would result in an extension in the hours of operation at the Mine and would therefore result in an incremental increase in the need for fuel and oil deliveries to the Mine. However, it is not expected that the increased fuel deliveries to the Mine would substantially increase hazards to the public or the environment as compared to existing conditions.

The routine transport of aggregate materials would not result in any significant hazards to the public or the environment. Waste generated on-site is limited to non-hazardous waste piles and refuse from site workers. On-site waste piles ultimately would be graded level of as proposed by RP 2006-01A2, while refuse would be disposed of in accordance with City and County requirements. Accordingly,

potential impacts due to the routine transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials would be less than significant.

The routine transport of aggregate materials and fuels to and from the Mine would not result in any significant hazards to the public or the environment because these fuel delivery trucks are required to comply with federal and state safety regulations governing the transport of hazardous materials. Accordingly, potential impacts due to the reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment would be less than significant.

The Project's proposed EDA would occur as close as 0.15 mile from an existing school facility (Temescal Canyon High School). However, the Project involves aggregate mining and processing activities, and the Mine does not store any petroleum products on-site that could pose a risk to the Temescal Canyon High School. There are no other components of the Project that would result in the emission or storage of acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste. Accordingly, hazardous materials impacts to nearby school facilities would be less than significant.

GPU EIR Figure 3.10-1, *Hazardous Materials Site & SARI Line*, indicates that there may be a hazardous materials site located south of Nichols Road. However, no hazardous materials sites are located on the Nichols Canyon Mine site, including within the proposed EDA. In addition, the Mine is not included on any list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. Accordingly, no impact would occur. (Lake Elsinore, 2011b)

No airports are located within two miles of the Mine. ~~Skylark Field is located approximately 6.25 miles southeast of the Mine, although the Mine is not located within the Airport Influence Area of the Skylark Airport.~~ March Air Reserve Base is located approximately 11.8 northeast of the Mine, and the Mine is not located within the Airport Influence Area of the March Air Reserve Base. Therefore, the Project would not result in a safety hazard for people working at the Mine and no impact would occur. (Lake Elsinore, 2011a, Figure 2-7; Google Earth, 2013)

Skylark Field is an private airport facility located approximately 5.7 miles southeast of the Mine, although the Mine is not located within the Airport Influence Area of the Skylark Airport.~~There are no private airport facilities in the Mine's vicinity (Google Earth, 2013).~~ Thus, the Project would not expose future site workers to hazards associated with public or private airport operations and no impact would occur. (Google Earth, 2013)

The Nichols Canyon Mine is not identified as an emergency access route on any local or regional plans. Although Nichols Road could serve as an emergency access route for the residences located east of the Mine, there are no components of the Project that would obstruct access along Nichols Road. Moreover, emergency egress for the residential uses to the east of the Mine is available via SR-74 to the southeast. Accordingly, there would be no impact due to interference with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

According to Figure 3.10-2, *Wildlife Susceptibility*, of the GPU EIR the Nichols Canyon Mine is located in an area with "Very High" susceptibility to wildfires. However, the Project would not involve the construction of any structures that could result in significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fire hazards. Accordingly, a less-than-significant impact due to fire hazards would occur. (Lake Elsinore, 2011b).

Therefore, for the reasons stated above, the Project would result in either no impact or less-than-significant impacts to Hazards and Hazardous Materials.

5.5.3 LAND USE AND PLANNING

The Nichols Canyon Mine comprises approximately 199 acres of land, of which approximately 116 acres are currently used for mining activities. Expansion of the site's disturbance limits to accommodate an additional 24 acres of mining area would not physically disrupt or divide the arrangement of an established community. The Mine is located adjacent and to the east of I-15 and undeveloped land is located to the east and north of the site. The only existing residential community in the Project's vicinity occurs to the east of the Mine's southeastern boundary. As such, there are no components of the proposed Project with the potential to physically divide any existing communities. The Mine site does not provide access to established communities and would not isolate any established communities or residences from neighboring communities. Therefore, Project implementation would not physically divide an established community and no impact would occur.

The Nichols Canyon Mine is designated for "Open Space/Manufactured Slopes (OS)" and "Commercial-Specific Plan (C-SP)" land uses by the Alberhill Ranch Specific Plan (Lake Elsinore, 1997, Exhibit 3). In addition, the City's General Plan Land Use Plan applies an "Extractive Overlay" designation to a majority of the Mine (including the EDA), which "…provides for continued operations of extractive uses, such as aggregates, coal, clay mining, and certain ancillary uses" (Lake Elsinore, 2011a, Figure 2.1A and p. 2-18). Expanded mining operations proposed as part of the Project would be fully consistent with the Extractive Overlay designation. The proposed Project also would not conflict with any policies of the General Plan or the Alberhill Ranch Specific Plan, as the proposed Project is limited to the expansion of an existing condition recognized by the General Plan and Specific Plan. Accordingly, no impact would occur.

The Nichols Canyon Mine is located in a region that is subject to Western Riverside County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP). The MSHCP establishes conservation requirements for sensitive habitats; sensitive plant and animal species; and jurisdictional and riparian resources. The MSHCP identifies the Mine as occurring within Cell Group W (Cells 4067 and 4070) of the Elsinore Area Plan. The Conservation Criteria for Cell Group W is to achieve conservation of 80~~ percent~~% - 90~~ percent~~% of the Cell Group, focusing on the northwestern portion of the Cell Group. The MSHCP also identifies the Mine as occurring within the Burrowing Owl Survey Area. (Riverside County, 2016)~~(Riverside County, 2015)~~ However, in 2004, the owners of the Nichols Canyon Mine at the time, along with other landowners, entered into a Settlement Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding ("Agreement") with the County of Riverside which, among other things, explicitly exempted the Nichols Canyon Mine from all provisions of the MSHCP. As a result of the Agreement, the MSHCP no longer applies to the Project site. However, out of an abundance of caution, the Project's conflict with the MSHCP was determined to be a significant and unavoidable impact. Please refer to EIR Section 4.3, *Biological Resources*, Threshold f. for a discussion of the Project's impacts due to a conflict with the MSHCP. No new or additional impacts would occur beyond what is described in EIR Section 4.3. Additionally, the Project would comply with Chapter 19.04 of the City of Lake Elsinore's Municipal Code, which requires payment of fees pursuant to the Stephens' kangaroo rat habitat conservation plan (SKR HCP). Payment of fees as required by Chapter 19.04 would ensure compliance with the SKR HCP, as no portion of the Project site is targeted for conservation under the SKR HCP. There are no other adopted Habitat Conservation Plans, Natural Community Conservation Plans, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plans that are applicable to the Nichols

Canyon Mine. Accordingly, no impact would occur, other than the Project's conflict with the MSHCP which is evaluated and discussed in EIR Subsection 4.3.

For the reasons stated above, the proposed Project would result in no impacts to Land Use and Planning.

5.5.4 MINERAL RESOURCES

According to mapping information available from the California Department of Conservation (CDC), the southern portions of the Mine are located within Mineral Resources Zone (MRZ) 3b, with the remainder of the Mine occurring within MRZ-4. MRZ-3b represents "[a]reas containing inferred mineral occurrences of undetermined mineral resources significance…" and occurs on sites "…that appear to be favorable environments for the occurrence of specific mineral deposits." MRZ-4 represents "[a]reas of no known mineral occurrences where geologic information does not rule out either the presence or absence of significant mineral resources." (CDC, 1991) The proposed Project would involve the continuation and expansion of an existing mining operation, which would result in the continued commercial extraction and production of the property's mineral resources. Accordingly, the proposed Project would make productive use of the property's mineral resources, as planned for and expected by the California State Mining and Geology Board, which oversees the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA). The Project would not result in any adverse impacts due to the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region or the residents of the State. The Project would allow continued use of the property's aggregate resources, which are of value to the State and the region. Accordingly, impacts to Mineral Resources would not occur.

The City of Lake Elsinore General Plan applies an Extractive Overlay to a majority of the Mine site (including the EDA), which allows for "…provides for continued operations of extractive uses, such as aggregates, coal, clay mining, and certain ancillary uses" (Lake Elsinore, 2011a, Figure 2.1A and p. 2-18). The Alberhill Ranch Specific Plan does not address mineral resources, nor does it preclude on-going reclamation activities (Lake Elsinore, 1997). As noted under Threshold 4.11(a), the proposed Project would involve the continuation and expansion of an existing mining operation, which would result in the continued commercial extraction and production of the property's mineral resources. Accordingly, the proposed Project would make productive use of the property's mineral resources, as planned for and expected by the California State Mining and Geology Board. The Project would not result in any adverse impacts due to the loss of availability of a locally-important resources recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan. On the contrary, the Project would allow continued use of the property's aggregate resources, in conformance with the General Plan's Extractive Overlay designation for the site. As such, no adverse impact would occur.

5.5.5 POPULATION AND HOUSING

The proposed Project would expand an existing mining operation and would result in up to two (2) new employees on-site. Although increased employment opportunities would occur on-site, the relatively minor increase in employment on-site would not induce substantial population growth. In addition, the Project does not involve the construction of any infrastructure that could otherwise induce substantial population growth. Accordingly, no impact would occur.

The Nichols Canyon Mine does not contain any residential structures or residents under existing conditions. As such, the expansion of mining operations on-site would not result in the displacement of substantial numbers of people or existing housing, and no impacts would occur.

Therefore, for the reasons stated above, the proposed Project would not result in impacts to Population and Housing.

5.5.6 PUBLIC SERVICES

A. Fire Protection

The proposed Project involves the continuation and expansion of an existing mining operation, which is provided fire protection services under existing conditions by the Riverside County Fire Department. The closet fire station to the Nichols Canyon Mine is Station 85, which is located approximately 2.9 miles to the southwest (Google Earth, 2013). The Project would result in a net increase of two employees at the site. The existing Nichols Canyon Mine site already generates a demand for fire protection services. The Project would extend the Mine's operating hours; however, the increased hours of mining, processing, and export activities would not result in nor require new or physically altered fire protection facilities, or the need for new or physically altered fire protection facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for fire protection. There are no components of the proposed Project that would require an expansion of fire protection services or facilities that could result in adverse environmental effects. Accordingly, there would be a less-than-significant impact to fire protection services.

B. Police Protection

The existing Nichols Canyon Mine site already generates a demand for police protection services, and the Project would not substantially increase the existing demand on this public service. In addition, the Project does not propose any change in the scope of operations or hours of operation that would require an expansion of law enforcement. Accordingly, there would be a less-than-significant impact to police protection services and no need for physical alterations of police stations to service the Project.

C. Public Schools

The proposed Project does not involve the construction of any new homes, would not affect local demographics, and would only result in two new employees on-site. As such, there would be no discernible increase or decrease in demand for school services resulting from Project implementation and no need for physical alterations to school facilities. No impact would occur.

D. Parks Facilities

The proposed Project does not involve the construction of any new homes, would not affect local demographics, and would only result in a few new employees on-site. As such, there would be no discernible increase or decrease in demand for parks resulting from Project implementation and no need for physical alterations to park facilities. No impact would occur.

E. Other Public Facilities

The proposed Project does not involve the construction of any new homes, would not affect local demographics, and would only result in two new employees on-site. As such, there would be no discernible increase or decrease in demand for library services or other public services resulting from Project implementation and no need for physical alterations to library or other public facilities.

For the reasons stated above, the proposed Project would result in either no impacts or less-than-significant impacts to Public Services.

5.5.7 RECREATION

The Project does not propose any type of residential use or other land use that may generate a population that would increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities in such a manner as to result in or accelerate a discernible physical deterioration of recreational facilities. The Project only would result in an increase of two employees, which would not generate a regional population with a potential for causing or contributing to physical deterioration of any recreational facility. Accordingly, implementation of the proposed Project would not result in the increased use or substantial physical deterioration of an existing neighborhood or regional park or include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities.

The Project does not involve or propose any recreational facilities. Implementation of the Project would result in an increase of two employees, which would not generate a regional population that would require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities. Accordingly, the Project would not result in the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment, and no impact would occur.

As such, implementation of the proposed Project would not result in any significant impacts associated with Recreation.

6.0 ALTERNATIVES

CEQA Guidelines § 15126.6(a) indicates the scope of alternatives to a proposed project that must be evaluated:

> *"An EIR shall describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives. An EIR need not consider every conceivable alternative to a project. Rather it must consider a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives that will foster informed decision making and public participation. An EIR is not required to consider alternatives which are infeasible. The lead agency is responsible for selection of a range of project alternatives for examination and must publicly disclose its reasoning for selecting those alternatives. There is no ironclad rule governing the nature or scope of the alternatives to be discussed other than the rule of reason."*

As discussed in Section 4.0 of this EIR, the proposed Project would result in significant adverse environmental effects that cannot be mitigated to below levels of significance after the implementation of Project design features, mandatory regulatory requirements, and feasible mitigation measures. The unavoidable significant impacts are:

- Air Quality Threshold a: Significant Unavoidable Direct and Cumulatively-Considerable Impact. As shown in Table 4.2-18, *Summary of Peak Operational Emission (With Mitigation)*, with implementation of the required mitigation, the Project's emissions of NO_x would exceed the SCAQMD Regional Threshold of Significance for this pollutant. NO_X is a pre-cursor to ozone, for which the region is considered non-attainment under both State and Federal standards. Although the Project would not exceed the regional growth forecasts because the Project would only result in the addition of two new employees on-site, the Project's level of NO_X emissions represents a conflict with the SCAQMD 2012 AQMP; this is evaluated as a significant direct and cumulatively-considerable impact of the proposed Project for which no additional, feasible mitigation is available.

- Air Quality Threshold b and c: Significant Unavoidable Direct and Cumulatively-Considerable Impact. As shown in Table 4.2-18, *Summary of Peak Operational Emission (With Mitigation)*, the Project's emissions of NO_X still would exceed the SCAQMD's Regional Thresholds even with the incorporation of mitigation. NO_x emissions would contribute to the region's non-attainment status for ozone. Accordingly, the Project's impact due to a violation of air quality standards for an ozone precursor (NO_x), a contribution to air quality violations for ozone, and a cumulatively considerable net increase of ozone precursors represent significant and unavoidable impacts of the proposed Project on both a direct and cumulatively-considerable basis for which additional feasible mitigation is not available.

- Biological Resources Thresholds e, and f: Direct Significant and Unavoidable Impact. The Project would result in direct impacts due to non-compliance with City Ordinance 1124 and the MSHCP. Although the Project would mitigate its impacts to biological resources to below a level of significance, the Project's non-compliance with Ordinance 1124 and the

MSHCP nonetheless represents significant and unavoidable direct impacts of the proposed Project that cannot be mitigated to below a level of significance. However, because the vast majority of properties within the MSHCP area and that are subject to Ordinance 1124 (or other the implementing ordinance of other local jurisdictions) would be required to comply with the provisions of the MSHCP and all MSHCP-related requirements, the Project's non-compliance with Ordinance 1124 and the MSHCP would be less-than-cumulatively considerable.

- Noise Thresholds a, c, and d: Direct and Cumulatively Considerable Significant and Unavoidable Impact. ~~Although i~~Implementation of Mitigation Measures MM 4.8~~3~~-1 through MM 4.8~~3~~-3 would reduce the Project's operational-related noise impacts during the extended nocturnal hours~~,~~; however, during daytime operations nearby residential structures located within 794 feet of mining activities within the EDA would be exposed periodically to noise levels exceeding the Riverside County daytime noise standard of 50 dBA L_{50}. Thus, a significant impact would occur during the phases of mining within the southeastern portions of the proposed Expanded Disturbance Area (EDA) that are located within 794 feet of the residential structures and when a minimum headwall of 15 feet in height cannot be maintained between mining areas and nearby residential structures~~located within approximately 500 feet of mining activities~~. During this phase of mining operations, the nearby residences located within approximately 794 ~~500~~ feet of mining activities would be exposed to noise levels exceeding 55 dBA L_{50} ~~Leq (10 min)~~, which represents a significant and unavoidable impact of the proposed Project on both a direct and cumulatively-considerable basis.

- Transportation and Circulation Threshold a: Cumulatively Significant and Unavoidable Impact. As detailed in Table 4.9-30, *Intersection Analysis for EAPC (2016) Conditions with Improvements*, with implementation of Mitigation Measures MM TR-1 and MM TR-2 and installation of traffic signals, the LOS for the intersection of the I-15 Northbound ramps at Nichols Road would improve from LOS F to LOS D during the AM and PM peak hours under Year 2016 conditions. Additionally, with implementation of Mitigation Measures MM TR-1 and MM TR-2, the LOS for the intersection of the I-15 Southbound Ramps at Nichols Road would improve from LOS F to LOS D during the AM and PM peak hours under Year 2016 conditions. Similarly, and as shown in Table 4.9-31, *Intersection Analysis for Horizon Year (2035) Conditions With Improvements*, with implementation of Mitigation Measures MM TR-1 and MM TR-2 and installation of traffic signals, the LOS for the intersection of I-15 Northbound ramps at Nichols Road would operate at an acceptable LOS D with implementation of the Project under long-term (Year 2035 conditions). With implementation of Mitigation Measures MM TR-1 and MM TR-2, the LOS for the intersection of the I-15 Southbound Ramps at Nichols Road would operate at LOS C in the AM peak hour and LOS D in the PM peak hour under long-term (Year 2035) conditions. Thus, with improvements, the Project's cumulatively-~~-~~considerable impacts to the intersections of the I-15 Northbound On- and Off-Ramps at Nichols Road and I-15 Southbound On- and Off-Ramps at Nichols Road under Year 2016 and Year 2035 conditions would be reduced to less-than-significant levels. However, no schedule is prescribed by the TUMF or TIF program for these improvements, and it is not practical to assume that the improvements would be installed by 2016 (when operations pursuant to SMP 2015-01 and RP2006-01A2 are expected to commence). Improvement schedules for these improvements are partially dependent on the

pace of new development and associated pace of fee collection that occurs under the TUMF and the TIF. Under CEQA, a fair-share monetary contribution to a mitigation fund is adequate mitigation if the funds are part of a reasonable plan that the relevant agency (in this case WRCOG and the City of Lake Elsinore) is committed to implementing. As such, while the proposed Project can mitigate its cumulatively considerable contribution to these impacts through the payment of fees, the improvements would likely not be in place at their time of need (before the deficiency occurs). As such, this EIR recognizes a short-term and unavoidable cumulatively considerable impact at these locations, which would occur until the TUMF and TIF improvements are in place.

The proposed Project would contribute to, but would not cause, impacts to the I-15 Northbound freeway segments (LOS F in the AM peak hour and LOS E during the PM peak hour) and the I-15 Southbound freeway segments (LOS F in the PM peak hour) under Horizon Year (2035) conditions. Although the Project's level of traffic affecting these facilities would be below the threshold at which Caltrans normally would require a traffic study, the Project's contribution to these deficiencies are nonetheless considered cumulatively considerable. Long-range plans by Caltrans for the I-15 Freeway include the construction of two tolled Express Lanes from Cajalco Road to Central Avenue (SR-74), which are improvements that are subject to available funding. Planned improvements to the I-15 Northbound and Southbound mainlines would improve LOS along these freeway segments. With improvements, the I-15 Southbound freeway segments would improve to LOS C in the AM peak hour and LOS E during the PM peak hour. Additionally, the Northbound freeway segments would improve to LOS E during the AM peak hour and LOS D during the PM peak hour. Thus, while planned Caltrans improvements to these freeway segments would improve the LOS, both the Northbound and Southbound freeway segments would continue to operate at a deficient LOS during at least one peak hour. There is no additional feasible mitigation to reduce these cumulatively-considerable impacts to below a level of significance. Moreover, the timing of Caltrans' improvements is not currently known. Therefore, the EIR recognizes the Project's cumulatively-considerable impacts to the I-15 Northbound and Southbound freeway segments as cumulatively-considerable and unavoidable impacts of the proposed Project.

~~The Project would contribute more than 50 peak hour trips to the merge/diverge ramp junction of I-15 Northbound at Nichols Road under Horizon Year (2035) conditions.~~ Project-related traffic would contribute to, but would not directly cause, the deficient LOS at the merge/diverge ramp junctions of I-15 Northbound Off-Ramp at Nichols Road (LOS E in the AM peak hour) and the I-15 Southbound On- and Off-Ramps at Nichols Road (LOS E in the PM peak hour) under Horizon Year (2035).~~;~~ Although the Project's level of traffic affecting these facilities would be below the threshold at which Caltrans normally would require a traffic study, the Project's contribution of traffic to ~~accordingly, the Project's impacts to this~~ these merge/diverge ramp junction under Horizon Year (2035) conditions nonetheless would be cumulatively considerable. Long-range plans by Caltrans for the I-15 Freeway include the construction of two tolled Express Lanes from Cajalco Road to Central Avenue (SR-74), which are improvements that are subject to available funding. As shown in Table 4.9-31, with construction of the planned improvements, the queuing issues at the I-15 Northbound Off-Ramp at Nichols Road and I-15 Southbound On- and Off-Ramps at Nichols Road would be reduced to acceptable levels. However, it is possible that queuing deficiencies may still be

experienced in the interim period prior to the completion of the improvements to I-15. As such, the Project's impacts to the I-15 Freeway ~~n~~Northbound ~~o~~Off-~~r~~Ramp and the I-15 Freeway Southbound On- and Off-Ramps under Horizon Year (2035) represent~~s~~ a near-term significant and unavoidable impact of the proposed Project for which no feasible mitigation is available.

Under Horizon Year (2035) conditions, the Project would contribute to, but would not directly cause queuing issues during the weekday peak 95th percentile traffic flows at the I-15 Freeway Northbound and Southbound Freeway Off-Ramps. Although the Project's level of traffic affecting these facilities would be below the threshold at which Caltrans normally would require a traffic study, t~~T~~he Project's contribution to this projected deficiency is evaluated as a cumulatively considerable impact. As noted above, long-range plans by Caltrans for the I-15 Freeway include the construction of two tolled Express Lanes from Cajalco Road to Central Avenue (SR-74), which are improvements that are subject to available funding. As shown in Table 4.9-32, *Basic Freeway Segment Analysis for Horizon Year (2035) Conditions with Improvements*, even with the planned Express Lanes, the I-15 N~~n~~orthbound ~~segment at the~~ and Southbound ~~o~~Off-~~r~~Ramps ~~with~~ at Nichols Road would continue to operate at a deficient LOS during at least one peak hour. ~~experience a deficient LOS E during the AM peak hour, and the southbound freeway off ramp at Nichols Road would experience a deficient LOS E during the PM peak hour. There are no additional improvements planned along these segments of the I-15, nor are there any funding mechanisms identified by Caltrans for such cumulatively considerable impacts. However, and as noted previously, the Project would contribute fewer than 50 peak hour trips to these freeway mainline segments.~~ As such, the Project's contribution to the ~~projected freeway mainline~~I-15 Northbound and Southbound Off-Ramps queuing deficiencies under Horizon Year (2035) conditions represent~~s~~ ~~a less than~~ cumulatively ~~–~~considerable impact~~s~~ of the proposed Project for which no feasible mitigation is available.

- Transportation and Circulation Threshold b: Cumulatively Significant and Unavoidable Impact. As discussed above under the discussion of Transportation and Circulation Threshold a., the Project would result in cumulatively considerable impacts for which feasible mitigation is not available at the following facilities:

  - EAPC (2016) Conditions:
    - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Northbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection (LOS F AM and PM peak hours);
    - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Southbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection (LOS F in the AM and PM peak hours);
    - Cumulatively considerable impact due to the need to signalize the I-15 Northbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection; and
    - Cumulatively considerable impact due to the need to signalize the I-15 Southbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection.

  - Horizon Year (2035) Conditions:
    - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Northbound Ramp/Nichols Road intersection (LOS F during both AM and PM peak hours);

- Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Northbound Ramp/Nichols Road intersection (LOS F during both AM and PM peak hours);
- Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Southbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection (LOS F for both AM and PM peak hours);
- Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Southbound Freeway Segments (LOS F during the PM peak hour);
- Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Northbound Freeway Segments (LOS F during the AM peak hour and LOS E during the PM peak hour);
- Cumulatively considerable freeway off-ramp queuing impact to the I-15 Northbound Off-Ramp at Nichols Road (2,838 ft. queue during the AM peak hour and 3,520 ft. queue during the PM peak hour);
- Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Southbound Off-Ramp/Nichols Road Freeway Ramp Junction Merge/Diverge (LOS F during the PM peak hour);
- Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Northbound On-Ramp/Nichols Road Freeway Ramp Junction Merge/Diverge (LOS F during the AM peak hour and LOS E during the PM peak hour);
- Cumulatively considerable impact due to the need to signalize the I-15 Northbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection; and
- Cumulatively considerable impact due to the need to signalize the I-15 Southbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection.

~~• at the junction of Nichols Road and the I-15 northbound ramps; would contribute to the need for signalization of Nichols Road at the I-15 northbound ramps; would contribute to queuing issues during the weekday peak 95th percentile traffic flows at the I-15 Freeway Northbound Off-Ramp; and would contribute to, but would not cause, the projected deficiency at the freeway merge/diverge junctions of I-15 Northbound Ramps at Nichols Road. This facility is part of the CMP roadway network. Although with implementation of the improvements programmed as part of TUMF and/or TIF these impacts would be reduced to less than significant levels (with exception of the Project's cumulatively considerable junction merge/diverge impacts, which would remain significant and unavoidable), improvement schedules for these improvements are partially dependent on the pace of new development and associated pace of fee collection that occurs under the TUMF and the TIF. Under CEQA, a fair share monetary contribution to a mitigation fund is adequate mitigation if the funds are part of a reasonable plan that the relevant agency (in this case WRCOG and the City of Lake Elsinore) is committed to implementing. As such, while the proposed Project can mitigate its cumulatively considerable contribution to these impacts through the payment of fees, the improvements would likely not be in place at their time of need (before the deficiency occurs). As such, this EIR recognizes a short-term and unavoidable cumulatively considerable impact at these locations, which would occur until the TUMF, TIF, and planned Caltrans improvements are in place.~~

6.1 ALTERNATIVES UNDER CONSIDERATION

The following scenarios are identified by the City of Lake Elsinore as potential alternatives to implementation of the proposed Project.

6.1.1 NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE

The No Project Alternative considers no mining activities within the Expanded Disturbance Area (EDA). Mining would be permitted within the existing approved Nichols Canyon Mine Reclamation Plan limits. This alternative was selected by the Lead Agency for the purpose of conducting a comparative analysis of the environmental effects of the proposed Project to the environmental effects of the No Project ~~a~~Alternative which would leave the EDA in its existing condition. Under existing conditions mining occurs within the existing approved Nichols Canyon Mine Reclamation Plan limits. If the proposed Project were not approved, it is reasonable to expect that the EDA's undeveloped property would remain vacant and no mining would occur within the EDA.

6.1.2 REDUCED EXPANDED DISTURBANCE AREA (REDA)

The Reduced Expanded Disturbance Area (REDA) Alternative, as depicted on Figure 6-1, *Reduced Expanded Disturbance Alternative*, considers a reduction in the proposed EDA from approximately 24 acres under the proposed Project to approximately 17 acres~~, as depicted on Figure 6-1, *Environmentally Superior Alternative*~~. All other components of the REDA would be the same as described for the proposed Project in EIR Section 3.0, *Project Description*. This alternative was selected by the Lead Agency to consider an alternative that would reduce to a level below significant the Project's daytime operational noise impacts to sensitive noise receptors (i.e., residential uses southeast of the EDA) that are located within 794~~500~~ feet of mining operations (i.e., eight homes located east of Dexter Avenue and south of Nichols Road that would be exposed to daytime mining-related noise levels exceeding 55 dB Leq (10-min) under the proposed Project). Additionally, this alternative also would reduce the Project's impacts to biological resources, but would not avoid the Project's significant and unavoidable impact due to a conflict with the MSCHP. Nonetheless, because this alternative would eliminate the Project's significant and unavoidable impacts due to daytime operational noise, and would reduce impacts to biological resources, this alternative has been selected as the "Environmentally Superior Alternative" pursuant to CEQA Guidelines § 15123.6(e)(2).

6.1.3 REDUCED TRAFFIC ALTERNATIVE (RTA)

Under near-term cumulative (Existing plus Ambient plus Project plus Cumulative [EAPC] 2016) conditions and Horizon Year (2035) conditions, the Project would contribute more than 25~~50~~ peak hour trips to the intersection of Nichols Road at I-15 Northbound On- and Off-Ramps and the intersection of Nichols Road at I-15 Southbound On- and Off-Ramps. Project-related traffic would therefore contribute to the need for improvements to these intersections under near-term conditions, and to the need for freeway improvements under long-term (2035) conditions to address freeway mainline segment, freeway merge/diverge, and queuing issues. While improvements are currently planned by Caltrans, the TUMF program, and/or the City's TIF program, the improvements would likely not be in place at their time of need (before the deficiency occurs). The Project Applicant has no control over the pace of Caltrans, TUMF, or TIF improvements. Thus, the only viable alternative that would reduce the Project's cumulatively considerable traffic impacts ~~to a level below significant~~ would be to reduce the maximum allowed daily tonnage such that the proposed Project would contribute~~ fewer than 50 peak hour trips~~ less traffic to the I-15 Northbound On- and Off-Ramps at Nichols Road and the I-15 Southbound On- and Off-Ramps at Nichols Road.

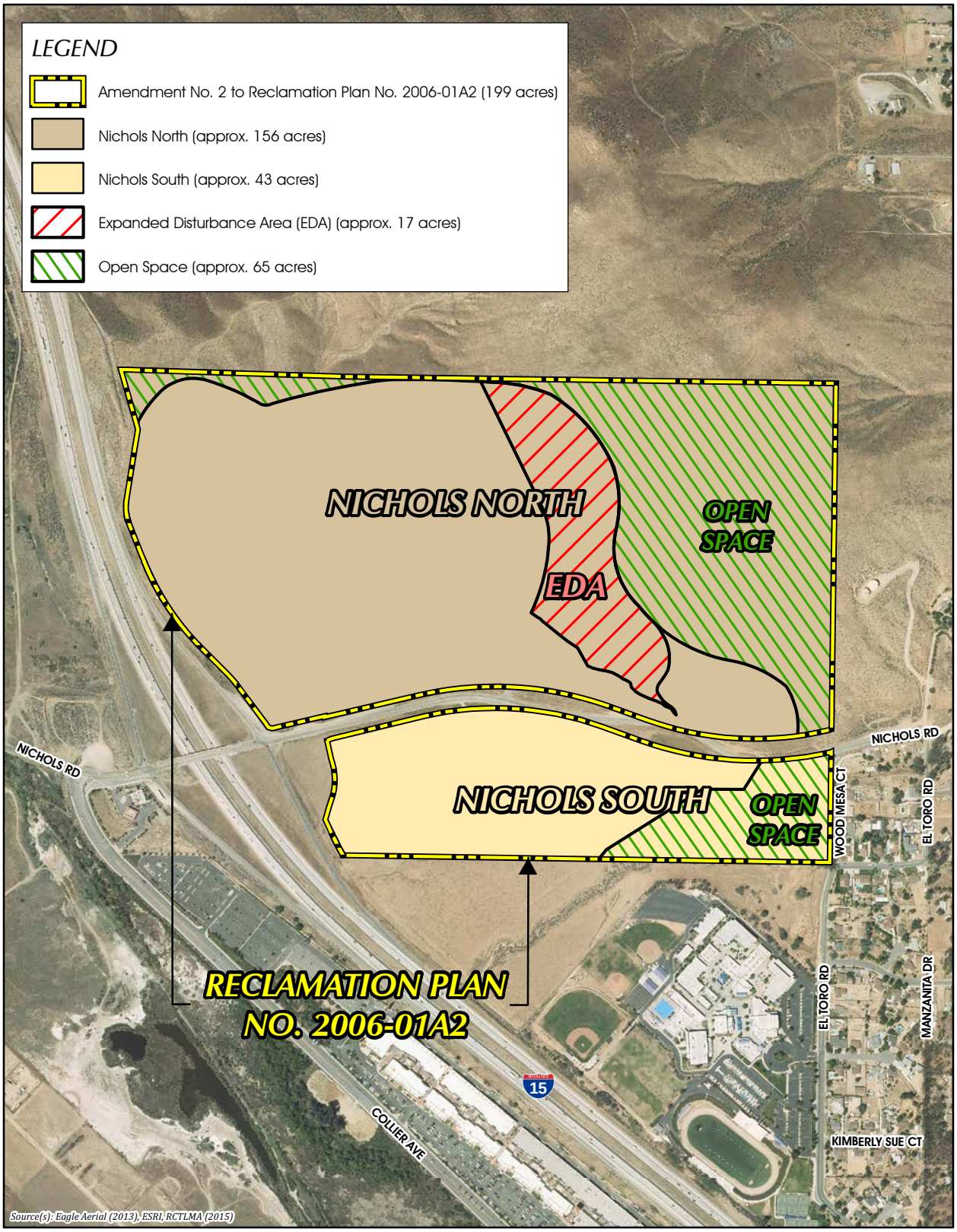

Figure 6-1

REDUCED EXPANDED DISTURBANCE AREA

Accordingly, the Reduced Traffic Alternative (RTA) considers a reduction in maximum daily tonnage at the Mine from 5,000 tons per day (tpd) to 4,250~~4,578~~ tpd, with approximately 1,490~~1,330~~ tpd attributable to the proposed Project and ~~3,248~~2,760 tpd attributable to baseline operational conditions. Using the values presented in EIR Table 4.9-11, 1,490~~1,330~~ tpd would result in approximately 361~~223~~ average daily trips (ADT), with 55~~49~~ AM peak hour trips and 45~~40~~ trips during the PM peak hour. Due to the restriction in tpd, it is expected that this alternative ~~would~~ may take ~~approximately 9%~~ longer to achieve the final grades as specified by RP 2006-01A2 due to the reduction in daily maximum operating capacity at the Mine.

All other components of the RTA would be identical to the proposed Project. This alternative was selected to eliminate the Project's near-term EAPC (2016) cumulatively considerable impacts to transportation and traffic, and reduce the Project's Horizon Year (2030) cumulatively considerable impacts to transportation and traffic, which also would reduce the Project's daily emissions of air quality pollutants and traffic-related noise.

6.2 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

An EIR is required to identify any alternatives that were considered by the Lead Agency but were rejected as infeasible. Among the factors described by CEQA Guidelines §15126.6 in determining whether to exclude alternatives from detailed consideration in the EIR are: a) failure to meet most of the basic project objectives, b) infeasibility, or c) inability to avoid significant environmental impacts. With respect to the feasibility of potential alternatives to the proposed Project, CEQA Guidelines §15126.6(f)(1) notes:

> *"Among the factors that may be taken into account when addressing the feasibility of alternatives are site suitability, economic viability, availability of infrastructure, general plan consistency, other plans or regulatory limitations, jurisdictional boundaries…and whether the proponent can reasonably acquire, control or otherwise have access to the alternative site…"*

In determining an appropriate range of alternatives to be evaluated in this EIR, a number of possible alternatives were initially considered and, for a variety of reasons, rejected. Alternatives were rejected because either: 1) they could not accomplish the basic objectives of the Project, 2) they would not have resulted in a reduction of significant adverse environmental impacts, or 3) they were considered infeasible to construct or operate. A summary of the alternatives that were considered but rejected are described below.

6.2.1 ALTERNATIVE SITES

CEQA does not require that an analysis of alternative sites always be included in an EIR. However, if the surrounding circumstances make it reasonable to consider an alternative site then this alternative should be considered and analyzed in the EIR. In making the decision to include or exclude analysis of an alternative site, the "*key question and first step in analysis is whether any of the significant effects of the project would be avoided or substantially lessened by putting the project in another location. Only locations that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project need to be considered for inclusion in the EIR*" (CEQA Guidelines § 15126.6(f)(2)).

Based on a review of aerial photography, the City of Lake Elsinore General Plan Land Use Plan Map and a list of approved/pending development proposals within the City of Lake Elsinore and nearby portions of unincorporated Riverside County and the City of Wildomar which are included in the Project's Traffic Impact Analysis (EIR *Technical Appendix J*; refer to EIR Table 4.9-12 for a list of cumulative developments), there are no other available~~,~~ properties under control of the Project Applicant that are designated for surface mining operations and that have the potential for expansion to encompass 24 acres of new mining area. All lands in the Project vicinity that are already being mined are under ownership of other parties and are being mined in accordance with existing vested and/or approved mining operations.

If alternative sites located within the Project vicinity not zoned for mining are considered, it is likely that the impacts of such a new mining operation on lands not previously subject to mining activities would result in increased impacts to the environment. This is because there are very few sites that are as close in proximity to regional transportation corridors (such as I-15) as the Project site. Thus, any alternative location would likely result in increased impacts to traffic and related issue areas, such as air quality, noise, and greenhouse gas emissions, as compared to the proposed Project. Furthermore, mining on alternative site locations would result in new physical impacts as compared to the proposed Project because any such site would need to include a site for aggregate processing equipment outside of the proposed mining areas. Furthermore, it would not be viable to establish a new mining operation on an alternative location that encompasses only 24 acres. Therefore, the proposed Project would result in fewer environmental impacts in the local area than would result from expanded mining activities on other active mines or on undeveloped properties in the Project vicinity.

For these reasons, an alternative sites analysis is not required for the proposed Project.

6.3 ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

The following discussion compares the impacts of each alternative considered by the Lead Agency with the impacts of the proposed Project, as detailed in Section 4.0, *Environmental Analysis*, of this EIR. A conclusion is provided for each impact as to whether the alternative results in one of the following: (1) reduction or elimination of the proposed Project's impact, (2) a greater impact than would occur under the proposed Project, (3) the same impact as the proposed Project, or (4) a new impact in addition to the proposed Project's impacts. Table 6-1 at the end of this section compares the environmental hazard and resource impacts of the alternatives with those of the proposed Project and identifies the ability of the alternative to meet the basic objectives of the Project. As described in EIR Subsection 3.2, the Project's fundamental purpose is to increase the availability of high-quality aggregate resources within the local area in order to help meet the regional demand for aggregate material. T~~t~~he proposed Project's specific objectives are:

A. To increase the availability of ~~e~~ high-quality aggregate reserves ~~available~~ within the local area ~~on the property~~ in order to help meet the regional demand for aggregate material, to make the best use of the Mine's aggregate resources, and by revising approved Reclamation Plan 2006-01A1 to accommodate an expansion to the approved limits of aggregate mining activities.

B. To facilitate more efficient export processing of aggregate materials from the Mine site by extending the permitted operational hours for mining activities on-site.

C. To better reflect actual mining capacity for the Mine site by reducing the annual tonnage allowed to be mined and exported from the Nichols Canyon Mine site.

D. To reclaim the 199-acre Mine site to a usable condition by revising Reclamation Plan 2006-01A1 to identify ultimate site elevations in conformance with the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA) and the regulations and requirements of the City of Lake Elsinore.

E. To minimize environmental impacts associated with mining and reclamation activities at the Nichols Canyon Mine site in conformance with the requirements of SMARA and the City of Lake Elsinore.

F. To establish updated standards for operational mining activities at the Nichols Canyon Mine site in a manner that complies with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations and requirements.

G. To maximize the use of aggregate reserves and create the most usable space from the Mine's disturbance by designing slopes that accomplish this objective.

6.3.1 NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE (NPA)

The No Project Alternative (NPA) allows decision-makers to compare the environmental impacts of approving the proposed Project to the environmental impacts that would occur if the Mine were to continue operating under approved Reclamation Plan RP 2006-01A1. Under this alterative, no mining would occur within the EDA. Under RP 2006-01A1, approximately 116 acres of the Mine are currently subject to mining and reclamation activities and would continue to be mined until the final grades established by RP 2006-01A1 are achieved on-site. Under this alternative, there would be no change in the Mine's annual tonnage limit of 4,000,000 tons per year (tpy), and mining, asphalt batch plant, processing, ~~and~~ aggregate export activities on-site would continue to be limited to between 7:00 a.m. and 12:00 a.m. (Monday through Friday, excluding Federal Holidays) and between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. (Saturdays only), and export of asphalt would continue to be allowed 24 hours per day. For purposes of analysis herein, it is assumed that under the No Project Alternative a maximum of 3,248 tons per day (tpd) would be mined (as 1,752 tpd are assumed by this EIR to be attributable to SMP 2015-01 out of a maximum daily production average of 5,000 tpd).

A. Aesthetics

No unique or scenic vistas would be impacted by the Project or the NPA, as the Project site does not contain any scenic vistas, nor does it offer unique views of any visually prominent features. Thus, impacts to scenic vistas and unique views would be similar to the Project's less-than-significant impact to scenic vistas.

The Project site also is not visible from any State-designated scenic highways. As such, impacts to resources visible from a designated scenic highway corridor would be similar to the Project's less-than-significant impacts.

Although the proposed Project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site or its surrounding areas, the proposed Project would involve expanded mining operations encompassing an additional approximately 24 acres, and the expanded mining areas would be visible from off-site locations. Thus, impacts due to the degradation of the existing visual

character or quality of the site or its surrounding areas would be reduced under the NPA in comparison to the Project, although in both cases impacts would be less than significant.

Under existing conditions, operational hours for mining activities are restricted to between 7:00 a.m. and 12:00 a.m. (Monday through Friday, excluding Federal Holidays) and between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. (Saturdays only). Under the proposed Project, the time limits for both mining and asphalt batch plant operation would be extended to between 4:00 a.m. and 12:00 a.m. (Monday through Saturday, excluding Federal Holidays) for mining equipment and asphalt batch plant operation and 24 hours per day (Monday through Saturdays, excluding Federal Holidays) for aggregate and asphalt batch plant export activities. Although the Project does not propose any new lighting elements on-site, lighting elements would be used during the extended nighttime hours of operation under the proposed Project. Thus, although the Project's impacts due to light and glare would be less than significant, such impacts would be reduced under the NPA.

B. Air Quality

The proposed Project is consistent both with the site's land use at the time the 2012 Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) was adopted, and the site's "Extractive Overlay" General Plan land use designation and would therefore result in emissions "accounted for" in the AQMP based on the mining activities that occurred on-site in 2012 and the site's General Plan land use designation. With mitigation, the Project's regional VOC and $PM_{2.5}$ ~~NO_X~~ emissions impacts would be reduced to less than significant. However, the required mitigation would not reduce the Project's emissions of NO_x to below a level of significance. Although the Project would not exceed the regional growth forecasts, the Project's impacts due to a conflict with the AQMP was found to be a significant unavoidable direct and cumulatively-considerable impact of the proposed Project~~, and the Project would not result in any exceedances of the SCAQMD localized significance thresholds.~~ As with the proposed Project, the NPA would be consistent with the growth forecast assumptions for the site and emissions associated with the NPA also are accounted for by the AQMP. There would be no increase in emissions under the NPA. Thus, impacts due to a conflict with the AQMP under the ~~Project and the~~ NPA would be reduced to ~~similar and~~ less than significant levels as compared to the proposed Project.

With mitigation for ~~NO_X~~ VOCs and PM_{10} emissions, the proposed Project would not exceed the SCAQMD regional thresholds of significance for VOCs and PM_{10}~~any criteria pollutant~~. However, the Project's emissions of NO_x still would exceed the SCAQMD's Regional Thresholds even with the incorporation of mitigation. NO_X emissions would contribute to the region's non-attainment status for ozone. Accordingly, the Project would result in a significant unavoidable impact due to a violation of air quality standard for an ozone precursor (NO_x), a contribution to air quality violations for ozone, and a cumulatively considerable net increase of ozone precursors, for which feasible mitigation is not available. Under the NPA, total daily mining-related emissions from the Project site would be reduced as compared to the proposed Project. Thus, the NPA would result in reduced impacts due to air quality emissions and violations of air quality standards as compared to the proposed Project, ~~although both the proposed Project~~ and the NPA would avoid the Project's significant and unavoidable impact due to increased NO_x emissions. Thus, the NPA would result in less-than-significant impacts and impacts would be reduced as compared to the proposed Project.

There is no potential for the Project or the NPA to contribute to impacts associated with CO "Hot Spots," as there are no intersections within the Project site's vicinity that experience the levels of

traffic needed to form a CO "Hot Spot." Implementation of the proposed Project would result in less-than-significant impacts due to both cancer and non-cancer risks from diesel particulate matter (DPM) emissions. However, due to the reduction in the average tons per day associated with the NPA, impacts associated with DPM emissions (and associated cancer and non-cancer risks) would be reduced under the NPA as compared to the proposed Project.

Potential sources of operational odors generated by the Project and the NPA would include disposal of miscellaneous refuse. However, only a nominal increase in solid waste would occur in association with the proposed Project. Moreover, SCAQMD Rule 402 acts to prevent occurrences of odor nuisances. Consistent with City requirements, all refuse would be stored in covered containers and removed at regular intervals in compliance with solid waste regulations. Thus, impacts due to odors under both the NPA and the proposed Project would be similar and would be less than significant.

C. Biological Resources

Under the NPA, there would be no expansion into the Project's 24-acre Expanded Disturbance Area (EDA). As such, there would be no new direct or indirect impacts to sensitive animal species. As with the proposed Project, impacts to sensitive plant species would not occur under the NPA. New indirect impacts to sensitive animal species also would be avoided under the NPA. Additionally, the Project's impacts to 21.4 acres of brittlebush scrub and 2.1 acres of non-native grassland habitat also would be avoided under the NPA. Although the Project's direct and indirect impacts to sensitive animal species and sensitive habitats would be reduced to less-than-significant levels, impacts would nonetheless be avoided and reduced under the NPA.

Although there is no riparian habitat on-site, implementation of the proposed Project would result in direct impacts to 21.4 acres of brittlebush scrub and 2.1 acres of non-native grassland, which provide habitat for sensitive animal species (i.e., coastal California gnatcatcher and MBTA-protected birds and raptors). Although these impacts would be reduced to less-than-significant levels under the proposed Project, these additional impacts would be completely avoided under the NPA.

The proposed Project would impact approximately 0.05 acre of Corps non-wetland Waters of the U.S. (WUS) and 0.17 acre of California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) streambed. Although the Project proposes mitigation to reduce these impacts to less-than-significant levels, these impacts would be completely avoided by the NPA.

Neither the proposed Project nor the NPA have the potential to result in impacts to any native resident or migratory fish, established wildlife corridor, or native wildlife nursery sites. However, the proposed Project has the potential to impact native, migratory, and nesting birds protected by the MBTA that may exist within the EDA. These potential impacts would be completely avoided under the NPA.

~~Neither t~~The Project is not subject to the requirements of the MSHCP, and would therefore not be subject to Ordinance 1124 which created a development mitigation fee in accordance with the MSHCP. The Project would provide direct mitigation for impacts to biological resources on-site and would not rely on the take coverage granted by the MSHCP and Ordinance 1124; thus, payment of the fees pursuant to Ordinance 1124 is not required and would not serve to mitigate any of the Project's direct, indirect, or cumulatively considerable impacts to biological resources. Nonetheless, and in an effort to provide a conservative analysis, the Project's non-compliance with Ordinance

1124 represent a significant direct impact of the proposed Project for which mitigation, other than payment of a fee that would bear no relation to the Project's impacts and associated mitigation, is not available. Under the NPA, no fees would be paid nor required, as mining activities on-site were previously authorized both by the vested status of the Mine and RP 2006-01A1 and no fees were required by Mitigated Negative Declaration 2006-01 even though Ordinance 1124 was enacted in 2004. Nonetheless, implementation of the NPA would eliminate the Project's direct impact due to a conflict with Ordinance No. 1124. The ~~proposed Project nor the~~ Project and the NPA would not conflict with any other local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance.

~~Although t~~The Nichols Canyon Mine is located within the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) area. However, pursuant to a March 2004 Settlement Agreement and MOU signed between Riverside County and the former landowner, the 199-acre Nichols Canyon Mine site is fully exempt from the provisions and requirements of the MSHCP. Although the Project is fully exempt from the provisions and requirements of the MSHCP, implementation of the proposed Project would impact conservation efforts within the MSHCP area. Thus, out of an abundance of caution, ~~no~~an impact~~s~~ due to a conflict with the MSHCP would occur under the proposed Project and would represent a significant unavoidable impact. ~~or~~ While the NPA also would interfere with the MSHCP conservation objectives for the site, the NPA would nonetheless result in more open space on-site, and thereby would result in a reduction in the Project's impacts due to a conflict with the MSHCP. Additionally, the Mine is located within the Stephens' Kangaroo Rat (SKR) Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), and the proposed Project would be subject to the payment of fees in accordance with City of Lake Elsinore Municipal Code Chapter 19.04. Payment of new SKR fees would not be required under the NPA, as these fees were previously paid in accordance with the mitigation measures included in MND 2006-01. Thus, neither the Project nor the NPA would result in impacts due to a conflict with the SKR HCP. ~~Accordingly, impacts due to a conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan would not occur under the proposed Project or the NPA.~~

D. Cultural Resources

There are no historical resources as defined in § 15064.5 within the Nichols Canyon Mine site. Thus, there would be no impacts to historical resources under the proposed Project or the NPA, and impacts would be similar.

No archeological resources meeting the definition of § 15064.5 within the Nichols Canyon Mine site, and none are expected within the areas already disturbed by mining activities or the EDA. However, the potential nonetheless exists for resources to be unearthed during ground disturbing activities. The proposed Project reduced this impact to less-than-significant levels with the incorporation of mitigation. ~~Accordingly, no~~ Nonetheless, because the NPA would not authorize any new disturbances on-site, implementation of the NPA would reduce the Projects less-than-significant impacts to archaeological resources ~~would occur under the NPA or the proposed Project, and impacts would be similar~~.

According to GPU EIR Figure 3.2-3, the Nichols Canyon Mine has a "low" and "undetermined" potential for paleontological resources to be uncovered (City of Lake Elsinore, 2011b, Figure 3.2-3). The geologic units within the bounds of the Nichols Canyon Mine are either assigned a Low

Potential to yield fossiliferous materials, or are regarded as unlikely to yield fossiliferous materials on the basis of the geologic field investigation. Based on the published geologic map units within the bounds of the Nichols Canyon Mine, the lack of any known fossiliferous deposits in these units, the assignment of a Low Potential to contain significant nonrenewable paleontological resources (i.e. fossils) in the granitic and young alluvial fan sediments, and the results of the geologic field examination, the Paleontological Resource and Monitoring Assessment concludes that the likelihood of finding fossiliferous materials within the Project site during any further excavation (quarrying) and/or grading activities is low to nil. (BFSA, 2015a, p. 3) Accordingly, impacts to paleontological resources would not occur under the proposed Project or NPA, and impacts would be similar.

The Project site does not contain a cemetery and no known formal cemeteries are located within the immediate site vicinity. Field surveys conducted on the Project site did not identify the presence of any human remains and no human remains are known to exist beneath the surface of the site (BFSA, 2015b). Mining activities under the NPA and the proposed Project would be subject to California Health and Safety Code, § 7050.5 "Disturbance of Human Remains," which would ensure that any potential impacts to human remains, including human remains of Native American descent, would be less than significant. Accordingly, impacts to human remains would be less than significant under both the proposed Project and the NPA, and such impacts would be similar.

E. Geology and Soils

There are no known active or potentially active faults on the Mine site. Ground shaking at the Mine site would not result in mine slope failure and would therefore not expose people or structures to adverse effects involving injury or death. The potential for liquefaction and other shallow groundwater hazards within the Mine site is low. Under both the proposed Project, and the NPA, slopes would be required to be protected with berms or drainage improvements as necessary to prevent slope erosion in the areas where natural slopes drain onto the reclaimed slopes. Although the NPA proposes mining over 24 fewer acres than would occur under the proposed Project, risks associated with seismic hazards, earthquake faults, strong seismic ground shaking, seismic-related ground failure (including liquefaction) and landslides would be similar under both the proposed Project and the NPA and would be less than significant.

Under the NPA and proposed Project, dust control would be required on all disturbed portions of the Mine. Likewise, under both the Project and the NPA, under interim conditions and upon final reclamation the ~~site~~ runoff from areas subject to mining would be directed towards ~~detention~~ sedimentation basins to control erosion. Therefore, under both the Project and the NPA, impacts due to erosion would be similar and less than significant.

Based on slope stability analyses conducted by CHJ Consultants, the whole rock strength in the proposed slope areas of the Mine is sufficient to accommodate the proposed overall slope angles. Based on the analyses, the proposed overall approximate 45-degree mine and cut-slopes up to approximately 480 feet in height are suitably stable against gross failure for the long-term conditions, including the effects of seismic shaking. (CHJ Consultants, 2015, p. 20) Thus, impacts due to on-or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse would be similar under the proposed Project and the NPA and would be less than significant.

Due to the nature of the proposed activity under both the proposed Project and NPA (i.e., surface mining), a less-than-significant impact associated with expansive soil would occur because soils

would be removed during mining activities. Any future use of the Project site for other land uses would require environmental review and a separate analysis regarding potential impacts from expansive soils. Thus, the Project and NPA would have a less-than-significant impact in this regard, and impacts would be similar.

The Project and NPA do not propose the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems. Both the Project and the NPA would utilize portable toilets, as is the case with the existing mining operation. Accordingly, no impact associated with septic tanks or alternative waste water systems would occur under either the Project or the NPA, and impacts would be similar.

F. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

As indicated in EIR Subsection 4.6, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, the net new Project-related GHG emissions would not exceed the SCAQMD's interim threshold of 10,000 $MTCO_2e$ per year. Notwithstanding the Project's less-than-significant Greenhouse Gas (GHG) impacts, because the NPA would result in daily mining of only 3,248 tpd, as compared to 5,000 tpd under the proposed Project, impacts due to annual GHG emissions would be reduced under the NPA as compared to the proposed Project by approximately 35.05%.

Based on the analysis of Threshold b. in EIR Subsection 4.6.45, the proposed Project would not conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases. It can be reasoned that the NPA also would not conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases, based on the discussion in EIR Subsection 4.6.45. Accordingly, impacts due to a conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases would be similar under both the proposed Project and the NPA, and impacts would be less than significant.

G. Hydrology and Water Quality

Mining operations at the site would continue to be regulated by an approved Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) under both the proposed Project and the NPA, which requires the incorporation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to preclude water quality impacts associated with mining operations. The BMPs specified in the required SWPPP would be required to ensure that all potential pollutants of concern are prevented, minimized, and/or otherwise appropriately treated prior to being discharged from the subject property. Mandatory compliance with the SWPPP would ensure that the Project and NPA would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements. In addition, pursuant to the requirements of the Santa Ana RWQCB and the City of Lake Elsinore, the Project and the NPA would be required to comply with the NPDES General Permit. An NPDES General Permit is required for all new and expanded mining facilities. In addition, both the Project and the NPA would be required to comply with the Santa Ana RWQCB's Santa Ana River Basin Water Quality Control Program. Because the Project and NPA would comply with mandatory SWPPP requirements and all runoff from actively mined portions of the Mine would be retained on-site during ongoing mining activities and would not affect any downstream properties or facilities, impacts would be less than significant and would be similar.

Similarly, upon completion of mining activities under both the Project and the NPA, runoff on the Nichols North site would be conveyed to a proposed sediment basin and brow ditch located in the

southwestern portion of the Nichols North site, and eventually conveyed westerly to Stovepipe Creek beneath an existing culvert underneath I-15. Similarly, the Nichols South site also would achieve the final grades specified by the applicable reclamation plan upon completion of mining activities, and the majority of drainage from this portion of the site would be conveyed to a proposed sedimentation basin located in the ~~north~~southwestern portion of the Nichols South site and ultimately west beneath I-15. Runoff from the portions of the Nichols South and Nichols North sites that are not subject to mining activities would continue to be conveyed by Stovepipe Creek, located in the southeast corner of the Nichols South site, and ultimately west beneath I-15. (Bonadiman, 2016, Exhibit H)~~(Bonadiman, 2015, Exhibit H)~~ Due to the rocky nature of the Mine, the potential for sedimentation is considered low, and the proposed sedimentation basins for both the NPA and the proposed Project have been designed in accordance with Santa Ana RWQCB and/or SMARA requirements to ensure runoff from the Mine does not result in any new violations or water quality objectives. (Bonadiman, 2016, p. 16)~~(Bonadiman, 2015, p. 16)~~ As such, impacts would be less than significant under both the NPA and the proposed Project, and impacts would be similar.

Neither the proposed Project nor the NPA would directly result in the depletion of groundwater supplies or groundwater recharge, as the Project site would remain undeveloped with pervious surfaces that would allow for infiltration of runoff at the site. However, under the proposed Project, water usage at the site would be ~~reduced by~~ 46.99~~45.84~~% ~~as compared to~~ of what occurs under the NPA. Because a portion of the Mine's water is obtained from groundwater resources and provided by the EVMWD, the NPA would result in greater impacts to groundwater levels as compared to the proposed Project, although in both cases impacts would be less than significant.

Implementation of the proposed Project would result in mining within the 24-acre EDA; however, such mining activities would not substantially change the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, because all runoff from the slopes within the EDA would ultimately be conveyed west towards Stove Pipe Creek. Accordingly, impacts due to changes to the existing drainage pattern of the site or area would be less than significant under both the proposed Project and NPA, and would be similar.

As indicated by the analysis of unit hydrograph calculations in the site-specific hydrology study and drainage analysis (see Table 14 of *Technical Appendix H)* a decrease in runoff flows would occur during the reclamation phase of the Project, and also during the reclamation phase of the NPA as the ultimate drainage conditions of the proposed Project and NPA are similar. Under interim conditions for both the Project and NPA, sedimentation basins would detain all runoff from mined areas thereby precluding any increase in runoff from the site. The two sedimentation basins required under the NPA and for the proposed Project under post-reclamation conditions ~~would be~~have been designed to provide the minimum required capacities as the basins are not required to reduce peak flow rates but instead are proposed to provide sediment control. Within the Nichols North site a brow ditch is also proposed during the reclamation phase of the NPA and the proposed Project. Because the design features would ensure that runoff rates would be reduced compared to the existing condition, the proposed Project and NPA would not have an adverse impact on downstream properties. (Bonadiman, 2016, p. 16)~~(Bonadiman, 2015, p. 16)~~ Accordingly, the Project and NPA would result in less-than-significant impacts associated with an increase in the rate of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on-or off-site. Thus, impacts would be less than significant under both the Project and NPA, and would be similar.

Under both the proposed Project and NPA, during on-going mining activities, all runoff within the areas subject to mining activities would be retained on-site, while areas not subject to disturbance would continue to drain via Stovepipe Creek, located in the southeastern portion of the Nichols South site. Upon final reclamation of the site, runoff that had been detained on-site would instead be conveyed to one of the two sediment basins located in Nichols North and Nichols South. Following water quality treatment, the flows would be conveyed by Stovepipe Creek via existing culverts beneath I-15 to the west. Flows within the Nichols North site would first be conveyed through a brow ditch to the existing culverts beneath I-15. A decrease in runoff flows would occur during the reclamation phase of the Project and NPA. The two sedimentation basins required for both the NPA and proposed Project would be designed to provide the minimum required capacities as the basins are not required to reduce peak flow rates but instead are proposed to provide sediment control. Design features would ensure that runoff rates would be reduced compared to the existing condition. Runoff within the Nichols Canyon Mine also is subject to the existing SWPPP which provides BMP measures that ensures that runoff does not exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems, does not provide substantial, additional sources of polluted runoff, or otherwise degrade water quality. The Project and NPA would be subject to the existing or a revised SWPPP that includes BMP measures, as necessary and appropriate, to address potential water quality impacts. The proposed Project and NPA would be required to comply with the SWPPP or revised SWPPP, which identifies or would identify required BMPs to be incorporated into the Project or NPA to ensure that the proposed Project would not result in substantial amounts of polluted runoff. Thus, with mandatory compliance with the existing or revised SWPPP, the proposed Project and NPA would not create or contribute substantial additional sources of polluted runoff. Thus, impacts would be less than significant under both the Project and NPA, and impacts would be similar.

No new storm drainage facilities would be required in support of existing mining activities under the NPA or proposed mining activities under the proposed Project, except for the construction of interim and permanent sedimentation basins to control sediment in runoff which would occur in areas that will have already been disturbed by mining-related activities. ~~as the existing basins on-site are adequately sized to detain all runoff from the mined areas (both with and without the Project)~~. Under the proposed Project and NPA, a decrease in runoff flows is expected as a result of reclamation. The decrease in flow rate is a result of the longer path lengths which in turn reduce peak flow rates. Accordingly, reclamation under the proposed Project and NPA would result in a reduction of flow rates and neither the Project nor the NPA would require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities off-site. Thus, impacts would be less than significant and would be similar under the NPA and proposed Project.

There are no other conditions associated with the proposed Project or NPA that could result in the substantial degradation of water quality beyond what is discussed above and in Subsection 4.7.

The areas proposed for mining at the Nichols Canyon Mine under both the proposed Project and NPA are not located within a 100-year flood plain; thus, neither the Project nor the NPA would place housing or structures in a floodplain. Impacts would not occur and would be similar under the NPA and the proposed Project.

According to Figure 10, *Flood Hazards*, of the Riverside County General Plan's Elsinore Area Plan, the Nichols Canyon Mine is not located within a dam hazard zone related to the Railroad Canyon Dam or any other dam hazard zone. As depicted on Figure 3-2, *Vicinity Map*, the Nichols Canyon

Mine is located approximately 2.0 miles north of the levee that is present in association with Lake Elsinore. Thus, due to the location of the Nichols Canyon Mine approximately 5.0 miles north of the Railroad Canyon Dam and approximately 2.0 miles north of the levee at Lake Elsinore and the direction of sheet flow, the Project and NPA would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam. Impacts would be less than significant and would be similar under both the Project and the NPA.

The Nichols Canyon Mine is located approximately 2.0 miles north of Lake Elsinore, which is the nearest body of water subject to seiches. Lake Elsinore incorporates USACE flood control devices including a berm fill at the southern end of the lake to lower the potential for a seiche to occur (Lake Elsinore, 2011b, 3.9-36). In addition, due to the site's distance from Lake Elsinore, and the elevation difference between Lake Elsinore and the Nichols Canyon Mine (i.e., the Project site occurs approximately 250 feet in elevation above Lake Elsinore), the Mine is not be subject to seiches or mudflow. Furthermore, the Nichols Canyon Mine is located approximately 25 miles from the Pacific Ocean, and has no potential to be affected by tsunamis. (Google Earth Pro, 2015) Thus, neither the Project nor the NPA would be subject to seiche, tsunami, or mudflow. No Impact would occur under either the NPA or proposed Project, and impacts would be similar.

H. Noise

Under the proposed Project, mining activities within the EDA and within ~~500~~794 ~~–~~feet from any existing residences during daytime hours (between 7:00 am and 10:00 pm) would expose the nearest residential structures to noise levels exceeding 55 dBA L_{50}~~Leq (109 min)~~, with the nearest residential structure occurring approximately 386~~414~~ feet from the EDA. Under the NPA, the existing mining limits at the Nichols South site occur within approximately ~~500~~ 473 feet of the nearest residential home, which also would expose nearby residential uses to daytime noise. However, because the EDA is approximately ~~86~~ 87 feet closer to the existing homes than the existing NPA mining limits, the proposed Project would expose approximately ~~eight~~ ten homes to daytime noise levels exceeding the City's standard of 55 dBA L_{50}~~Leq (10 min)~~, while the NPA would only expose ~~three~~ eight homes to daytime noise levels exceeding the City's standard of 50 dBA L_{50}~~Leq (10 min)~~. Accordingly, daytime noise levels would be reduced under the NPA as compared to the proposed Project, although noise impacts would continue to be significant and unavoidable under the NPA for the ~~three~~ eight homes located within ~~500~~ 794 feet of the existing mining limits.

During nighttime hours (between 10:00 pm and 7:00 am), the Project would be restricted from mining within 1,820~~250~~ feet of any occupied residential structure if a direct line-of-sight exists between the mining activity and the occupied structure(s) If the line-of-site is blocked, noise-generating activities may extend to within 603~~500~~ feet of occupied residential structures. Under the NPA, however, no restriction is imposed between the hours of 10:00pm and 12:00am, during which mining activities may occur as close as 473~~800~~ feet from residential structures. Thus, nighttime operational noise impacts under the proposed Project would be reduced to less-than-significant levels, while under the NPA nighttime impacts would remain significant and unavoidable and increased in relation to the proposed Project.

The Project would result in a greater increase associated transportation-related noise as compared to the NPA due to the increase ~~in~~to up to 425 passenger care equivalents (PCEs) under the proposed Project, and thus the Project would result in increased transportation-related noise impacts in

comparison to the NPA. However, transportation noise-related impacts under both the Project and NPA would be less than significant.

Although the NPA would introduce blasting activities and mining activities as close as 386~~414~~ feet from the nearest residential home, the analysis in EIR Subsection 4.~~3~~8.7 demonstrates that Project-related blasting and mining equipment would result in less-than-significant impacts associated with groundborne noise or groundborne vibration at the nearest home. Nonetheless, because the Project would introduce blasting activities within closer proximity to residential structures than the NPA, impacts associated with ground borne vibration or ground borne noise levels would increase under the proposed Project in comparison to the NPA.

Neither the proposed Project nor the NPA would be impacted by noise related to airport or private airport operations. Impacts would not occur under the Project and NPA and would be similar.

I. Transportation and Circulation

Under the No Project Alternative, no mining would occur within the EDA and no additional traffic would be generated beyond the 795 PCE ADT that occurs under baseline conditions. Thus, the following Project-related cumulatively-considerable unavoidable impacts would be avoided under the NPA:

- EAPC (2016) Conditions:
    - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Northbound Ramp/Nichols Road intersection (LOS F during both AM and ~~peak hour; LOS E~~ PM peak hours);
    - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Southbound Ramp/Nichols Road intersection (LOS F during both AM and PM peak hours)
    - Cumulatively considerable impact due to the need to signalize the I-15 Northbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection; and~~.~~
    - Cumulatively considerable impact due to the need to signalize the I-15 Southbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection.

The proposed Project would contribute to cumulative traffic levels in Horizon Year (2035). Cumulative deficiencies to the I-15 Project study facilities would occur with or without the proposed Project. Although the Project would not contribute more than 25 peak hour trips to the cumulatively impacted facilities, out an abundance of caution, and in order to be consistent with the analysis and conclusions reached in EIR Subsection 4.9, any cumulative deficiencies would be a significant and unavoidable impact until freeway improvements are in place. Thus, the following Project-related cumulatively-considerable unavoidable impacts would be avoided under the NPA because no new traffic would result from the NPA:

- Horizon Year (2035) Conditions:
    - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Northbound Ramp/Nichols Road intersection (LOS F during both AM and PM peak hours);
    - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Southbound Ramp/Nichols Road intersection (LOS F during both AM and PM peak hours);
    - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Southbound Ramp/Nichols Road intersection (LOS F AM and PM peak hours);

- Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Southbound Freeway Segments (LOS F during the PM peak hour);
- Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Northbound Freeway Segments (LOS F during the AM peak hour and LOS E during the PM peak hour);
- Cumulatively considerable freeway off-ramp queuing impact to the I-15 Northbound Off-Ramp at Nichols Road (2,838 ft. queue during the AM peak hour and 3,520 ft. queue during the PM peak hour);
- Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Southbound Off-Ramp/Nichols Road Freeway Ramp Junction Merge/Diverge (LOS F during the PM peak hour);
- Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Northbound On-Ramp/Nichols Road Freeway Ramp Junction Merge/Diverge (LOS F during the AM peak hour and LOS E during the PM peak hour);
- Cumulatively considerable impact due to the need to signalize the I-15 Northbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection; and
- Cumulatively considerable impact due to the need to signalize the I-15 Southbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection.
- ~~Cumulatively considerable impact due to the projected off-ramp queueing issue at the I-15 northbound off-ramps to Nichols Road; and~~
- ~~Cumulatively considerable impact due to deficiencies at the I-15 Northbound Ramps/Nichols Road merge/diverge junction (LOS F AM Peak Hour; LOS E PM Peak Hour).~~

The above-listed impacts also affect I-15, a Congestion Management Plan (CMP) designated facility. Thus, impacts due to a conflict with a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways would be increased under the Project as compared to the NPA.

Neither the proposed Project nor the NPA would result in impacts due to a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks, and impacts would be similar under both the NPA and proposed Project.

Neither the proposed Project nor the NPA would substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment). Impacts under both the proposed Project and NPA would be similar, and would be less than significant.

Neither the proposed Project nor the NPA would result in inadequate emergency access. No impacts would occur under the proposed Project or the NPA, and impacts would be similar.

Based on the analysis presented in EIR Subsection 4.9.7 (refer the Threshold f.), the proposed Project would not conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities). There are no components associated with the existing mining operations under the NPA that would conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities). Accordingly, impacts under both the NPA and proposed Project would be less than significant and would be similar.

J. Utilities and Service Systems

Under existing conditions, wastewater treatment at the Nichols Canyon Mine is handled by portable toilets, which are regularly emptied by a rental service company. Waste from these portable toilets is disposed of in accordance with all applicable regulatory requirements. Portable toilets would continue to be operated on-site for the duration of mining and reclamation activities under both the proposed Project and the NPA. There are no other potential sources of wastewater associated with the proposed Project or the NPA. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project or NPA would not exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board. Thus, impacts would be less than significant and would be identical under the NPA and proposed Project.

Although the Project would result in a net increase of two employees as compared to the NPA, such an increase is not substantial and would not have an effect on existing wastewater treatment facilities, as wastewater treatment at the Nichols Canyon Mine is handled by portable toilets, which are regularly emptied by a rental service company. Thus, impacts due to the need for construction of new wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects would not occur under either the NPA or the proposed Project, and impacts would be similar.

Under the NPA, the Nichols Canyon Mine utilizes approximately 32,915~~64,000~~ gallons per day (gpd). SMP 2015-01 includes new watering restrictions for soil stabilization, as shown on Figure 4.10-1, *SMP~~urface Mining Permit~~ 2015-01 Proposed Dust Control Measures – Nichols North~~Plan~~*, and Figure 4.10-2, *SMP 2015-01 Proposed Dust Control Measures – Nichols South*.~~ and~~ ~~i~~Implementation of the proposed Project would result in a net decrease in areas subject to watering from 24.90~~20.33~~ acres under the NPA to 13.20~~11.01~~ acres under the proposed Project. The reduction in water usage on-site would occur because SMP 2015-01 requires the use of soil binding chemicals, pavement, and other stabilization techniques to provide for adequate dust control while resulting in a net decrease in water used at the site. In total, it can be assumed that because areas on-site that require water for dust control would be ~~reduced by approximately~~ 53.01~~45.8~~% ~~as compared to~~ of baseline conditions; therefore, it can be assumed that total water use at the mine would decrease under the proposed Project from approximately 32,915~~64,000~~ gpd to approximately 17,448~~34,660~~ gpd as compared to the NPA. Although approval of the Project would extend the duration of mining activities on-site as necessary to mine and reclaim the proposed Expanded Disturbance Area (EDA), the EVWMD has determined that it has sufficient supplies to meet the demand for projected normal year, singly-dry year, and multiple-dry-year supply through 2035. This determination was made by the EVWMD based on future population and employment estimates within the EVMWD service area, and accounts for on-going mining activities at the Nichols Canyon Mine. (EVMWD, 2011a, Tables ES-9, ES-10, and ES-11) Therefore, because total water usage on-site would decrease under the proposed Project as compared to the NPA, and because the EVMWD has sufficient supplies through 2035, including during dry and multiple-dry years, the Project's impacts to water supplies would be less than significant and reduced in comparison to the NPA.

Implementation of the proposed Project would result in a demand for 17,448~~net decrease of 29,340~~ gpd as compared to the NPA, which uses approximately 32,915 gpd. Also, the UWMP concludes that sufficient supply exists to meet the demand for projected normal year, singly-dry year, and multiple-dry-year supply through 2035. (EVMWD, 2011a, p. 10) The proposed Project has no potential to result in the construction of new or expanded water treatment facilities, and no impact

would occur. In comparison to the NPA, which would also have less-than-significant impacts, impacts to water supply would be reduced under the proposed Project.

Implementation of the proposed Project would result in the net increase of two employees as compared to the NPA, and the Project is not expected to result in a substantial increase in the amount of wastewater generated at the site as compared to wastewater generated by the NPA. Furthermore, wastewater generated at the site under existing conditions is handled via portable toilets, and there would be no need for additional portable toilets as a result of the Project, nor would there be a discernible change in the number of times the service provider would need to service the Mine under the proposed Project and NPA. The wastewater haul company would dispose of all wastewater generated by the Project at permitted facilities with sufficient capacity to handle Project-generated wastewater. Neither the Project nor NPA utilize EVMWD's sewer system and there are no components of the Project or NPA that would cause or contribute to deficient wastewater treatment capacity; therefore, no impact would occur under either the proposed Project or NPA, and impacts would be similar.

There would be only nominal increase in solid waste generation at the Mine under the proposed Project as compared to the NPA, due to the expected increase of two employees under the proposed Project. Solid waste generated under the Project or NPA would be conveyed to one of several landfills (El Sobrante, Badlands, or Lamb Canyon Landfills) operated or managed by the RCWMD. These existing landfills are required to comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste. Landfills within RCWMD's jurisdiction adhere to state guidelines which specify that a minimum of 15 years of system-wide landfill capacity shall be provided. (Lake Elsinore, 2011b, p. 3-16-5). Therefore, because the Project and NPA both would be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the Mine's solid waste, and because the Project's incremental increase in solid waste generation would be negligible, impacts would be less than significant and would be similar under both the proposed Project and NPA.

The Project and the NPA would be required to comply with City and County waste reduction programs pursuant to the State's Integrated Waste Management Act and Chapter 14.12 of the City of Lake Elsinore Municipal Code. Solid waste generated at the Mine would be conveyed to one of several landfills operated or managed by RCWMD under both the Project and the NPA. These existing landfills are required to comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste. Compliance with federal, state, and local statutes would reduce the amount of solid waste generated by the Mine and diverted to landfills which in turn will aid in the extension of the life of affected disposal sites. The Project and NPA would comply with all applicable solid waste statutes and regulations; as such, impacts would be less than significant and would be similar under both the Project and NPA.

The proposed Project and NPA would involve the continuation and expansion of an existing mining operation, and would not result in a substantial increase in daily operational characteristics at the site. All utilities needed to serve the Nichols Canyon Mine are currently in place. Specifically, electricity is provided to the site via private power poles from a connection near the Mine's southern boundary, and these existing power poles would not require expansion as a result of the Project. There are no other utilities needed in support of mining operations that would have the potential to cause significant environmental effects. Accordingly, no impact would occur under either the Project or the NPA, and impacts would be similar.

K. Conclusion

Implementation of the No Project Alternative would result in no new physical environmental impacts. Impacts to the following issue areas would be reduced under the NPA in relation to the proposed Project: aesthetics; air quality; biological resources; greenhouse gases; noise (daytime); and traffic and transportation. Impacts to cultural resources and geology/soils would be similar under the proposed Project and the NPA. Impacts to hydrology/water quality, noise (nighttime), and utilities/service systems would increase under the NPA in relation to the proposed Project, primarily because the Project would reduce water usage on-site as compared to the NPA.

Because the NPA would avoid many of the Project's significant impacts (including the Project's significant and unavoidable impacts to noise and traffic/transportation), it warrants consideration as the "environmentally superior alternative." However, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines § 15126.6(e)(2), if a no project alternative is identified as the "environmentally superior alternative" then the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives. The Reduced Expanded Disturbance Alternative, as described in Subsection 6.3.2, is identified as the environmentally superior alternative.

The No Project Alternative would fail to meet most of the Project's objectives. This alternative would fail to increase the available high-quality aggregate reserves available within the local area ~~on the property~~ in order to help meet the regional demand for aggregate material. This alternative would not allow for an expansion of operating hours, and would therefore lead to less efficient operations at the Mine as compared to the proposed Project. The NPA also would continue to allow for the export of up to 4,000,000 tpy, as compared to the 856,560 tpy that would occur under the Project. Furthermore, this alternative would not maximize the use of aggregate reserves and create the most usable space from the Mine's disturbance. This alternative would fail to establish updated standards for operational mining activities at the Nichols Canyon Mine site in a manner that complies with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations and requirements. Moreover, selection of the No Project Alternative, while preventing mining within the EDA, would not reduce demand for aggregate materials in Riverside County and the southern California region. Therefore, the Project's impacts would likely be displaced to another property and not avoided by selection of this alternative.

6.3.2 REDUCED EXPANDED DISTURBANCE AREA ALTERNATIVE (REDA)

As depicted previously on Figure 6-1, the Reduced Expanded Disturbance Area Alternative (REDA) considers a reduction in the limits of the EDA from 24 acres under the proposed Project to 17 acres under the REDA. This alternative was selected for consideration by the Lead Agency (Lake Elsinore) because it would completely avoid the Project's significant and unavoidable impact due to daytime mining-related noise within the EDA impacting existing residences located within 794~~800~~ feet of the EDA. This alternative also would reduce impacts to biological resources (jurisdictional areas and sensitive habitat), but would not avoid the Project's significant and unavoidable impact due to a conflict with the MSHCP conservation goals for the site. All other components of the REDA, including daily and annual tonnage estimates/limits and hours of operation, would be identical to the proposed Project described in EIR Section 3.0, *Project Description*.

A. Aesthetics

No unique or scenic vistas would be impacted by the Project or the REDA, as the Project site does not contain any scenic vistas, nor does it offer unique views of any visually prominent features. Thus, impacts to scenic vistas and unique views would be similar to the Project's less-than-significant impact to scenic vistas.

The Project site also is not visible from any State-designated scenic highways. As such, impacts to resources visible from a designated scenic highway corridor would be similar to the Project's less-than-significant impacts.

The proposed Project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site or its surrounding areas. Although the REDA proposes to reduce the areas subject to mining activities from 24 acres to 17 acres, the approximate 7-acre reduction would occur in the southeastern portions of the EDA which occur at a lower elevation than the majority of the EDA. Thus, the portion of the EDA that would not be mined under the REDA would not substantially reduce the visual effects of mining as visible from off-site locations. Nonetheless, the reduction in the EDA would slightly reduce visual effects as compared to the proposed Project. Impacts to the existing visual character or quality of the site or its surrounding areas would be less than significant under both the REDA and proposed Project ~~would be less than significant~~, but would be slightly reduced under the REDA.

Both the proposed Project and the REDA would include the expansion of mining hours. Although no new lighting elements would be introduced to the Project site, the increased hours of operation would extend the length of time lighting is used on-site. As discussed in EIR Section 4.1, impacts due to lighting would be less than significant under the proposed Project and the REDA, and would be similar.

B. Air Quality

The proposed Project is consistent both with the site's land use at the time the 2012 Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) was adopted, and the site's "Extractive Overlay" General Plan land use designation and would therefore result in emissions "accounted for" in the AQMP based on the mining activities that occurred on-site in 2012 and the site's General Plan land use designation. With mitigation, the Project's regional VOCs and $PM_{2.5}$ ~~NO_x~~ emissions impacts would be reduced to less than significant, and the Project would not result in any exceedances of the SCAQMD localized significance thresholds. However, the required mitigation would not reduce the Project's emissions of NO_x to below a level of significance. Although the Project would not exceed the regional growth forecasts, the Project's impacts due to a conflict with the AQMP were found to be a significant unavoidable direct and cumulatively-considerable impact of the proposed Project. Under the REDA, daily emissions of criteria pollutants would be the same as the proposed Project as the reduction in areas subject to mining activities would not affect daily mining quantities. As with the proposed Project, the REDA would be consistent with the growth forecast assumptions for the site; however, ~~and~~ NO_x emissions associated with the REDA would exceed the SCAQMD Regional Threshold even after the incorporation of mitigation. NO_X is a precursor for ozone, a pollutant for which the region is considered non-attainment by both Federal and State standards. Therefore, both the REDA and the proposed Project would conflict with the 2012 AQMP, and this represents a significant and unavoidable impact for which additional mitigation is not available. ~~also are accounted for by the~~

~~AQMP. Thus, impacts due to a conflict with the AQMP under the Project and the NPA would be similar and less than significant.~~

With mitigation for VOCs and PM_{10} ~~NO_X~~ emissions, the proposed Project and REDA would not exceed the SCAQMD Regional Thresholds of significance for VOCs and PM_{10} ~~any criteria pollutant~~. However, the Project's emissions of NO_x still would exceed the SCAQMD's Regional Thresholds even with the incorporation of mitigation. NO_X emissions would contribute to the region's non-attainment status for ozone. Accordingly, the Project would result in a significant unavoidable impact due to a violation of air quality standard for an ozone precursor (NO_x), a contribution to air quality violations for ozone, and a cumulatively considerable net increase of ozone precursors, for which feasible mitigation is not available. Under the REDA, total daily mining-related emissions from the Project site would be identical to the proposed Project. Thus, and as with the proposed Project, impacts due to the emissions of ~~criteria pollutants~~NO_X would be ~~less than~~ significant and unavoidable under the proposed Project and REDA ~~with~~ even after the incorporation of mitigation ~~incorporated~~.

There is no potential for the Project or the REDA to contribute to impacts associated with CO "Hot Spots," as there are no intersections within the Project site's vicinity that experience the levels of traffic needed to form a CO "Hot Spot." Implementation of the proposed Project would result in less-than-significant impacts due to both cancer and non-cancer risks from diesel particulate matter (DPM) emissions. Given that average daily operating characteristics would not change under the REDA as compared to the proposed Project, impacts due to DPM emissions under both the Project and REDA would be less than significant and would be similar.

Potential sources of operational odors generated by the Project and the REDA would include disposal of miscellaneous refuse. However, only a nominal increase in solid waste would occur in association with either the proposed Project. Moreover, SCAQMD Rule 402 acts to prevent occurrences of odor nuisances. Consistent with City requirements, all refuse would be stored in covered containers and removed at regular intervals in compliance with solid waste regulations. Thus, impacts due to odors under both the REDA and the proposed Project would be similar and would be less than significant.

C. Biological Resources

Under the REDA, the Project's 24-acre Expanded Disturbance Area (EDA) would be reduced to 17 acres. As such, this alternative would reduce the Project's significant but mitigable impacts to the coastal California gnatcatcher and nesting birds and raptors protected by the MBTA. Additionally, the Project's impacts to 21.4 acres of brittlebush scrub and 2.1 acres of non-native grassland habitat would be reduced to 15.5 acres of brittlebush scrub and 1.5 acres of non-native grassland habitat. Although direct and indirect impacts to sensitive animal species and sensitive habitats would be reduced to less-than-significant levels through mitigation under both the proposed Project and REDA, impacts (and required mitigation) would nonetheless be reduced under the REDA due to the reduction of the EDA by seven acres.

Although there is no riparian habitat on-site, implementation of the proposed Project would result in direct impacts to 21.4 acres of brittlebush scrub and 2.1 acres of non-native grassland, which provide habitat for sensitive animal species (i.e., coastal California gnatcatcher and MBTA-protected birds and raptors). Under the REDA, these impacts would be reduced to 15.5 acres of brittlebush scrub and 1.5 acres of non-native grassland habitat. Although both the Project and the REDA would

require mitigation to reduce these impacts to less-than-significant levels, impacts (and required mitigation) would nonetheless be reduced under the REDA due to the reduction of the EDA by seven acres.

The proposed Project would impact approximately 0.05 acre of Corps non-wetland Waters of the U.S. (WUS) and 0.17 acre of California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) streambed. Under the REDA, impacts to 0.05 acre of Corps non-wetland WUS would be the same, although the REDA would affect only approximately 1,327 linear feet of Corps non-wetland WUS as compared to 1,627 linear feet under the proposed Project. Additionally, impacts to CDFW jurisdictional features (streambed) would be reduced to 0.15 acre, and would include of 1,327 linear feet of CDFW streambed, which is a reduction from the 1,627 linear feet that would be impacted by the proposed Project. Although impacts would be mitigated to below a level of significant under both the proposed Project and the REDA, impacts under the REDA would nonetheless be reduced under the REDA due to the reduction of the EDA by approximately seven acres.

Neither the proposed Project nor the REDA have the potential to result in impacts to any native resident or migratory fish, established wildlife corridor, or native wildlife nursery sites. However, both the proposed Project and the REDA have the potential to impact native, migratory, and nesting birds protected by the MBTA that may exist within the EDA. Although mitigation would reduce impacts to below significant under the proposed Project and REDA, impacts would nonetheless be reduced under the REDA due to the reduction of the EDA by seven acres.

The Project is not subject to the requirements of the MSHCP, and would therefore not be subject to Ordinance 1124, which created a development mitigation fee in accordance with the MSHCP. Project impacts to habitat, sensitive species, and jurisdictional areas would be mitigated to below a level of significance through the implementation of the mitigation measures provided in EIR Subsection 4.3.7, which include a requirement for the Project Applicant to obtain appropriate permits directly through the Wildlife Agencies. The Project would provide direct mitigation for impacts to biological resources on-site and would not rely on the take coverage granted by the MSHCP and Ordinance 1124; thus, payment of the fees pursuant to Ordinance 1124 is not required and would not serve to mitigate any of the Project's direct, indirect, or cumulatively considerable impacts to biological resources. Nonetheless, and in an effort to provide a conservative analysis, the Project's non-compliance with Ordinance 1124 represent a significant direct impact of the proposed Project for which mitigation, other than payment of a fee that would bear no relation to the Project's impacts and associated mitigation, is not available. Under the REDA, the site still would not be subject to the MSHCP, and payment of fees pursuant to Ordinance 1124 would not be required for the REDA. As with the Project, the REDA would be required to implement direct mitigation and obtain permits from the Wildlife Agencies to reduce impacts to below a level of significant. Nonetheless, the non-payment of fees pursuant to Ordinance 1124 under the Project and the REDA represent significant and unavoidable impacts, and such impacts would be similar under both the Project and the REDA.~~Neither the proposed Project nor the REDA would conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance.~~

~~Although t~~Both the REDA and the proposed Project would be required to contribute fees pursuant to Chapter 19.04 of the City's Municipal Code in order to ensure compliance with the SKR HCP. Thus, no impact due to a conflict with the SKR HCP would occur under the proposed Project or REDA. Although the Project and REDA would not be subject to the requirements of the MSHCP, the Project

site is located within MSHCP Cell Group W. Pursuant to the MSHCP, conservation within Cell Group W is intended to encompass 80%-90% of the Cell Group focusing in the northwestern portion of the Cell Group. The Mine and the EDA occur in the eastern portion of Group W. Notwithstanding the fact that the mitigation identified in EIR Subsection 4.3.7 would reduce the Project's impacts to below a level of significance, the Project would nonetheless not comply with the MSHCP objectives for Cell Group W because strict compliance with the MSHCP would require the conservation of the EDA, which inherently conflicts with the Project's primary objective to increase the availability of aggregate reserves within the local area. Moreover, on-going mining operations at the site have fully disturbed the western portions of the Mine site that are intended for conservation under the MSHCP. Thus, even if the EDA were to be conserved, the site still would not meet the objectives for Cell Group W and any preserved habitat would be disconnected from the portions of Cell Group W located west of the Project site. Thus, both the Project and the REDA would result in a significant and unavoidable impact due to non-compliance with the MSHCP's conservation objectives for the site. However, impacts would be slightly reduced under the REDA due to the reduction by seven acres of areas within the EDA that would be subject to mining activities.~~he Nichols Canyon Mine is located within the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) area, pursuant to a March 2004 Settlement Agreement and MOU signed between Riverside County and the former landowner, the 199-acre Nichols Canyon Mine site is fully exempt from the provisions and requirements of the MSHCP. Thus, no impacts due to a conflict with the MSHCP would occur under the proposed Project or the REDA. Additionally, the Mine is located within the Stephens' Kangaroo Rat (SKR) Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), and the proposed Project and the REDA would be subject to the payment of fees in accordance with City of Lake Elsinore Municipal Code Chapter 19.04. Accordingly, impacts due to a conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan would not occur under the proposed Project or the REDA and would be similar.~~

D. Cultural Resources

There are no historical resources as defined in § 15064.5 within the Nichols Canyon Mine site. Thus, there would be no impacts to historical resources under the proposed Project or the REDA, and impacts would be similar.

No archeological resources meeting the definition of § 15064.5 within the Nichols Canyon Mine site, and none are expected within the areas already disturbed by mining activities or the EDA. However, the potential nonetheless exists for resources to be unearthed during ground disturbing activities, which would require mitigation under both the proposed Project and REDA. Accordingly, ~~no~~ a less-than-significant impact to archaeological resources would occur under the REDA or the proposed Project, ~~and~~ though impacts ~~would be similar~~ under the REDA would be slightly reduced due to the reduction in area subject to mining activities by seven acres.

According to GPU EIR Figure 3.2-3, the Nichols Canyon Mine has a "low" and "undetermined" potential for paleontological resources to be uncovered (City of Lake Elsinore, 2011b, Figure 3.2-3). The geologic units within the bounds of the Nichols Canyon Mine are either assigned a Low Potential to yield fossiliferous materials, or are regarded as unlikely to yield fossiliferous materials on the basis of the geologic field investigation. Based on the published geologic map units within the bounds of the Nichols Canyon Mine, the lack of any known fossiliferous deposits in these units, the assignment of a Low Potential to contain significant nonrenewable paleontological resources (i.e.

fossils) in the granitic and young alluvial fan sediments, and the results of the geologic field examination, the Paleontological Resource and Monitoring Assessment concludes that the likelihood of finding fossiliferous materials within the Project site during any further excavation (quarrying) and/or grading activities is low to nil. (BFSA, 2015a, p. 3) Accordingly, impacts to paleontological resources would not occur under the proposed Project or REDA, and impacts would be similar.

The Project site does not contain a cemetery and no known formal cemeteries are located within the immediate site vicinity. Field surveys conducted on the Project site did not identify the presence of any human remains and no human remains are known to exist beneath the surface of the site (BFSA, 2015b). Mining activities under the REDA and the proposed Project would be subject to California Health and Safety Code, § 7050.5 "Disturbance of Human Remains," which would ensure that any potential impacts to human remains, including human remains of Native American descent, would be less than significant. Accordingly, impacts to human remains would be less than significant under both the proposed Project and the NPA, and such impacts would be similar.

E. Geology and Soils

There are no known active or potentially active faults on the Mine site. Ground shaking at the Mine site would not result in mine slope failure and would therefore not expose people or structures to adverse effects involving injury or death. The potential for liquefaction and other shallow groundwater hazards within the Mine site is low. Under both the proposed Project and the REDA, slopes would be required to be protected with berms or drainage improvements as necessary to prevent slope erosion in the areas where natural slopes drain onto the reclaimed slopes. Although the REDA proposes mining over seven fewer acres than would occur under the proposed Project, risks associated with seismic hazards, earthquake faults, strong seismic ground shaking, seismic-related ground failure (including liquefaction) and landslides would be similar under both the proposed Project and the REDA and would be less than significant.

Under the REDA and proposed Project, dust control would be required on all disturbed portions of the Mine and all runoff from areas subject to mining activities would be conveyed to sedimentation basins on-site under interim conditions, and would not allow for any runoff. Likewise, under both the Project and the NPA, upon final reclamation the site runoff would be directed towards detention basins to control erosion. Therefore, under both the Project and the REDA, impacts due to erosion would be similar and less than significant.

Based on slope stability analyses conducted by CHJ Consultants, the whole rock strength in the proposed slope areas of the Mine is sufficient to accommodate the proposed overall slope angles. Based on the analyses, the proposed overall approximate 45-degree mine and cut-slopes up to approximately 480 feet in height are suitably stable against gross failure for the long-term conditions, including the effects of seismic shaking. (CHJ Consultants, 2015, p. 20) Thus, impacts due to on-or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse would be similar under the proposed Project and the REDA and would be less than significant.

Due to the nature of the proposed activity under both the proposed Project and REDA (i.e., surface mining), a less-than-significant impact associated with expansive soil would occur because soils would be removed during mining activities. Any future use of the Project site for other land uses would require environmental review and a separate analysis regarding potential impacts from

expansive soils. Thus, the Project and REDA would have a less-than-significant impact in this regard, and impacts would be similar.

The Project and REDA do not propose the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems. Both the Project and the REDA would utilize portable toilets, as is the case with the existing mining operation. Accordingly, no impact associated with septic tanks or alternative waste water systems would occur under either the Project or the NPA, and impacts would be similar.

F. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

As indicated in EIR Subsection 4.6, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, the net new Project-related Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions would not exceed the SCAQMD's interim threshold of 10,000 $MTCO_2e$ per year. Because daily and annual operational characteristics of the REDA would be identical to the proposed Project, the REDA also would result in similar less-than-significant GHG impacts.

Based on the analysis of Threshold b. in EIR Subsection 4.6.45, the proposed Project would not conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases. It can be reasoned that the REDA also would not conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases, based on the discussion in EIR Subsection 4.6.45. Accordingly, impacts due to a conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases would be similar under both the proposed Project and the REDA, and impacts would be less than significant.

G. Hydrology and Water Quality

Mining operations at the site would continue to be regulated by an approved Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) under both the proposed Project and the REDA, which requires the incorporation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to preclude water quality impacts associated with mining operations. The BMPs specified in the required SWPPP would be required to ensure that all potential pollutants of concern are prevented, minimized, and/or otherwise appropriately treated prior to being discharged from the subject property. Mandatory compliance with the SWPPP would ensure that the Project and REDA would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements. In addition, pursuant to the requirements of the Santa Ana RWQCB and the City of Lake Elsinore, the Project and the REDA would be required to comply with the NPDES General Permit. An NPDES General Permit is required for all new and expanded mining facilities. In addition, both the Project and the REDA would be required to comply with the Santa Ana RWQCB's Santa Ana River Basin Water Quality Control Program. Because the Project and REDA would comply with mandatory SWPPP requirements and all runoff from actively mined portions of the Mine would be retained on-site during ongoing mining activities and would not affect any downstream properties or facilities, impacts would be less than significant and would be similar.

Similarly, upon completion of mining activities under both the Project and the REDA, runoff on the Nichols North site would be conveyed to a proposed sediment basin located in the southwestern portion of the Nichols North site, and eventually conveyed westerly to Stovepipe Creek beneath an existing culvert underneath I-15. Similarly, the Nichols South site also would achieve the final grades specified by the applicable reclamation plan upon completion of mining activities, and the

majority of drainage from this portion of the site would be conveyed via brow ditches to a proposed sedimentation basin located in the ~~north~~southwestern portion of the Nichols South site and ultimately west beneath I-15. Runoff from the portions of the Nichols South and Nichols North sites that are not subject to mining activities would continue to be conveyed by Stovepipe Creek, located in the southeast corner of the Nichols South site, and ultimately west beneath I-15. (Bonadiman, 2016, Exhibit H)~~(Bonadiman, 2015, Exhibit H)~~ Due to the rocky nature of the Mine, the potential for sedimentation is considered low, and the proposed sedimentation basins for both the REDA and the proposed Project have been designed in accordance with Santa Ana RWQCB requirements to ensure runoff from the Mine does not result in any new violations or water quality objectives. (Bonadiman, 2016, p. 16)~~(Bonadiman, 2015, p. 16)~~ As such, impacts would be less than significant under both the REDA and the proposed Project, and impacts would be similar.

Neither the proposed Project nor the REDA would directly result in the depletion of groundwater supplies or groundwater recharge, as the Project site would remain undeveloped with pervious surfaces that would allow for infiltration of runoff at the site. As with the proposed Project, water usage at the site would be reduced by ~~45.84~~46.99% as compared to what occurs under historic baseline conditions. Thus, the REDA would have similar less-than-significant impacts to groundwater levels.

Implementation of the proposed Project would result in mining within the 24-acre EDA, while the REDA would result in a reduced EDA comprising 17 acres in size. Interim and ultimate drainage patterns associated with both the proposed Project and the REDA would be similar, and all runoff from the slopes within the EDA would ultimately be conveyed west towards Stove Pipe Creek. Accordingly, impacts due to changes to the existing drainage pattern of the site or area would be less than significant under both the proposed Project and REDA, and would be similar.

As indicated by the analysis of unit hydrograph calculations in the site-specific hydrology study and drainage analysis (see Table 14 of *Technical Appendix H)* a decrease in runoff flows would occur during the reclamation phase of the Project, and also during the reclamation phase of the REDA as the ultimate drainage conditions of the proposed Project and REDA are similar. The two sedimentation basins required under the REDA and for the proposed Project would be designed to provide the minimum required capacities as the basins are not required to reduce peak flow rates but instead are proposed to provide sediment control. The sedimentation basin within the Nichols South site would also include a brow ditch to help reduce sediments. Because the design features would ensure that runoff rates would be reduced compared to the existing condition, the proposed Project and REDA would not have an adverse impact on downstream properties. (Bonadiman, 2016, p. 16)~~(Bonadiman, 2015, p. 16)~~ Accordingly, the Project and REDA would result in similar less-than-significant impacts associated with an increase in the rate of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on-or off-site.

Under both the proposed Project and REDA, during on-going mining activities, all runoff within the areas subject to mining activities would be retained on-site, while areas not subject to disturbance would continue to drain via Stovepipe Creek, located in the southeastern portion of the Nichols South site. Upon final reclamation of the site, runoff that had been detained on-site would instead be conveyed to one of the two sediment basins located in Nichols North and Nichols South. Following water quality treatment, the flows would be conveyed by Stovepipe Creek via existing culverts beneath I-15 to the west. A decrease in runoff flows would occur during the reclamation phase of the

Project and REDA. The two sedimentation basins required for both the REDA and proposed Project would be designed to provide the minimum required capacities as the basins are not required to reduce peak flow rates but instead are proposed to provide sediment control. Design features would ensure that runoff rates would be reduced compared to the existing condition. Runoff within the Nichols Canyon Mine also is subject to the existing SWPPP which provides BMP measures that ensures that runoff does not exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems, does not provide substantial, additional sources of polluted runoff, or otherwise degrade water quality. The Project and REDA would be subject to a revised SWPPP that includes BMP measures, as necessary and appropriate, to address potential water quality impacts. The proposed Project and REDA would be required to comply with a revised SWPPP, which identifies or would identify required BMPs to be incorporated into the Project or REDA to ensure that the proposed Project would not result in substantial amounts of polluted runoff. Thus, with mandatory compliance with the existing or revised SWPPP, the proposed Project and REDA would not create or contribute substantial additional sources of polluted runoff. Thus, impacts would be less than significant under both the Project and REDA, and impacts would be similar.

No new storm drainage facilities would be required in support of mining activities under the REDA or the proposed Project in the Nichols North site, as the existing basins ~~on-site are~~is adequately sized to detain all runoff from the mined areas (both with and without the Project). A similar sedimentation basin would be constructed in Nichols South when mining commences under the Project or REDA to detain all runoff from the mined portions of the Nichols South site. Under the proposed Project and REDA, a decrease in runoff flows is expected as a result of reclamation. The decrease in flow rate is a result of the longer path lengths which in turn reduce peak flow rates. Accordingly, reclamation under the proposed Project and REDA would result in a reduction of flow rates and neither the Project nor the REDA would require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, beyond construction of the sedimentation basin in the Nichols South site and the proposed post-reclamation sedimentation basins. Thus, impacts would be less than significant and would be similar under the REDA and proposed Project.

There are no other conditions associated with the proposed Project or REDA that could result in the substantial degradation of water quality beyond what is discussed above and in Subsection 4.7.

The areas proposed for mining at the Nichols Canyon Mine under both the proposed Project and REDA are not located within a 100-year flood plain; thus, neither the Project nor the REDA would place housing or structures in a floodplain. Impacts would not occur and would be similar under the REDA and the proposed Project.

According to Figure 10, *Flood Hazards*, of the Riverside County General Plan's Elsinore Area Plan, the Nichols Canyon Mine is not located within a dam hazard zone related to the Railroad Canyon Dam or any other dam hazard zone. As depicted on Figure 3-2, *Vicinity Map*, the Nichols Canyon Mine is located approximately 2.0 miles north of the levee that is present in association with Lake Elsinore. Thus, due to the location of the Nichols Canyon Mine approximately 5.0 miles north of the Railroad Canyon Dam and approximately 2.0 miles north of the levee at Lake Elsinore and the direction of sheet flow, the Project and REDA would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam. Impacts would be less than significant and would be similar under both the Project and the REDA.

The Nichols Canyon Mine is located approximately 2.0 miles north of Lake Elsinore, which is the nearest body of water subject to seiches. Lake Elsinore incorporates USACE flood control devices including a berm fill at the southern end of the lake to lower the potential for a seiche to occur (Lake Elsinore, 2011b, 3.9-36). In addition, due to the site's distance from Lake Elsinore, and the elevation difference between Lake Elsinore and the Nichols Canyon Mine (i.e., the Project site occurs approximately 250 feet in elevation above Lake Elsinore), the Mine is not be subject to seiches or mudflow. Furthermore, the Nichols Canyon Mine is located approximately 25 miles from the Pacific Ocean, and has no potential to be affected by tsunamis. (Google Earth Pro, 2015) Thus, neither the Project nor the REDA would be subject to seiche, tsunami, or mudflow. No Impact would occur under either the REDA or proposed Project, and impacts would be similar.

H. Noise

Under the proposed Project, mining activities within the EDA and within ~~500~~794 feet from any existing residences during daytime hours (between 7:00 am and 10:00 pm) would expose the nearest residential structures to noise levels exceeding 55 dBA L_{50} ~~Leq (10-min)~~, with the nearest residential structure occurring approximately 386~~414~~ feet ~~from~~ southeast of the EDA. Under the REDA, the EDA would be reduced from 24 acres to 17 acres in size and the distance between the reduced EDA and the nearest structure would increase to approximately 1,000 feet. The limits of the REDA's mining limits have been designed to ensure that no mining activities would occur within ~~500~~794 feet from any existing residences during daytime hours (between 7:00 am and 10:00 pm), and would thereby avoid the Project's significant and unavoidable operational noise impact which would occur under the proposed Project when mining is within 794 feet from any existing residences during daytime hours. However, it should be noted that under the REDA and consistent with the existing mining operation, areas subject to mining in the Nichols South site would occur as close as 472 feet from the nearest residential home and would expose nearby residences to noise levels exceeding the County's standard; nonetheless, because no new mining activities would be authorized within 794 feet of the nearest residential structure, the Project's significant and unavoidable impact would be avoided under the REDA.

Pursuant to the mitigation measures included in EIR Subsection 4.8, *Noise*, during nighttime hours (between 10:00 pm and 7:00 am), the Project and the REDA would be restricted from mining within 1,820~~250~~ feet of any occupied residential structure if a direct line-of-sight exists between the mining activity and the occupied structure(s) If the line-of-site is blocked, noise-generating activities may extend to within 603~~500~~ feet of occupied residential structures. The limits of the REDA's mining limits have been designed to ensure that no mining activities would occur within approximately 1,000 feet from any existing residences during the nocturnal hours. Thus, nighttime operational noise impacts under the proposed Project and REDA would be reduced to less-than-significant levels, and impacts would be similar.

There would be no changes to operational characteristics under the REDA as compared to the proposed Project. Thus, both he proposed Project and REDA would result in an increase in 425 passenger care equivalents (PCEs). For the reasons discussed in EIR Subsection 4.8, *Noise*, transportation-related noise would be less than significant under the REDA and proposed Project, and impacts would be similar.

Although the NPA would introduce blasting activities and mining activities as close as 386~~414~~ feet from the nearest residential home, the analysis in EIR Subsection 4.3.~~7~~8 demonstrates that Project-

related blasting and mining equipment would result in less-than-significant impacts associated with groundborne noise or groundborne vibration at the nearest home. Under the REDA, the distance between the disturbance limits and the nearest home would increase to approximately ~~975~~ 1,000 feet. Thus, impacts due to groundborne vibration or groundborne noise would be reduced under the REDA, although impacts would be less than significant under both the proposed Project and the REDA.

Neither the proposed Project nor the REDA would be impacted by noise related to airport or private airport operations. Impacts would not occur under the Project and REDA and would be similar.

I. Transportation and Circulation

Under the REDA, daily operational characteristics would be identical to the proposed Project. Thus, both the REDA and the proposed Project would result in the generation of 425 new PCE trips from the site. Although the Project and REDA would generate trips at a level that would not normally require a traffic study based on Caltrans' criteria, cumulatively considerable and unavoidable impacts would nonetheless occur to the following facilities under the REDA:

- EAPC (2016) Conditions:
  - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Northbound Ramp/Nichols Road intersection (LOS F AM and PM peak hours~~; LOS E PM peak hour~~); ~~and~~
  - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Southbound Ramp/Nichols Road intersection (LOS F AM and PM peak hours);
  - Cumulatively considerable impact due to the need to signalize the I-15 Northbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection; and~~.~~
  - Cumulatively considerable impact due to the need to signalize the I-15 Southbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection.

- Horizon Year (2035) Conditions:
  - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Northbound Ramp/Nichols Road intersection (LOS F during both AM and PM peak hours);
  - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Southbound Ramp/Nichols Road intersection (LOS F during both AM and PM peak hours);
  - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Southbound Ramp/Nichols Road intersection (LOS F AM and PM peak hours);
  - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Southbound Freeway Segments (LOS F during the PM peak hour);
  - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Northbound Freeway Segments (LOS F during the AM peak hour and LOS E during the PM peak hour);
  - Cumulatively considerable freeway off-ramp queuing impact to the I-15 Northbound Off-Ramp at Nichols Road (2,838 ft. queue during the AM peak hour and 3,520 ft. queue during the PM peak hour);
  - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Southbound Off-Ramp/Nichols Road Freeway Ramp Junction Merge/Diverge (LOS F during the PM peak hour);
  - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Northbound On-Ramp/Nichols Road Freeway Ramp Junction Merge/Diverge (LOS F during the AM peak hour and LOS E during the PM peak hour);

- o Cumulatively considerable impact due to the need to signalize the I-15 Northbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection; and
- o Cumulatively considerable impact due to the need to signalize the I-15 Southbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection.
- ~~o Cumulatively considerable impact due to the projected off-ramp queueing issue at the I-15 northbound off-ramps to Nichols Road; and~~
- ~~o Cumulatively considerable impact due to deficiencies at the I-15 Northbound Ramps/Nichols Road merge/diverge junction (LOS F AM Peak Hour; LOS E PM Peak Hour).~~

The above-listed impacts also affect I-15, a Congestion Management Plan (CMP) designated facility. Thus, impacts due to a conflict with a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways would be similar under the proposed Project and the REDA, and impacts would be cumulatively considerable and unavoidable.

Neither the proposed Project nor the REDA would result in impacts due to a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks, and impacts would be similar under both the REDA and proposed Project.

Neither the proposed Project nor the REDA would substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment). Impacts under both the proposed Project and NPA would be similar, and would be less than significant.

Neither the proposed Project nor the REDA would result in inadequate emergency access. No impacts would occur under the proposed Project or the REDA, and impacts would be similar.

Based on the analysis presented in EIR Subsection 4.9.7 (refer the Threshold f.), the proposed Project and the REDA would not conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities). Accordingly, impacts under both the NPA and proposed Project would be less than significant and would be similar.

J. Utilities and Service Systems

Under existing conditions, wastewater treatment at the Nichols Canyon Mine is handled by portable toilets, which are regularly emptied by a rental service company. Waste from these portable toilets is disposed of in accordance with all applicable regulatory requirements. Portable toilets would continue to be operated on-site for the duration of mining and reclamation activities under both the proposed Project and the REDA. There are no other potential sources of wastewater associated with the proposed Project or the REDA. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project or REDA would not exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board. Thus, impacts would be less than significant and would be identical under the REDA and proposed Project.

Both the proposed Project and the REDA would result in a net increase of two employees as compared to historic baseline conditions; however, such an increase is not substantial and would not have an effect on existing wastewater treatment facilities, as wastewater treatment at the Nichols

Canyon Mine is handled by portable toilets, which are regularly emptied by a rental service company. Thus, impacts due to the need for construction of new wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects would not occur under either the REDA or the proposed Project, and impacts would be similar.

Under historic baseline conditions, the Nichols Canyon Mine utilized approximately 32,91564,000 gallons per day (gpd) for dust suppression. SMP 2015-01 includes new watering restrictions for soil stabilization, as shown on Figure 4.10-1, *Surface Mining Permit SMP 2015-01 Proposed Dust Control Measures – Nichols NorthPlan*, and Figure 4.10-2, *SMP 2015-01 Proposed Dust Control Measures – Nichols South*, implementation of the proposed Project and REDA would result in a net decrease in areas subject to watering as compared to historic baseline conditions. The reduction in water usage on-site would occur because SMP 2015-01 requires the use of soil binding chemicals, pavement, and other stabilization techniques to provide for adequate dust control while resulting in a net decrease in water used at the site. In total, it can be assumed that because areas on-site that require water for dust control would be reduced by approximately 45.846.99% as compared to baseline conditions; therefore, it can be assumed that total water use at the mine would decrease under the proposed Project and REDA from approximately 32,91564,000 gpd to approximately 17,44834,660 gpd as compared to baseline conditions. Areas subject to dust control would be slightly reduced under the REDA due to the reduction by seven acres in areas subject to mining activities; thus, under the REDA water usage would be reduced as compared to historic baseline conditions and compared to the proposed Project. Although approval of the Project or the REDA would extend the duration of mining activities on-site as necessary to mine and reclaim the site, the EVWMD has determined that it has sufficient supplies to meet the demand for projected normal year, singly-dry year, and multiple-dry-year supply through 2035. This determination was made by the EVWMD based on future population and employment estimates within the EVMWD service area, and accounts for on-going mining activities at the Nichols Canyon Mine. (EVMWD, 2011a, Tables ES-9, ES-10, and ES-11) Therefore, because total water usage on-site would decrease under the proposed Project as compared to baseline conditions, and because the EVMWD has sufficient supplies through 2035, including during dry and multiple-dry years, the REDA's impacts to water supplies would be less than significant and identical similar to the proposed Project.

Implementation of the proposed Project or REDA would result in a reduction in demand for water from 32,915 gpd to 17,448a net decrease of 29,340 gpd as compared to baseline. Areas subject to dust control would be slightly reduced under the REDA due to the reduction by seven acres in areas subject to mining activities; thus, under the REDA water usage would be reduced as compared to historic baseline conditions and ascompared to the proposed Project. Also, the UWMP concludes that sufficient supply exists to meet the demand for projected normal year, singly-dry year, and multiple-dry-year supply through 2035. (EVMWD, 2011a, p. 10) The proposed Project and REDA have no potential to result in the construction of new or expanded water treatment facilities, and no impact would occur.

Implementation of the proposed Project or REDA would result in the net increase of two employees as compared to baseline conditions, and the Project is not expected to result in a substantial increase in the amount of wastewater generated at the site as compared to wastewater generated under baseline conditions. Furthermore, wastewater generated at the site under existing conditions is handled via portable toilets, and there would be no need for additional portable toilets as a result of

the Project or the REDA, nor would there be a discernible change in the number of times the service provider would need to service the Mine under the proposed Project and REDA. The wastewater haul company would dispose of all wastewater generated by the Project at permitted facilities with sufficient capacity to handle Project-generated wastewater. Neither the Project nor REDA utilize EVMWD's sewer system and there are no components of the Project or REDA that would cause or contribute to deficient wastewater treatment capacity; therefore, no impact would occur under either the proposed Project or REDA, and impacts would be similar.

There would be only nominal increase in solid waste generation at the Mine under the proposed Project and REDA, due to the expected increase of two employees. Solid waste generated under the Project or REDA would be conveyed to one of several landfills (El Sobrante, Badlands, or Lamb Canyon Landfills) operated or managed by the RCWMD. These existing landfills are required to comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste. Landfills within RCWMD's jurisdiction adhere to state guidelines which specify that a minimum of 15 years of system-wide landfill capacity shall be provided. (Lake Elsinore, 2011b, p. 3-16-5). Therefore, because the Project and REDA both would be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the Mine's solid waste, and because the Project's and the REDA's incremental increase in solid waste generation would be negligible, impacts would be less than significant and would be similar.

The Project and the REDA would be required to comply with City and County waste reduction programs pursuant to the State's Integrated Waste Management Act and Chapter 14.12 of the City of Lake Elsinore Municipal Code. Solid waste generated at the Mine would be conveyed to one of several landfills operated or managed by RCWMD under both the Project and the REDA. These existing landfills are required to comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste. Compliance with federal, state, and local statutes would reduce the amount of solid waste generated by the Mine and diverted to landfills which in turn will aid in the extension of the life of affected disposal sites. The Project and REDA would comply with all applicable solid waste statutes and regulations; as such, impacts would be less than significant and would be similar under both the Project and REDA.

The proposed Project and REDA would involve the continuation and expansion of an existing mining operation, and would not result in a substantial increase in daily operational characteristics at the site. All utilities needed to serve the Nichols Canyon Mine are currently in place. Specifically, electricity is provided to the site via private power poles from a connection near the Mine's southern boundary, and these existing power poles would not require expansion as a result of the Project. There are no other utilities needed in support of mining operations that would have the potential to cause significant environmental effects. Accordingly, no impact would occur under either the Project or the RDA, and impacts would be similar.

K. Conclusion

Implementation of the Reduced Expanded Disturbance Area ~~and the proposed Project~~ would result in a reduction in areas subject to physical impacts by the Project from approximately 24 acres to 17 acres. All other characteristics of the REDA would be identical to the proposed Project. Impacts to the following issue areas would be reduced under the REDA in relation to the proposed Project: aesthetics; biological resources; cultural resources; and noise. However, the Project's significant and unavoidable biological resources impact due to a conflict with the MSHCP and Ordinance 1124

would still occur under the REDA, although the impact would be slightly reduced due to the reduction in areas subject to mining under the REDA. All other impacts would be the same under the REDA and the proposed Project.

The REDA would meet all of the Project's objectives although it would meet two objectives to a lesser extent than the proposed Project. The REDA would increase the available high-quality aggregate reserves available within the local area~~on the property~~, although by seven fewer acres than the proposed Project. Additionally, the REDA would be less effective at making the most usable space from the Mine's disturbance limits. The REDA would meet the Project's remaining objectives.

6.3.3 REDUCED TRAFFIC ALTERNATIVE (RTA)

The Reduced Traffic Alternative (RTA) considers implementation of the Project as proposed, but with a restriction on daily tonnage from the mine from 5,000 tpd under the proposed Project to 4,250~~4,578~~ tpd, of ~~which~~ which 1,490~~1,330~~ tpd would be attributable to the RTA and ~~3,248~~2,760 tpd attributable to existing baseline operations. Using the values presented in EIR Table 4.9-11, 1,490~~1,330~~ tpd would result in approximately 361~~223~~ average daily trips (ADT), with 55~~49~~ AM peak hour trips and 45~~40~~ trips during the PM peak hour. Due to the restriction in tpd, it is expected that this alternative would take ~~approximately 9%~~ longer to achieve the final grades as specified by RP 2006-01A2 due to the reduction in peak daily production limits.

Under the RTA, the proposed increase in daily operations over baseline conditions would produce fewer than 25~~50~~ peak hour trips at all study area intersections, and daily and peak hour traffic would be reduced by 15%. Nonetheless, and consistent with the conservative assumptions applied to the proposed Project in EIR Subsection 4.9, the RTA still would contribute to cumulatively-considerable impacts to the following facilities, although impacts would be reduced compared to the proposed Project~~As a result, this alternative would avoid the following near-term cumulatively considerable impacts of the proposed Project~~:

- EAPC (2016) Conditions:
  - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Northbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection (LOS F during both the AM and ~~peak hour; LOS E~~ PM peak hours);
  - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Southbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection (LOS F during both the AM and PM peak hours);
  - Cumulatively considerable impact due to the need to signalize the I-15 Northbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection; and~~.~~
  - ~~o~~ Cumulatively considerable impact due to the need to signalize the I-15 Southbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection

- Horizon Year (2035) Conditions:
  - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Northbound Ramp/Nichols Road intersection;
  - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Southbound Ramp/Nichols Road intersection; Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Southbound Ramp/Nichols Road intersection (LOS F AM and PM peak hours);
  - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Southbound Freeway Segments (LOS F during the PM peak hour);

- Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Northbound Freeway Segments (LOS F during the AM peak hour and LOS E during the PM peak hour);
- Cumulatively considerable freeway off-ramp queuing impact to the I-15 Northbound Off-Ramp at Nichols Road (2,838 ft. queue during the AM peak hour and 3,520 ft. queue during the PM peak hour);
- Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Southbound Off-Ramp/Nichols Road Freeway Ramp Junction Merge/Diverge (LOS F during the PM peak hour);
- Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Northbound On-Ramp/Nichols Road Freeway Ramp Junction Merge/Diverge (LOS F during the AM peak hour and LOS E during the PM peak hour);
- Cumulatively considerable impact due to the need to signalize the I-15 Northbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection.
- Cumulatively considerable impact due to the need to signalize the I-15 Southbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection.
- ~~Cumulatively considerable impact due to the projected off-ramp queueing issue at the I-15 northbound off-ramps to Nichols Road; and~~
- ~~Cumulatively considerable impact due to deficiencies at the I-15 Northbound Ramps/Nichols Road merge/diverge junction.~~

All other components of the RTA would be identical to the proposed Project. This alternative was selected to ~~eliminate~~ reduce the Project's cumulatively considerable impacts to transportation and traffic, which also would reduce the Project's daily emissions of air quality pollutants and traffic-related noise.

A. Aesthetics

No unique or scenic vistas would be impacted by the Project or the RTA, as the Project site does not contain any scenic vistas, nor does it offer unique views of any visually prominent features. Additionally, areas subject to mining activities would be identical to the proposed Project. Thus, impacts to scenic vistas and unique views would be similar to the Project's less-than-significant impact to scenic vistas.

The Mine also is not visible from any State-designated scenic highways. As such, impacts to resources visible from a designated scenic highway corridor would be similar to the Project's less-than-significant impacts.

Areas planned for mining disturbance would be identical under the RTA and the proposed Project. Thus, impacts due to the degradation of the existing visual character or quality of the site or its surrounding areas would be identical under the RTA in comparison to the Project, and in both cases impacts would be less than significant.

Under the proposed Project and the RTA, the time limits for both mining and asphalt batch plant operation would be extended to between 4:00 a.m. and 12:00 a.m. (Monday through Saturday, excluding Federal Holidays) for mining equipment and asphalt batch plant operation and 24 hours per day (Monday through Saturdays, excluding Federal Holidays) for aggregate and asphalt batch plant export activities. Neither the Project nor the RTA proposes any new lighting elements on-site. Thus, impacts due to light and glare would identical under the RTA and the proposed Project, and such impacts would be less than significant.

B. Air Quality

The proposed Project is consistent both with the site's land use at the time the 2012 Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) was adopted, and the site's "Extractive Overlay" General Plan land use designation and would therefore result in emissions "accounted for" in the AQMP based on the mining activities that occurred on-site in 2012 and the site's General Plan land use designation. However, w~~W~~ith mitigation, the Project's and RTA's regional VOCs and $PM_{2.5}$ ~~NO_X~~ emissions impact would be reduced to less than significant~~., and the Project would not result in any exceedances of the SCAQMD localized significance thresholds.~~ However, the required mitigation would not reduce the Project's or the RTA's emissions of NO_x to below the SCAQMD Regional Threshold for this pollutant. Reduction in the amount of traffic and daily operations at the site under the RTA would result in a reduction in air quality pollutants by roughly 15%. Under the RTA, this would reduce maximum daily emissions of NO_X to approximately 60.57 pounds per day after mitigation, which still would exceed the SCAQMD Regional Threshold of 55 pounds per day. Thus, and similar to the proposed Project, the RTA still would result in a significant unavoidable conflict with the SCAQMD 2012 AQMP, although the impact would be reduced due to the reduced amount of daily emissions under the RTA.~~ As with the proposed Project, the RTA would be consistent with the growth forecast assumptions for the site and emissions associated with the RTA also are accounted for by the AQMP. Thus, impacts due to a conflict with the AQMP under the Project and the RTA would be similar and less than significant.~~

With mitigation for VOCs and PM_{10} ~~NO_X~~ emissions, the proposed Project would not exceed the SCAQMD regional thresholds of significance for VOCs and PM_{10} ~~any criteria pollutant~~. However, the Project's emissions of NO_x still would exceed the SCAQMD's Regional Thresholds even with the incorporation of mitigation. NO_X emissions would contribute to the region's non-attainment status for ozone. Under the RTA, total daily mining-related emissions from the Project site would be reduced by approximately 15% as compared to the proposed Project due to the restriction on allowable daily tonnage. Thus, the RTA would result in reduced impacts due to ~~air quality~~NO_X emissions and violations of air quality standards as compared to the proposed Project, although both the proposed Project and the RTA would result in ~~less than~~ significant and unavoidable impacts because NO_X emissions still would exceed the SCAQMD Regional Threshold even after the incorporation of mitigation measures.

There is no potential for the Project or the RTA to contribute to impacts associated with CO "Hot Spots," as there are no intersections within the Project site's vicinity that experience the levels of traffic needed to form a CO "Hot Spot." Implementation of the proposed Project would result in less-than-significant impacts due to both cancer and non-cancer risks from diesel particulate matter (DPM) emissions. However, due to the reduction in the average tons per day associated with the RTA, impacts associated with DPM emissions (and associated cancer and non-cancer risks) would be reduced under the RTA as compared to the proposed Project.

Potential sources of operational odors generated by the Project and the RTA would include disposal of miscellaneous refuse. However, only a nominal increase in solid waste would occur in association with the proposed Project or the RTA. Moreover, SCAQMD Rule 402 acts to prevent occurrences of odor nuisances. Consistent with City requirements, all refuse would be stored in covered containers and removed at regular intervals in compliance with solid waste regulations. Thus, impacts due to odors under both the RTA and the proposed Project would be similar and would be less than significant.

C. *Biological Resources*

Under the RTA, the Expanded Disturbance Area (EDA) would be identical to the Project. As with the proposed Project, impacts to sensitive plant species would not occur under the RTA. As with the proposed Project, new indirect impacts to sensitive animal species also would occur under the RTA. Additionally, the Project's impacts to 21.4 acres of brittlebush scrub and 2.1 acres of non-native grassland habitat also would be impacted under the RTA. Thus, the RTA would have impacts that are identical to the Project's direct and indirect impacts to sensitive animal species and sensitive habitats. With mitigation, impacts would be reduced to less-than-significant levels.

Although there is no riparian habitat on-site, implementation of the proposed Project and RTA would result in direct impacts to 21.4 acres of brittlebush scrub and 2.1 acres of non-native grassland, which provide habitat for sensitive animal species (i.e., coastal California gnatcatcher and MBTA-protected birds and raptors). These impacts would be reduced to less-than-significant levels with the incorporation of mitigation, and following mitigation impacts would be identical under the proposed Project and the RTA.

The proposed Project and the RTA would impact approximately 0.05 acre of Corps non-wetland WUS and 0.17 acre of CDFW streambed. Mitigation would be required under both the Project and the RTA to reduce these impacts to less-than-significant levels.

Neither the proposed Project nor the RTA have the potential to result in impacts to any native resident or migratory fish, established wildlife corridor, or native wildlife nursery sites. However, the proposed Project and the RTA both have the potential to impact native, migratory, and nesting birds protected by the MBTA that may exist within the EDA. These potential impacts would be identical under the Project and the RTA.

The Project is not subject to the requirements of the MSHCP, and would therefore not be subject to Ordinance 1124, which created a development mitigation fee in accordance with the MSHCP. Project impacts to habitat, sensitive species, and jurisdictional areas would be mitigated to below a level of significance through the implementation of the mitigation measures provided in EIR Subsection 4.3.7, which include a requirement for the Project Applicant to obtain appropriate permits directly through the Wildlife Agencies. The Project would provide direct mitigation for impacts to biological resources on-site and would not rely on the take coverage granted by the MSHCP and Ordinance 1124; thus, payment of the fees pursuant to Ordinance 1124 is not required and would not serve to mitigate any of the Project's direct, indirect, or cumulatively considerable impacts to biological resources. Nonetheless, and in an effort to provide a conservative analysis, the Project's non-compliance with Ordinance 1124 represent a significant direct impact of the proposed Project for which mitigation, other than payment of a fee that would bear no relation to the Project's impacts and associated mitigation, is not available. Under the RTA, the site still would not be subject to the MSHCP, and payment of fees pursuant to Ordinance 1124 would not be required for the RTA. As with the Project, the RTA would be required to implement direct mitigation and obtain permits from the Wildlife Agencies to reduce impacts to below a level of significant. Nonetheless, the non-payment of fees pursuant to Ordinance 1124 under the Project and the RTA represent significant and unavoidable impacts, and such impacts would be similar under both the Project and the RTA.~~Neither the proposed Project nor the RTA would conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance.~~

Both the RTA and the proposed Project would be required to contribute fees pursuant to Chapter 19.04 of the City's Municipal Code in order to ensure compliance with the SKR HCP. Thus, no impact due to a conflict with the SKR HCP would occur under the proposed Project or RTA. Although the Project and RTA would not be subject to the requirements of the MSHCP, the Project site is located within MSHCP Cell Group W. Pursuant to the MSHCP, conservation within Cell Group W is intended to encompass 80%-90% of the Cell Group focusing in the northwestern portion of the Cell Group. The Mine and the EDA occur in the eastern portion of Group W. Notwithstanding the fact that the mitigation identified in EIR Subsection 4.3.7 would reduce the Project's and RTA's impacts to below a level of significance, the Project and RTA would nonetheless not comply with the MSHCP objectives for Cell Group W because strict compliance with the MSHCP would require the conservation of the EDA, which inherently conflicts with the Project's primary objective to increase the availability of aggregate reserves within the local area. Moreover, on-going mining operations at the site have fully disturbed the western portions of the Mine site that are intended for conservation under the MSHCP. Thus, even if the EDA were to be conserved, the site still would not meet the objectives for Cell Group W and any preserved habitat would be disconnected from the portions of Cell Group W located west of the Project site. Thus, both the Project and the RTA would result in a significant and unavoidable impact due to non-compliance with the MSHCP's conservation objectives for the site. Impacts would be identical to the proposed Project because areas subject to mining activities would be identical under the Project and RTA.

~~Although the Nichols Canyon Mine is located within the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) area, pursuant to a March 2004 Settlement Agreement and MOU signed between Riverside County and the former landowner, the 199 acre Nichols Canyon Mine site is fully exempt from the provisions and requirements of the MSHCP. Thus, no impacts due to a conflict with the MSHCP would occur under the proposed Project or the RTA. Additionally, the Mine is located within the Stephens' Kangaroo Rat (SKR) Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), and the proposed Project would be subject to the payment of fees in accordance with City of Lake Elsinore Municipal Code Chapter 19.04. Payment of SKR fees also would be required under the RTA. Accordingly, impacts due to a conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan would not occur under the proposed Project or the RTA.~~

D. Cultural Resources

There are no historical resources as defined in § 15064.5 within the Nichols Canyon Mine site. Thus, there would be no impacts to historical resources under the proposed Project or the RTA, and impacts would be similar.

No archeological resources meeting the definition of § 15064.5 within the Nichols Canyon Mine site, and none are expected within the areas already disturbed by mining activities or the EDA. However, the potential nonetheless exists for resources to be unearthed during ground disturbing activities. The proposed Project reduced this impact to less-than-significant levels with the incorporation of mitigation, and would also be reduced to less-than-significant under the RTA. Accordingly, ~~no~~ a less-than-significant impact to archaeological resources would occur under the RTA ~~or~~ and the proposed Project, and impacts would be similar.

According to GPU EIR Figure 3.2-3, the Nichols Canyon Mine has a "low" and "undetermined" potential for paleontological resources to be uncovered (City of Lake Elsinore, 2011b, Figure 3.2-3).

The geologic units within the bounds of the Nichols Canyon Mine are either assigned a Low Potential to yield fossiliferous materials, or are regarded as unlikely to yield fossiliferous materials on the basis of the geologic field investigation. Based on the published geologic map units within the bounds of the Nichols Canyon Mine, the lack of any known fossiliferous deposits in these units, the assignment of a Low Potential to contain significant nonrenewable paleontological resources (i.e. fossils) in the granitic and young alluvial fan sediments, and the results of the geologic field examination, the Paleontological Resource and Monitoring Assessment concludes that the likelihood of finding fossiliferous materials within the Project site during any further excavation (quarrying) and/or grading activities is low to nil. (BFSA, 2015a, p. 3) Accordingly, impacts to paleontological resources would not occur under the proposed Project or RTA, and impacts would be similar.

The Project site does not contain a cemetery and no known formal cemeteries are located within the immediate site vicinity. Field surveys conducted on the Project site did not identify the presence of any human remains and no human remains are known to exist beneath the surface of the site (BFSA, 2015b). Mining activities under the RTA and the proposed Project would be subject to California Health and Safety Code, § 7050.5 "Disturbance of Human Remains," which would ensure that any potential impacts to human remains, including human remains of Native American descent, would be less than significant. Accordingly, impacts to human remains would be less than significant under both the proposed Project and the RTA, and such impacts would be similar.

E. Geology and Soils

There are no known active or potentially active faults on the Mine site. Ground shaking at the Mine site would not result in mine slope failure and would therefore not expose people or structures to adverse effects involving injury or death. The potential for liquefaction and other shallow groundwater hazards within the Mine site is low. Under both the proposed Project and the RTA, slopes would be required to be protected with berms or drainage improvements as necessary to prevent slope erosion in the areas where natural slopes drain onto the reclaimed slopes. Risks associated with seismic hazards, earthquake faults, strong seismic ground shaking, seismic-related ground failure (including liquefaction) and landslides would be similar under both the proposed Project and the RTA and would be less than significant.

Under the RTA and proposed Project, dust control would be required on all disturbed portions of the Mine and runoff from all areas subject to mining would be directed to sedimentation basins and detained on-site under interim conditions. Likewise, under both the Project and the RTA, upon final reclamation the site runoff would be directed towards detention basins to control erosion. Therefore, under both the Project and the RTA, impacts due to erosion would be similar and less than significant.

Based on slope stability analyses conducted by CHJ Consultants, the whole rock strength in the proposed slope areas of the Mine is sufficient to accommodate the proposed overall slope angles. Based on the analyses, the proposed overall approximate 45-degree mine and cut-slopes up to approximately 480 feet in height are suitably stable against gross failure for the long-term conditions, including the effects of seismic shaking. (CHJ Consultants, 2015, p. 20) Thus, impacts due to on-or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse would be similar under the proposed Project and the RTA and would be less than significant.

Due to the nature of the proposed activity under both the proposed Project and RTA (i.e., surface mining), a less-than-significant impact associated with expansive soil would occur because soils would be removed during mining activities. Any future use of the Project site for other land uses would require environmental review and a separate analysis regarding potential impacts from expansive soils. Thus, the Project and RTA would have a less-than-significant impact in this regard, and impacts would be similar.

The Project and RTA do not propose the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems. Both the Project and the RTA would utilize portable toilets, as is the case with the existing mining operation. Accordingly, no impact associated with septic tanks or alternative waste water systems would occur under either the Project or the RTA, and impacts would be similar.

F. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

As indicated in EIR Subsection 4.6, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, the net new Project-related GHG emissions would not exceed the SCAQMD's interim threshold of 10,000 $MTCO_2e$ per year. Although under the RTA the daily maximum tonnage, and thus, the daily GHG emissions would be reduced, it can reasonably be concluded that the annual tonnage under the RTA would be identical to the proposed Project. Thus, the RTA also would result in less-than-significant impacts due to GHG emissions, and impacts would be similar under the RTA and proposed Project on an annual basis.

Based on the analysis of Threshold b. in EIR Subsection 4.6.45, the proposed Project would not conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases. It can be reasoned that the RTA also would not conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases, based on the discussion in EIR Subsection 4.6.45. Accordingly, impacts due to a conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases would be similar under both the proposed Project and the RTA, and impacts would be less than significant.

G. Hydrology and Water Quality

Mining operations at the site would continue to be regulated by an approved Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) under both the proposed Project and the RTA, which requires the incorporation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to preclude water quality impacts associated with mining operations. The BMPs specified in the required SWPPP would be required to ensure that all potential pollutants of concern are prevented, minimized, and/or otherwise appropriately treated prior to being discharged from the subject property. Mandatory compliance with the SWPPP would ensure that the Project and RTA would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements. In addition, pursuant to the requirements of the Santa Ana RWQCB and the City of Lake Elsinore, the Project and the RTA would be required to comply with the NPDES General Permit. An NPDES General Permit is required for all new and expanded mining facilities. In addition, both the Project and the RTA would be required to comply with the Santa Ana RWQCB's Santa Ana River Basin Water Quality Control Program. Because the Project and RTA would comply with mandatory SWPPP requirements and all runoff from actively mined portions of the Mine would be retained on-site during ongoing mining activities and would not affect any downstream properties or facilities, impacts would be less than significant and would be similar.

Similarly, upon completion of mining activities under both the Project and the RTA, runoff on the Nichols North site would be conveyed to a proposed sediment basin located in the southwestern portion of the Nichols North site, and eventually conveyed westerly to Stovepipe Creek beneath an existing culvert underneath I-15. Similarly, the Nichols South site also would achieve the final grades specified by the applicable reclamation plan upon completion of mining activities, and the majority of drainage from this portion of the site would be conveyed to a proposed sedimentation basin located in the ~~north~~southwestern portion of the Nichols South site and ultimately west beneath I-15. Runoff from the portions of the Nichols South and Nichols North sites that are not subject to mining activities would continue to be conveyed by Stovepipe Creek, located in the southeast corner of the Nichols South site, and ultimately west beneath I-15. (Bonadiman, 2016, Exhibit H)~~(Bonadiman, 2015, Exhibit H)~~ Due to the rocky nature of the Mine, the potential for sedimentation is considered low, and the proposed sedimentation basins for both the RTA and the proposed Project have been designed in accordance with Santa Ana RWQCB requirements to ensure runoff from the Mine does not result in any new violations or water quality objectives. (Bonadiman, 2016, p. 16)~~(Bonadiman, 2015, p. 16)~~ As such, impacts would be less than significant under both the RTA and the proposed Project, and impacts would be similar.

Neither the proposed Project nor the RTA would directly result in the depletion of groundwater supplies or groundwater recharge, as the Project site would remain undeveloped with pervious surfaces that would allow for infiltration of runoff at the site. Under both the proposed Project and the RTA, water usage at the site would be reduced by ~~45.84~~46.99% as compared to what occurs under baseline conditions; however, watering at the site would likely be required over a greater duration of time under the RTA. Nonetheless, implementation of the RTA would result in similar impacts to groundwater levels as compared to the proposed Project, and in both cases impacts would be less than significant.

Implementation of the proposed Project and the RTA would result in mining within the 24-acre EDA; however, such mining activities would not substantially change the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, because all runoff from the slopes within the EDA would ultimately be conveyed west towards Stove Pipe Creek. Accordingly, impacts due to changes to the existing drainage pattern of the site or area would be less than significant under both the proposed Project and RTA, and would be similar.

As indicated by the analysis of unit hydrograph calculations in the site-specific hydrology study and drainage analysis (see Table 14 of *Technical Appendix H)* a decrease in runoff flows would occur during the reclamation phase of the Project, and also during the reclamation phase of the RTA as the ultimate drainage conditions of the proposed Project and RTA are identical. The two sedimentation basins required under the RTA and for the proposed Project would be designed to provide the minimum required capacities as the basins are not required to reduce peak flow rates but instead are proposed to provide sediment control. Because the design features would ensure that runoff rates would be reduced compared to the existing condition, the proposed Project and RTA would not have an adverse impact on downstream properties. (Bonadiman, 2016, p. 16)~~(Bonadiman, 2015, p. 16)~~ Accordingly, the Project and RTA would result in less-than-significant impacts associated with an increase in the rate of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on-or off-site. Thus, impacts would be less than significant under both the Project and RTA, and would be similar.

Under both the proposed Project and RTA, during on-going mining activities, all runoff within the areas subject to mining activities would be retained on-site, while areas not subject to disturbance would continue to drain via Stovepipe Creek, located in the southeastern portion of the Nichols South site. Upon final reclamation of the site, runoff that had been detained on-site would instead be conveyed to one of the two sediment basins located in Nichols North and Nichols South. Following water quality treatment, the flows would be conveyed by Stovepipe Creek via existing culverts beneath I-15 to the west. A decrease in runoff flows would occur during the reclamation phase of the Project and RTA. The two sedimentation basins required for both the RTA and proposed Project would be designed to provide the minimum required capacities as the basins are not required to reduce peak flow rates but instead are proposed to provide sediment control. Design features would ensure that runoff rates would be reduced compared to the existing condition. Runoff within the Nichols Canyon Mine also is subject to the existing SWPPP which provides BMP measures that ensures that runoff does not exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems, does not provide substantial, additional sources of polluted runoff, or otherwise degrade water quality. The Project and RTA would be subject to a revised SWPPP that includes BMP measures, as necessary and appropriate, to address potential water quality impacts. The proposed Project and RTA would be required to comply with the revised SWPPP, which identifies or would identify required BMPs to be incorporated into the Project or RTA to ensure that the proposed Project would not result in substantial amounts of polluted runoff. Thus, with mandatory compliance with the existing or revised SWPPP, the proposed Project and RTA would not create or contribute substantial additional sources of polluted runoff. Thus, impacts would be less than significant under both the Project and RTA, and impacts would be similar.

No new storm drainage facilities would be required in support of existing mining activities under the RTA or proposed mining activities under the proposed Project, as the existing basins on-site are adequately sized to detain all runoff from the mined areas (both with and without the Project). Under the proposed Project and RTA, a decrease in runoff flows is expected as a result of reclamation. The decrease in flow rate is a result of the longer path lengths which in turn reduce peak flow rates. Accordingly, reclamation under the proposed Project and RTA would result in a reduction of flow rates and neither the Project nor the RTA would require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities. Thus, impacts would be less than significant and would be similar under the RTA and proposed Project.

There are no other conditions associated with the proposed Project or RTA that could result in the substantial degradation of water quality beyond what is discussed above and in Subsection 4.7.

The areas proposed for mining at the Nichols Canyon Mine under both the proposed Project and RTA are not located within a 100-year flood plain; thus, neither the Project nor the RTA would place housing or structures in a floodplain. Impacts would not occur and would be similar under the RTA and the proposed Project.

According to Figure 10, *Flood Hazards*, of the Riverside County General Plan's Elsinore Area Plan, the Nichols Canyon Mine is not located within a dam hazard zone related to the Railroad Canyon Dam or any other dam hazard zone. As depicted on Figure 3-2, *Vicinity Map*, the Nichols Canyon Mine is located approximately 2.0 miles north of the levee that is present in association with Lake Elsinore. Thus, due to the location of the Nichols Canyon Mine approximately 5.0 miles north of the Railroad Canyon Dam and approximately 2.0 miles north of the levee at Lake Elsinore and the

direction of sheet flow, the Project and RTA would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam. Impacts would be less than significant and would be similar under both the Project and the RTA.

The Nichols Canyon Mine is located approximately 2.0 miles north of Lake Elsinore, which is the nearest body of water subject to seiches. Lake Elsinore incorporates USACE flood control devices including a berm fill at the southern end of the lake to lower the potential for a seiche to occur (Lake Elsinore, 2011b, 3.9-36). In addition, due to the site's distance from Lake Elsinore, and the elevation difference between Lake Elsinore and the Nichols Canyon Mine (i.e., the Project site occurs approximately 250 feet in elevation above Lake Elsinore), the Mine is not be subject to seiches or mudflow. Furthermore, the Nichols Canyon Mine is located approximately 25 miles from the Pacific Ocean, and has no potential to be affected by tsunamis. (Google Earth Pro, 2015) Thus, neither the Project nor the RTA would be subject to seiche, tsunami, or mudflow. No Impact would occur under either the RTA or proposed Project, and impacts would be similar.

H. Noise

Under the proposed Project and the RTA, mining activities within the EDA and within ~~500~~794 feet from any existing residences during daytime hours (between 7:00 am and 10:00 pm) would expose the nearest residential structures to noise levels exceeding 55 dBA L_{50} ~~Leq (10-min)~~, with the nearest residential structure occurring approximately 386~~414~~ feet from the EDA. Under the RTA, the duration of these noise impacts on a given day would be reduced, although the RTA would extend mining activities over a greater length of time overall as compared to the Project; thus, daytime noise impacts under the RTA and the Project would be similar, and would be significant and unavoidable for homes within ~~500~~794 feet of the EDA.

During nighttime hours (between 10:00 pm and 7:00 am), the Project and the RTA would be restricted from mining within 1,820~~250~~ feet of any occupied residential structure if a direct line-of-sight exists between the mining activity and the occupied structure(s) If the line-of-site is blocked, noise-generating activities may extend to within 603~~500~~ feet of occupied residential structures. Thus, nighttime operational noise impacts under the proposed Project and the RTA would be reduced to less-than-significant levels, and impacts would be similar.

The Project would result in a greater increase associated transportation-related noise as compared to the RTA due to the increase in 425 passenger care equivalents (PCEs) under the proposed Project as compared to the 361~~322~~ PCE per day under the RTA; thus the Project would result in increased transportation-related noise impacts in comparison to the RTA. However, transportation noise-related impacts under both the Project and RTA would be less than significant.

Although the Project and the RTA would introduce blasting activities and mining activities as close as 386~~414~~ feet from the nearest residential home, the analysis in EIR Subsection 4.~~3~~8.7 demonstrates that Project-related blasting and mining equipment would result in less-than-significant impacts associated with groundborne noise or groundborne vibration at the nearest home. Blasting-related impacts would be similar under the RTA and the proposed Project.

Neither the proposed Project nor the RTA would be impacted by noise related to airport or private airport operations. Impacts would not occur under the Project and RTA and would be similar.

I. Transportation and Circulation

Under the RTA, the total daily tonnage at the Mine would be restricted to 4,2504~~4,578~~ tpd as compared to 5,000 tpd under the proposed Project. Average Daily Traffic (ADT) attributable to the RTA would be reduced from 1,752 ADT under the proposed Project to 1,4901~~1,330~~ ADT under the RTA. As a result, the RTA would result in approximately 5549 AM PCE peak hour trips and 4540 PM peak hour trips. Although the RTA would result in reduced traffic generated on a daily basis by approximately 15%, in order to be consistent with the analysis in EIR Section 4.9 cumulatively-considerable impacts to the following facilities would occur under the RTA, although the impacts would be reduced in comparison to the Project: ~~As a result, the RTA would not send more than 50 peak hour trips to any study area intersection, and the following Project related cumulatively considerable impacts would be avoided under the RTA:~~

- EAPC (2016) Conditions:
    - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Northbound Ramp/Nichols Road intersection (LOS F AM and PM peak hours~~; LOS E PM peak hour~~); ~~and~~
    - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Southbound Ramp/Nichols Road intersection (LOS F AM and PM peak hours);
    - Cumulatively considerable impact due to the need to signalize the I-15 Northbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection; and~~.~~
    - Cumulatively considerable impact due to the need to signalize the I-15 Southbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection.

- Horizon Year (2035) Conditions:
    - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Northbound Ramp/Nichols Road intersection (LOS F during both AM and PM peak hours);
    - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Southbound Ramp/Nichols Road intersection (LOS F during both AM and PM peak hours);
    - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Southbound Ramp/Nichols Road intersection (LOS F AM and PM peak hours);
    - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Southbound Freeway Segments (LOS F during the PM peak hour);
    - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Northbound Freeway Segments (LOS F during the AM peak hour and LOS E during the PM peak hour);
    - Cumulatively considerable freeway off-ramp queuing impact to the I-15 Northbound Off-Ramp at Nichols Road (2,838 ft. queue during the AM peak hour and 3,520 ft. queue during the PM peak hour);
    - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Southbound Off-Ramp/Nichols Road Freeway Ramp Junction Merge/Diverge (LOS F during the PM peak hour);
    - Cumulatively considerable impact to the I-15 Northbound On-Ramp/Nichols Road Freeway Ramp Junction Merge/Diverge (LOS F during the AM peak hour and LOS E during the PM peak hour);
    - Cumulatively considerable impact due to the need to signalize the I-15 Northbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection; and
    - Cumulatively considerable impact due to the need to signalize the I-15 Southbound Ramps/Nichols Road intersection.
    - ~~Cumulatively considerable impact due to the projected off-ramp queueing issue at the I-15 northbound off-ramps to Nichols Road; and~~

- ~~Cumulatively considerable impact due to deficiencies at the I-15 Northbound Ramps/Nichols Road merge/diverge junction (LOS F AM Peak Hour; LOS E PM Peak Hour).~~

The above-listed impacts also affect I-15, a Congestion Management Plan (CMP) designated facility. Thus, impacts due to a conflict with a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways would be increased under the Project as compared to the RTA.

Neither the proposed Project nor the RTA would result in impacts due to a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks, and impacts would be similar under both the RTA and proposed Project.

Neither the proposed Project nor the RTA would substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment). Impacts under both the proposed Project and RTA would be similar, and would be less than significant.

Neither the proposed Project nor the RTA would result in inadequate emergency access. No impacts would occur under the proposed Project or the RTA, and impacts would be similar.

Based on the analysis presented in EIR Subsection 4.9.7 (refer the Threshold f.), the proposed Project would not conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities). There are no components associated with the RTA that would conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities). Accordingly, impacts under both the RTA and proposed Project would be less than significant and would be similar.

J. Utilities and Service Systems

Under existing conditions, wastewater treatment at the Nichols Canyon Mine is handled by portable toilets, which are regularly emptied by a rental service company. Waste from these portable toilets is disposed of in accordance with all applicable regulatory requirements. Portable toilets would continue to be operated on-site for the duration of mining and reclamation activities under both the proposed Project and the RTA. There are no other potential sources of wastewater associated with the proposed Project or the RTA. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project or RTA would not exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board. Thus, impacts would be less than significant and would be identical under the RTA and proposed Project.

Both the Project the proposed Project and the RTA would result in a net increase of two employees as compared to baseline conditions. However, such an increase is not substantial and would not have an effect on existing wastewater treatment facilities, as wastewater treatment at the Nichols Canyon Mine is handled by portable toilets, which are regularly emptied by a rental service company. Thus, impacts due to the need for construction of new wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects would not occur under either the RTA or the proposed Project, and impacts would be similar.

As shown on Figure 4.10-1, ~~*RP 2006-01A2*~~ *SMP 2015-01 Proposed Dust Control Measures – Nichols North* ~~*Plan*~~, and Figure 4.10-2, *SMP 2015-01 Proposed Dust Control Measures – Nichols South*, under both the RTA and the proposed Project, areas subject to watering would be decreased from 24.90~~20.33~~ acres under historical baseline conditions to 13.20~~11.01~~ acres. The reduction in water usage on-site would occur because both the RTA and proposed Project would require the use of soil binding chemicals, pavement, and other stabilization techniques to provide for adequate dust control while resulting in a net decrease in water used at the site. In total, it can be assumed that because areas on-site that require water for dust control would be reduced by approximately ~~45.8~~46.99% as compared to baseline conditions; therefore, it can be assumed that total water use at the mine would decrease under the proposed Project and RTA from approximately 32,915~~64,000~~ gpd to approximately 17,448~~34,660~~ gpd as compared to historical baseline conditions. Although approval of the Project and RTA would extend the duration of mining activities on-site as necessary to mine and reclaim the proposed EDA, the EVWMD has determined that it has sufficient supplies to meet the demand for projected normal year, singly-dry year, and multiple-dry-year supply through 2035. This determination was made by the EVWMD based on future population and employment estimates within the EVMWD service area, and accounts for on-going mining activities at the Nichols Canyon Mine. (EVMWD, 2011a, Tables ES-9, ES-10, and ES-11) Therefore, because total water usage on-site would decrease under the proposed Project and the RTA as compared to historical baseline conditions, and because the EVMWD has sufficient supplies through 2035, including during dry and multiple-dry years, the Project's impacts to water supplies would be less than significant and similar under the proposed Project and the RTA.

Implementation of the proposed Project and the RTA would result in a demand for ~~net decrease of~~ 17,448~~29,340~~ gpd ~~as compared to historical baseline conditions~~. Also, the UWMP concludes that sufficient supply exists to meet the demand for projected normal year, singly-dry year, and multiple-dry-year supply through 2035. (EVMWD, 2011a, p. 10) The proposed Project and the RTA have no potential to result in the construction of new or expanded water treatment facilities, and no impact would occur. Impacts would be similar under the proposed Project and the RTA.

Implementation of the proposed Project and the RTA would result in the net increase of two employees as compared to historical baseline conditions, and neither the RTA nor the Project would result in a substantial increase in the amount of wastewater generated at the site as compared to wastewater generated under historic baseline conditions. Furthermore, wastewater generated at the site under existing conditions is handled via portable toilets, and there would be no need for additional portable toilets as a result of the Project or the RTA, nor would there be a discernible change in the number of times the service provider would need to service the Mine under the proposed Project and RTA. The wastewater haul company would dispose of all wastewater generated by the Project at permitted facilities with sufficient capacity to handle Project-generated wastewater. Neither the Project nor RTA utilize EVMWD's sewer system and there are no components of the Project or RTA that would cause or contribute to deficient wastewater treatment capacity; therefore, no impact would occur under either the proposed Project or RTA, and impacts would be similar.

There would be only nominal increase in solid waste generation at the Mine under the proposed Project and RTA as compared to historical baseline conditions, due to the expected increase of two employees under the proposed Project and RTA. Solid waste generated under the Project or RTA would be conveyed to one of several landfills (El Sobrante, Badlands, or Lamb Canyon Landfills)

operated or managed by the RCWMD. These existing landfills are required to comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste. Landfills within RCWMD's jurisdiction adhere to state guidelines which specify that a minimum of 15 years of system-wide landfill capacity shall be provided. (Lake Elsinore, 2011b, p. 3-16-5). Therefore, because the Project and RTA both would be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the Mine's solid waste, and because the incremental increase in solid waste generation under the proposed Project and RTA would be negligible, impacts would be less than significant and would be similar under both the proposed Project and RTA.

The Project and the RTA would be required to comply with City and County waste reduction programs pursuant to the State's Integrated Waste Management Act and Chapter 14.12 of the City of Lake Elsinore Municipal Code. Solid waste generated at the Mine would be conveyed to one of several landfills operated or managed by RCWMD under both the Project and the RTA. These existing landfills are required to comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste. Compliance with federal, state, and local statutes would reduce the amount of solid waste generated by the Mine and diverted to landfills which in turn will aid in the extension of the life of affected disposal sites. The Project and RTA would comply with all applicable solid waste statutes and regulations; as such, impacts would be less than significant and would be similar under both the Project and RTA.

The proposed Project and RTA would involve the continuation and expansion of an existing mining operation, and would not result in a substantial increase in daily operational characteristics at the site. All utilities needed to serve the Nichols Canyon Mine are currently in place. Specifically, electricity is provided to the site via private power poles from a connection near the Mine's southern boundary, and these existing power poles would not require expansion as a result of the Project. There are no other utilities needed in support of mining operations that would have the potential to cause significant environmental effects. Accordingly, no impact would occur under either the Project or the RTA, and impacts would be similar.

K. Conclusion

Implementation of the Reduced Traffic Alternative and the proposed Project would result in identical areas of physical environmental impacts, although under the RTA the maximum amount of tonnage at the site would be restricted, from 5,000 tpd (total) under the proposed Project to 4,2504~~,578~~ tpd under the RTA. Impacts to the following issue areas would be reduced under the RTA in relation to the proposed Project: air quality; noise (transportation-related only); and traffic and transportation. It should be noted that although impacts would be reduced, impacts due to air quality emissions, noise, and traffic still would be significant under the RTA even with the implementation of mitigation measures. Impacts to aesthetics; biological resources; cultural resources; geology and soils; greenhouse gases; hydrology and water quality; operational (non-transportation) related noise; and utilities and service systems would be similar under the proposed Project and the RTA. There would be no environmental effects that would increase in relation to the Project under the RTA.

The RTA would meet all of the Project's objectives. The RTA would increase the available high-quality aggregate reserves available ~~on the property~~within the local area; expand the hours of operation at the mine; reduce the annual tonnage; revise the approved reclamation plan; minimize environmental impacts; and make the most usable space from the Mine's disturbance limits. However it should be noted that although the RTA would eliminate the Project's cumulatively

considerable traffic and circulation impacts, the RTA would result in the generation of traffic over a longer duration as compared to the proposed Project. Thus, although daily traffic would improve under the RTA in relation to the proposed Project, the RTA would contribute traffic to the intersections of I-15/Northbound On- and Off-Ramps and the I-15/Southbound On- and Off-Ramps, and would contribute traffic over a longer duration than the Project. The RTA would contribute traffic to the cumulatively-considerable I-15 Freeway segments, merge/diverge, and queuing deficiencies, which would be significant unavoidable impacts. Although the RTA would produce fewer than 2550 PCE peak hour trips and would reduce daily air quality emissions, the RTA would contribute traffic to the deficient facilities for a longer duration as compared to the proposed Project and would generate air quality pollutants over a longer duration than the proposed Project; thus, the RTA would not avoid the Project's significant and unavoidable impacts to air quality. Additionally, the RTA would fail to reduce or eliminate the Project's daytime operational noise impacts affecting nearby residences. The RTA also would not reduce or eliminate the Project's significant and unavoidable conflict with the MSHCP and Ordinance 1124.

6.4 COMPARISON OF PROJECT ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

In conformance with CEQA Guidelines § 15126.6(d), Table 6-1, *Alternatives to the Proposed Project – Comparison of Environmental Impacts*, provides a summary comparison of impacts that would occur under the proposed Project and each of the Project's three alternatives (NPA, REDA, and RTA). Additionally, Table 6-1 provides a summary comparison of the degree to which each alternative would achieve the Project's objectives.

Table 6-1 Alternatives to the Proposed Project – Comparison of Environmental Impacts

ENVIRONMENTAL TOPIC	PROPOSED PROJECT SIGNIFICANCE OF IMPACTS AFTER MITIGATION	LEVEL OF IMPACT COMPARED TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT		
		NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE	REDUCED EXPANDED DISTURBANCE ALTERNATIVE	REDUCED TRAFFIC ALTERNATIVE
Aesthetics	Less-than-Significant	~~Increased~~Reduced	Reduced	Similar
Air Quality	~~Less-than-Significant~~Significant and Unavoidable (Direct and Cumulative)*	Reduced and Avoided	Similar*	Reduced but Not Avoided*
Biological Resources	~~Less-than-Significant~~Significant and Unavoidable (Direct)*	Reduced and Avoided	~~Reduced~~Similar*	~~Similar~~Similar
Cultural Resources	Less-than-Significant	Similar	Similar	Similar
Geology and Soils	Less-than-Significant	Similar	Similar	Similar
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Less-than-Significant	Reduced	Similar	Similar
Hydrology and Water Quality	Less-than-Significant	Increased	Similar	Similar
Noise	Significant and Unavoidable (Direct)*	Daytime: Reduced but not Avoided* Nighttime: Increased*	Reduced and Avoided	Traffic-Related Noise: Reduced Operational Noise: Similar and Not Avoided*
Transportation/ Circulation	~~Cumulatively~~ Significant and Unavoidable (Cumualtive)*	Reduced and Avoided	Similar*	Reduced ~~and~~ but Not Avoided*
Utilities /Service Systems	Less-than-Significant	Increased	Similar	Similar
Project Objectives[1]		**Achieved?**	**Achieved?**	**Achieved?**
Objective A:		No	Yes, but to a lesser degree	Yes
Objective B:		No	Yes	Yes
Objective C:		No	Yes	Yes
Objective D:		No	Yes	Yes
Objective E:		No	Yes	Yes
Objective F:		No	Yes	Yes
Objective G:		No	Yes, but to a lesser degree	Yes

* = Significant and Unavoidable Impact even after mitigation.

1. Refer to EIR Subsection 3.2 for a list of the proposed Project's specific objectives.

7.0 REFERENCES

7.1 PERSONS INVOLVED IN PREPARATION OF THIS EIR

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7.2 DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

The following reports, studies, and supporting documentation were used in the preparation of this EIR and are incorporated by reference within this EIR. A copy of the following reports, studies, and supporting documentation is a matter of public record and is generally available to the public at the location listed.

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7.4 DOCUMENTS APPENDED TO THIS EIR

The following reports, studies, and supporting documentation were used in preparing the Nichols Canyon EIR and are bound separately as Technical Appendices. A copy of the Technical Appendices is available for review at the City of Lake Elsinore Community Development Department, Planning Division at 130 South Main Street, Lake Elsinore, CA 92530.

Appendix A Initial Study, Notice of Preparation, and Written Comments

Appendix B Urban Crossroads. Amendment No. 2 to Reclamation Plan 2006-001 Air Quality Impact Analysis City of Lake Elsinore. ~~October~~July 14, 201~~6~~5.

Appendix C Urban Crossroads. Amendment No. 2 to Reclamation Plan 2006-001 Diesel Particulate Matter Health Risk Assessment City of Lake Elsinore. ~~October~~July 14, 201~~6~~5.

Appendix D Alden Environmental, Inc. Biological Technical Report for the Nichols Mine Project. ~~November 9, 2015~~June 08, 2016.

Appendix E1 Brian F. Smith and Associates, Inc. Paleontological Resources and Monitoring Assessment, Nichols Road Quarry Expansion Project Area, City of Lake Elsinore, Riverside County, California. May 5, 2015.

Appendix E2 Brian F. Smith and Associates, Inc. A Phase I and II Cultural Resources Assessment for the Nichols Road Quarry Expansion Project, City of Lake Elsinore, Riverside County, California. July 9, 2015.

Appendix F CHJ Consultants. ~~2015~~. Report of Slope Stability Investigation. April 15, 2015.

Appendix G Urban Crossroads. Amendment No. 2 to Reclamation Plan 2006-001 Greenhouse Gas Analysis City of Lake Elsinore. ~~October~~July 14, 201~~6~~5.

Appendix H Joseph E. Bonadiman & Associates, Inc. Hydrology Study & Drainage Analysis Reclamation Plan 2006-01A2 County of Riverside, CA. ~~June 2015~~ May 2016.

Appendix I Giroux & Associates~~. 2015~~. Noise Impact Analysis Amendment No. 2 to RP2006-01 City of Lake Elsinore, California. ~~October 6, 2015.~~June 10, 2016.

Appendix J Urban Crossroads. Amendment No. 2 to Reclamation Plan 2006-001 Traffic Impact Analysis (Revised) City of Lake Elsinore. ~~August 17, 2015~~ April 25, 2016 (Revised).