

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

PURPOSE

Uses of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of a proposed project may be irreversible if a large commitment of these resources makes their removal or non-use thereafter unlikely. According to Section 15126(f) of the CEQA Guidelines, the irretrievable commitment of such resources are to be evaluated to assure that their current consumption by a proposed project is justified. In addition, this section must also identify any irreversible damage that can result from environmental accidents associated with the project.

IRREVERSIBLE COMMITMENT OF NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCES

Approval of the proposed RiverPark Specific Plan Project commit some presently undeveloped lands, to urban uses. The substantial investment required to reclaim the mine site would represent a long-term commitment of the site to a planned, residential community. The commitment of undeveloped land to urbanized uses is, essentially, an irreversible environmental change.

In addition, construction of the proposed land uses would contribute to the incremental depletion of resources, including renewable as well as slowly- or non-renewable resources. Resources, such as lumber and other forest products, as well as water, are generally considered renewable resources. Such resources would be replenished over the anticipated 12 to 15 years it is anticipated to build-out the uses allowed by the proposed Specific Plan. For example, lumber supplies are increased as seedlings mature into trees, while water supplies are replenished as water is redistributed through the action of the hydrologic cycle. Given this, the development of the project would not result in the irreversible commitment of renewable resources, although there would be an incremental increase in the demand for them over its lifetime.

Slowly- and non-renewable resources, such as natural gas, petroleum products, asphalt, petrochemical construction materials, steel, copper and other metals, and sand and gravel are considered to be commodities which are in limited supply. The actions or processes which created these products occur over a long period of time and cannot replace those supplies consumed in the development and

habitation of the project site within its lifespan. To varying degrees the aforementioned materials are all readily available and some materials, such as asphalt or sand and gravel, are abundant. Other commodities, such as metals, natural gas, and petroleum products, are also readily available, but are finite in supply given the length of time required by the natural process to create them.

The demand for all such resources is expected to increase whether or not the proposed project is developed. The Department of Finance indicates that the population of southern California will increase 62 percent over the thirty year period between 1990 and the year 2020. The resources consumed by the proposed project would be used to provide housing, recreation, jobs, services, and utilities to meet anticipated demand created by the projected demographic growth. These resources would likely be committed to other projects in the region intended to meet this demand if the proposed project was not developed. Further, the investment of resources in the proposed project would be typical of the level of investment normally required for a community of this scale. Provided that all standard building codes, including energy conservation standards, are followed, no wasteful use of energy or construction resources is anticipated.

IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

Irreversible long-term environmental changes associated with the proposed project would include a change in the visual character of the site as a result of the conversion of undeveloped land to a mixed-use community. Additional irreversible environmental changes would include the increase in local and regional vehicular traffic, and the resultant increase in air pollutants and noise emissions generated by this traffic, among other impacts. As discussed above, the restoration of the site to pre-developed conditions after site development would not be feasible given the level of capital investment and degree of disturbance needed to develop the property. However, design features have been incorporated into the development proposal and mitigation measures are proposed in this EIR that would minimize or avoid the significant effects of the environmental changes associated with the development of the project to the maximum degree feasible.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE FROM ACCIDENTS

The CEQA *Guidelines* also require a discussion of the potential for environmental damage caused by an accident associated with the project. The following discussion identifies the characteristics of the project site and proposed future uses which could be sources of potential accidents.

7.0 Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes

The site is located within a seismically active region and would be exposed to ground shaking in the event of a seismic event. Conformance with the regulatory provisions of the City of Oxnard and the *Uniform Building Code* pertaining to construction standards would minimize, to the extent feasible, damage and injuries in the event of such an occurrence.

Uses proposed by the project may use and store chemicals and/or substances which are typically found in such urban residential settings. Given the multitude of Federal, State, and local regulations governing the use of such substances, the proposed project is not expected to involve activities that would damage the environment or pose a risk to public health.