

## 4.1 LAND USE PLANNING, PROGRAMS & POLICIES

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### INTRODUCTION

*This section addresses the consistency of the proposed RiverPark Specific Plan Project with applicable state, regional and local land use plans, programs, and policies, including demographic forecasts. Land use compatibility is also assessed in this section.*

### ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Approximately 269 acres of the RiverPark Specific Plan area is located within the incorporated boundary of the City of Oxnard. The remaining 432 acres of the Specific Plan Area is currently located outside of the City of Oxnard within unincorporated Ventura County. The entire Specific Plan Area is located within the existing City of Oxnard City Urban Restriction Boundary (CURB)<sup>1</sup> and the Sphere of Influence line for the City of Oxnard.

### Local Plans and Policies

#### **City of Oxnard 2020 General Plan**

California State planning law requires each city and county to adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the area within its jurisdiction and of any land outside its boundaries, which bears relations to its land use planning activities. The Planning Area defined by the City and addressed in the *2020 General Plan* is generally bounded by the Santa Clara River on the north, Los Angeles Avenue and the Beardsley Wash on the east, Mugu Lagoon on the south, and the Pacific Ocean on the west. The City's *General Plan* includes all elements mandated by State law.

#### **Land Use Element**

The purpose of the Land Use Element is to guide future development within the City by identifying the types of land uses allowed and specifying their intensity. The existing Oxnard *2020 General Plan* land use map designations for the proposed Specific Plan Area are shown in **Figure 4.1-1**. As shown, that portion of the Specific Plan area presently located within the City of Oxnard incorporated boundary is

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<sup>1</sup> An ordinance establishing the CURB was approved by the voters of Oxnard in November 1998. The CURB requires that the City restrict urban services and urbanized uses of lands to within the CURB line through the year 2020. The CURB line is conterminous with the Sphere of Influence line for the City in this area.

designated for development of Regional Commercial, Commercial Office, and Business and Research Park uses. The majority of RiverPark Area 'A' consists of the adopted Oxnard Town Center Specific Plan. The adopted plan allows development of up to 4.4 million square feet of commercial and industrial space in the area addressed by that plan. The remainder of RiverPark Area 'A', consists of a small sliver of land generally located between the Ventura Freeway, Vineyard Avenue and Myrtle Street.

All of RiverPark Area 'A' is located within the Historic Enhancement and Revitalization of Oxnard (HERO) Redevelopment Project Area. The HERO Redevelopment Project Area provides a framework for the redevelopment of the 20 subareas located throughout the City of Oxnard. The objectives of the HERO Redevelopment Project Area include elimination of blight, economic revitalization, infrastructure improvement, structural rehabilitation, possible hazardous waste cleanup assistance, and other types of assistance for each specific subarea.<sup>2</sup> The RiverPark Specific Plan Area is located within Subarea 1, also known as the Town Center Subarea, of the HERO Redevelopment Project area.

RiverPark Area 'B' is located outside the City's boundary and is designated as Open Space-Mineral Resource and Open Space-Buffer on the Oxnard 2020 General Plan land use map. This area is also designated as a Planning Reserve area as defined by the Oxnard 2020 General Plan. This Planning Reserve overlay was placed on certain open space areas contiguous to developed portions of the City to indicate that these areas may be considered for urbanization during the term of the 2020 General Plan.

### **Growth Management Element**

As stated in the introduction to the Growth Management Element of the Oxnard 2020 General Plan:

*"Along with the designation and allocation of land uses, a fundamental goal of the 2020 General Plan is to establish balanced growth for the City of Oxnard. Key to achieving this goal are policies and programs that provide for the orderly phasing of development in terms of both timing and location."*

The Development Policies in the Growth Management Element consist of two general categories: (1) Definition of Development and Non-Development Areas; and, (2) A Growth Management and Monitoring Program. The first category basically defines "where" long-term development will occur

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<sup>2</sup> Report to City Council for the Historic Enhancement and Revitalization of Oxnard Redevelopment Project (HERO Project). Community Development Commission, City of Oxnard, February 1998.

**FIGURE 4.1-1**  
**Existing General Plan Land Use**

within the City's Planning Area. The City's population, housing and employment projections through the year 2020 are identified as key factors to be considered in the City's Growth Management Program.

The Growth Management Element includes goals, objectives, principles and policies related to the expansion of the City through annexation of land. A goal of the Growth Management Element is to encourage sensible urban growth based on the ability to provide necessary governmental services and municipal utilities. Objectives include insuring that areas annexed to the city share equitably in the costs of all necessary municipal improvements. A key policy related to the size of the City calls for creating an appropriate balance between urban development and preservation of agricultural uses within the City's Planning Area.

The primary planning tools discussed in the Growth Management Element which relate to the physical size of the City are the City Urban Restriction Boundary (CURB), maintenance of a City Buffer Boundary (CBB), and administration of the Sphere of Influence line by the City and the Ventura County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO).

***City Urban Restriction Boundary (CURB) and City Buffer Boundary (CBB)***

The Oxnard Save Open Space and Agricultural Resources (SOAR) Ordinance was approved by the voters in November of 1998. The SOAR Ordinance established a City Urban Restriction Boundary (CURB) and a City Buffer Boundary (CBB) by amending the Oxnard 2020 *General Plan*. The purpose of the CURB is to define a boundary within which development is planned to take place through the term of the *General Plan* (2020). During this time, the City of Oxnard will restrict urban services and urbanized land uses to land located within the CURB. No form of discretionary entitlement will be granted by the City that will result in urban land uses placed outside of this boundary. Urban uses are identified as "any development which would require the establishment of new sewer service systems; or the significant expansion of existing sewer infrastructure; or would create residential lots less than 10 acres in area per primary residence; or would result in the establishment of commercial or industrial uses which are neither exclusively related to agriculture nor exclusively related to the production of mineral resources."

The City Buffer Boundary encompasses land between the adopted Sphere of Influence line and the Planning Area Boundary. The purpose of this buffer is to maintain agricultural uses located outside the CURB. Agricultural land within this boundary cannot be converted to urban use unless approved by the registered voters of the City.

## Housing Element

As mandated by State Law, the City's Housing Element is a five-year plan that currently addresses the period from 2000-2005. The City recently completed an update of the Housing Element, which was adopted by the City Council in December 2000 and conditionally certified by the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) as complying with the State Law in May 2001. The Element identifies policies, programs, and objectives to provide adequate housing sites, promote equal housing opportunities for all segments of the City's population, and preserve and encourage construction of affordable housing. The Element examines specific housing needs of the City's population through extensive review of socio-economic data well as an assessment of the City's existing housing stock and a vacant land inventory within the City that is available for residential uses.

## Population Characteristics

The Ventura County Organization of Governments' (VCOG) adopted 2000-2025 population and housing forecasts identify demographic trends throughout the County. The latest projections were adopted in 2000 and have been submitted to SCAG for inclusion in its revised regional growth projections. The adopted demographic information for Ventura County and the City of Oxnard Growth and Non-growth areas considered in the Housing Element study are presented below in **Table 4.1-1**.

**Table 4.1-1**  
**Adopted VCOG Population Projections**

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	Growth 2000-2020
Ventura County	743,654	778,433	834,687	873,559	914,368	951,080	170,714 (23%)
City of Oxnard - Growth Area	162,623	170,215	178,912	189,439	200,302	213,891	37,679 (23%)
City of Oxnard	151,904	159,301	168,025	176,413	186,901	200,086	34,998 (23%)
City of Oxnard - Non-growth Area	4,815	4,861	4,907	4,953	4,999	5,044	184 (4%)

Source: Ventura County Environmental Management Agency, Department of Planning (2000).

As can be seen from the table, both Ventura County and the City of Oxnard are projected to undergo sustained growth during the 25-year period between 2000 and the year 2025. The total population of

the Oxnard growth area in the year 2025 is estimated to be 213,891 persons, while the County will grow to 951,080 persons. This represents a 23 percent increase over the period for both jurisdictions.

### **Housing Characteristics**

The present and projected housing stock contained within the City as contained in the VCOG forecasts is presented below in **Table 4.1-2**.

<b>Table 4.1-2 Adopted VCOG Housing Projections</b>							
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	Growth 2000-2020
Ventura County	251,853	264,863	284,483	297,790	312,407	327,024	75,171 (30%)
City of Oxnard- Growth Area	47,690	50,509	54,052	58,289	62,988	67,687	15,298 (32%)
City of Oxnard	44,030	46,689	50,113	53,605	58,066	62,527	14,036 (32%)
City of Oxnard- Non-growth Area	1,049	1,059	1,069	1,079	1,089	1,099	40 (4%)

Source: Ventura County Environmental Management Agency, Department of Planning (2000).

By the year 2020, the total number of houses within the City's Growth Area is projected to increase by 32 percent to a total of 62,988 units. The Non-growth area is not expected to undergo meaningful growth given the County SOAR Ordinance and the City's CURB. As shown, an increase of only 40 units is forecast by the year 2020 for the Non-growth area.

### **Regional Housing Needs**

California Government Code Section 65580 (et seq.) requires that all regional councils of governments determine the existing and projected housing need for its region. State law also requires that each council must determine the share of need allocated to each city and county within its region. A number of planning considerations are assessed in making this determination, including market demand, type and tenure of housing, employment, commuting patterns, suitable sites, and special housing need. The City of Oxnard's Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) allocation for the period 1998-2005 is 3,298 dwelling units distributed among income groups within the City as shown in **Table 4.1-3**.

**Table 4.1-3  
Adopted 1998-2005 City of Oxnard Regional Housing Needs**

<b>Income Group</b>	<b>Percent of County Median Family Income</b>	<b>Regional Housing Need</b>
Very Low	0-50%	797 du
Low	51-80%	489 du
Moderate	81-120%	505 du
Upper	120+%	1,507 du
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>3,298 du</b>

Source: City of Oxnard Housing Element (December 2000).

### ***Zoning Designations***

A variety of Zoning designations currently apply to the land within the proposed Specific Plan. The majority of RiverPark Area 'A' is zoned by the City as the Oxnard Town Center Specific Plan. The remaining land in RiverPark Area 'A', located between the Ventura Freeway, Vineyard Avenue and Myrtle Street is currently zoned C-2-PD (General Commercial – Planned Development) and R-1 (Single-Family Residential). RiverPark Area 'B' is zoned by the City as C-R (Community Reserve), and M-1-PD (Light Manufacturing-Planned Development). That portion of RiverPark Area 'B' which contains the Hanson Aggregates mine site sand and gravel mine is currently designated Open Space (O-S) with a Mineral Resource Protection Overlay by the County of Ventura.

### ***Multiplex Theater Ordinance***

In support of its downtown redevelopment efforts, the City of Oxnard adopted Ordinance No. 2466. This ordinance restricts multiplex motion picture theaters from locating anywhere in the City except the Central Business District (CBD) Zone of the City.<sup>3</sup>

### ***HERO Redevelopment Plan***

RiverPark Area 'A' is located in the Historic Enhancement and Revitalization of Oxnard (HERO) Redevelopment Project Area. The HERO Project Area, includes 2,264 acres in 20 defined subareas. The HERO Redevelopment Project provides a framework for the redevelopment of the 20 subareas located throughout the City of Oxnard. The objectives of the HERO Project include elimination of blight,

<sup>3</sup> Multiplex theaters are defined as an establishment containing three or more screens where films, motion pictures, video cassettes, slides or similar photographic reproductions are regularly shown for any form of consideration.

economic revitalization, infrastructure improvement, structural rehabilitation, possible hazardous waste cleanup assistance, and other types of assistance for each specific subarea. It is anticipated that these actions, together with private investment, will facilitate economic revitalization and diminish or eliminate blight in the 20 subareas.<sup>4</sup> RiverPark Area 'A' is located within Subarea 1, identified as the Town Center Subarea, of the HERO Redevelopment Project area.

### ***Oxnard Town Center Specific Plan***

RiverPark RiverPark Area 'A' includes the existing Oxnard Town Center Specific Plan Area. This Specific Plan, adopted by the City of Oxnard in 1986, allows up to 1.5 million square feet of office space, 1.2 million square feet of office or research and development space, approximately 1,000 hotel rooms, 50,000 square feet of freestanding restaurant space, a 1.0 million square foot regional shopping mall and related public facilities.

In July of 2000, the City of Oxnard adopted an interim ordinance that placed a 45-day moratorium on development within the Oxnard Town Center Specific Plan. This action was conducted consistent with California Government Code Section 65858, which allows for the prohibition of uses that may be in conflict with a contemplated general plan, specific plan or zoning proposal which the City is considering. In this case, the City is considering the RiverPark Specific Plan. The City of Oxnard extended the moratorium in September 2000 for an additional 10 months and 15 days, and then again in July 2001 for one additional year.

### ***Ventura County El Rio/Del Norte Area Plan***

The distribution, location, type, and intensity of land use in unincorporated areas of the County is governed by the Ventura County *General Plan*, as implemented by various community or area plans. The El Rio/Del Norte Area Plan is the primary policy planning component of the County of Ventura *General Plan* which guides land use planning for unincorporated land adjacent to the northern boundary of the City of Oxnard. Land use designations contained in this plan for unincorporated land within the RiverPark Specific Plan area include Open Space 40 (40 acre minimum lot size), A (Agriculture), commercial, and industrial.

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<sup>4</sup> Report to City Council for the Historic Enhancement and Revitalization of Oxnard Redevelopment Project (HERO Project). Community Development Commission, City of Oxnard, February 1998.



## **Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO)**

### **Background**

The Cortese-Knox Act is the framework within which proposed city annexations, incorporations, consolidations, and special district formations are considered. This law establishes a Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) in each county, empowering it to review, approve or deny proposals for boundary changes and incorporations for cities, counties, and special districts. The Act mandates specific factors that the LAFCO must address when considering annexation proposals. The LAFCO in turn establishes the ground rules by which the affected city will process the annexation. Each LAFCO is made up of elected officials from the county, local cities, special districts, and a member of the general public. The specific membership of each LAFCO depends upon the statutory requirements of the Cortese-Knox Act.

Each LAFCO operates independently of the state. However, it is expected to act within a set of state-mandated parameters. The Legislature has taken care to guide the actions of the LAFCOs by providing statewide policies and priorities for the consideration of annexations (Section 56844), and by establishing criteria for the delineation of spheres of influence (Section 56425).

On February 28, 2000, the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (AB 2838) was introduced, which incorporated all of the recommendations relating to reform of the Local Governmental Reorganization Act from *Growth within Bounds*, a report of the Commission on Local Governance for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. On September 26 2000, an amended version of this bill was signed into law. The purpose of the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 is identified in Section 56001 of the Act, which states that:

*“The Legislature finds and declares that it is the policy of the state to encourage orderly growth and development which are essential to the social, fiscal, and economic well-being of the state. The Legislature recognizes that the logical formation and determination of local agency boundaries is an important factor in promoting orderly development and in balancing such development with sometimes competing state interests of discouraging urban sprawl, preserving open space and prime agricultural lands, and efficiently extending government services. The Legislature also recognizes that providing housing for persons and families of all incomes is an important factor in promoting orderly development. Therefore, the Legislature further finds and declares that this policy should be effected by the logical formation and modification of the boundaries of local agencies, with a preference granted to accommodating additional growth within, or through the expansion of, the boundaries of those local agencies which can best accommodate and provide necessary governmental services and housing for persons and families of all incomes in the most efficient manner feasible.”*

### **Ventura County LAFCO**

The Sphere of Influence Line for the City of Oxnard as adopted by the Ventura County LAFCO is shown in **Figure 2.0-2 in Section 2.0, Environmental Setting**. This line is intended to represent “the probable ultimate physical boundaries and service area” of the City. This figure also depicts the current boundaries of the City of Oxnard. As shown, the entire RiverPark Specific Plan area is located within the existing Sphere of Influence line for the City of Oxnard. Further, RiverPark Area ‘A’ is located within the existing City of Oxnard incorporated boundary. RiverPark Area ‘B’ is located outside the existing incorporated boundaries of the City of Oxnard. Consequently, RiverPark Area ‘B’ is proposed for annexation into the City of Oxnard.

### ***Guidelines for Orderly Development***

The Guidelines for Orderly Development are regional jurisdictional policies that have been adopted by the County of Ventura, all cities in Ventura County, and the Ventura LAFCO. These Guidelines clarify the relationship between the cities and the County with respect to urban planning and services. The guidelines were a result of a cooperative effort to guide future growth and development in the County. The theme of the guidelines is that urban development should be located within incorporated cities whenever and wherever practical in order to ensure the provision of a full range of municipal services and in order to allow for cities to act as the responsible parties for land use planning decisions. One of the planning concepts in the guidelines calls for each defined Area of Interest within the County to contain only one city. The Guidelines contain a variety of policies that are linked with LAFCO goals regarding the discouragement of urban sprawl and the encouragement of the orderly formation and development of local governmental agencies based upon local conditions and circumstances. Specific policies contained in the Guidelines are discussed later in this section.

### ***Southern California Association of Governments***

The Specific Plan Area is located within the jurisdiction of the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), which includes Los Angeles, Ventura, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, and Imperial Counties. To facilitate planning activities for such a large region, SCAG has divided its jurisdiction into a number of sub-regions. The Specific Plan Area is located within the Ventura Council of Governments Subregion, which includes the Cities of Agoura Hills, Camarillo, Fillmore, Moorpark, Ojai, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, San Buenaventura, Santa Paula, Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks, and Westlake Village, as well as the County of Ventura.

To coordinate regional planning efforts and in response to Federal air and water quality laws, SCAG has prepared a Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide (RCPG). The RCPG is a comprehensive planning document intended to serve the SCAG region as a framework for decision making over the next 20 years. The plan includes a set of broad goals for the region and identifies strategies designed to guide local decision-making.

## **PROJECT IMPACTS**

### **Thresholds of Significance**

The City of Oxnard considers a project to have a significant land use impact if it would be:

- Inconsistent with the goals or objectives of Oxnard's plans or ordinances related to land use planning
- Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of another public agency
- Substantial incompatibility between the uses proposed and neighboring land uses is identified as a significant impact.

### **Consistency with City of Oxnard *General Plan***

#### ***Land Use Element***

Implementation of the Specific Plan would require the amendment of the Land Use Map designations contained in the *2020 General Plan* in order to be consistent with the proposed Specific Plan and to designate land uses reflected in the Specific Plan. This will require amendments to the 2020 Land Use Map and related text as described in **Section 3.0, Project Description**.

The City of Oxnard *2020 General Plan* Land Use Element contains a variety of goals, objectives and polices related to land use in the City. Actions intended to implement the City's plans and policies are also contained in the Element. The City's Land Use Goals are broad statements that encapsulate the City's vision. The Land Use Objectives provide more specifics and provide concrete means of achieving the goals. Finally, the City of Oxnard Land Use Policies articulate specific requirements or actions that apply to a particular area within the City. Pertinent goals, objectives, and policies are listed below in bold type, followed by a discussion of the project's consistency with each.

### Goals<sup>5</sup>

- **A balanced community that meets housing, commercial and employment needs consistent with the holding capacity of the City.**

### Discussion

The RiverPark Specific Plan guides development of a balanced mixed use community containing residential, commercial, open space and public facility uses. Residential uses allowed by the Specific Plan account for approximately 244 acres of the 701-acre Specific Plan Area (35 percent). Commercial uses allowed within the Specific Plan area occupy 147 acres or 21 percent of the total area. Public facilities serving the allowed uses include a 41-acre school/park site along with a 3-acre site designated for a fire station. The remaining 269 acres (38 percent) of the Specific Plan Area will consist of open space uses such as parks, landscape buffers, trails, and the reclaimed mine pits.

The Specific Plan Area is completely within the City Urban Restriction Boundary as identified in the Growth Management Element of the City of Oxnard *General Plan*. As such, the Specific Plan Area is part of the existing land inventory available to meet the diverse housing needs of the City.

The proposed amendment to the 2020 *General Plan* Land Use Map consists of changes to the land use designations for the proposed Specific Plan Area. In addition, the map amendment would change the land use designation for the portion of the existing El Rio West residential neighborhood located between Stroube and Myrtle Streets from Regional Commercial to Low Density Residential. This part of the map amendment would reflect the existing residential uses in this neighborhood and further promote a better balance of residential and employment generating uses in the northern portion of the City of Oxnard.

The proposed amendments to the *General Plan* High Density Residential, Regional Commercial, and Public/Semi Public land uses categories would facilitate mixed land uses in specific plan areas. The proposed amendment to the Multiplex Theater ordinance would also allow for more flexibility in specific plan areas. These proposed amendments would be limited in effect to areas subject to approved specific plans, and for this reason, would have little overall impact on the distribution of land uses throughout the City as defined by the 2020 *General Plan*. Given the above, the proposed RiverPark Specific Plan, general plan and code amendments are consistent with this Goal.

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<sup>5</sup> City of Oxnard Planning Department: *City of Oxnard 2020 General Plan*, "Land Use Element," pp. V-15, V-24. Oxnard, California: December 2000.

- A balance between jobs and housing within reasonable commuting distance from each other.

### Discussion

The Specific Plan provides for development of a mix of land uses scaled to pedestrian movement. This serves to limit automobile usage by placing employment and neighborhood serving uses within a short distance of residential areas. On a citywide scale, the RiverPark Specific Plan Area is located within short commuting distance of a variety of business and employment centers located in north Oxnard and surrounding communities on the Oxnard Plain. Presently, the approved Oxnard Town Center Specific Plan in RiverPark Area 'A' and the Pacific Commerce Center/Northeast Industrial Area, generally bounded by the Ventura Freeway, West Fifth Street and Del Norte Boulevard, represent the major areas of planned commercial and industrial uses in the City. The RiverPark Specific Plan will promote a better mix of housing in relation to job generating uses by locating a new residential community in the northern part of the City closer to these areas and reducing the amount of commercial and industrial uses currently allowed by the Oxnard Town Center Specific Plan. For these reasons, the project is consistent with this goal of the Land Use Element.

### Goal<sup>6</sup>

- Preservation of scenic views, natural topography, natural physical amenities, and air quality.

### Discussion

#### **Scenic Views**

Views of the Specific Plan Area are available along primary roadways in the area. Existing on-site views consist of cultivated fields, modern commercial office structures located within the Town Center Specific Plan, equipment and structures associated with the County El Rio Maintenance Yard, and the mine pits and facilities of the Hanson site. Background views are of the mountains within the Los Padres National Forest. The City of Oxnard *General Plan* Community Design Element regards the on-site and surrounding agricultural lands as a natural scenic resource. Eucalyptus windrows located in the area are also identified as a dramatic vertical visual element on the predominantly flat topography.

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<sup>6</sup> City of Oxnard Planning Department: *City of Oxnard 2020 General Plan*, "Land Use Element," pp. V-15, V-24. Oxnard, California: December 2000.

The RiverPark Specific Plan contains development standards and design guidelines that regulate development within the Specific Plan Area. These include regulations on building setback, height, architectural standards, lighting, and landscape requirements. Existing views to the mountains and hills would not be obstructed by the development on the proposed Specific Plan Area with application of these standards and development guidelines. Build-out of uses within the Specific Plan would result in the conversion of some agricultural land to urban use. However, the City of Oxnard has established a mechanism for the preservation of agricultural land in the form of Greenbelt agreements with surrounding cities and establishment of the CURB boundary. The Greenbelts and CURB preserve views of agricultural land and provide a buffer of open space separating Cities found on the Oxnard plain. Finally, the existing eucalyptus windrows are planned for incorporation into the 6.7-acre planned park space extending from Central Park westerly to the Santa Clara River edge and incorporates natural trail connections. Based on the above, the Specific Plan is consistent with this Goal.

### **Topography**

RiverPark Area 'A' is generally flat, while topography on RiverPark Area 'B' is more varied due to the mining operations of cutting, filling, spoils, and tailing disposal. The Grading Master Plan prepared for the project minimizes landform alteration. The plan maintains existing grades to the degree feasible, except at the mine pits where the slopes will be stabilized and fill material relocated as part of the Reclamation Plan. Based on the above, the Specific Plan is consistent with this Goal.

### **Natural Physical Amenities**

The proposed Specific Plan will enhance the natural physical resources of the Specific Plan Area and surroundings. The Specific Plan Area itself is presently disturbed by human activity including development, farming, and mining operations. No natural plant communities are located on RiverPark Area 'A', while limited natural resources are found on RiverPark Area 'B'. Natural habitat in the vicinity of the Specific Plan Area is associated with the Santa Clara River. This Specific Plan Area is relatively open, with few scattered mature trees near the outer banks and scattered patches of riparian scrub regrowth along the river bottom that is scoured away during large storm events every few years. During most of the year, the river in this area exists as one or more small meandering braided channels.

As part of the proposed Specific Plan, a multi-layered natural habitat area will be created along the edge of the Specific Plan adjacent to the Santa Clara River. This setback will utilize native vegetation communities to attract and support a wide range of wildlife species, especially birds. Selected tree species will provide nesting and foraging habitat for the various species. This newly

created forest will also contain an understory of numerous species of compatible native shrubs. These may include species such as: arroyo willow, mulefat, California sagebrush, and coyote. The proposed Reclamation Plan for the Hanson site would also provide for the establishment of native vegetation on the slopes of the existing mine pits.

An overall benefit of the RiverPark wildlife habitat development is the potential to increase plant and wildlife diversity in this segment of the Santa Clara River. In addition, it will lay the foundation for a wildlife corridor that could ultimately extend for a major portion of the Santa Clara River from the coast to remaining foothill and upland areas that already support native plant communities and wildlife populations. The Specific Plan also enhances groundwater management efforts by reclaiming the mine pits in a manner that protects the quality of the exposed groundwater in the pits and allows for use of the pits for groundwater recharge purposes by the United Water Conservation District. Based on the above, the Specific Plan is consistent with this Goal.

### **Air Quality**

The RiverPark Specific Plan guides development of a balanced mixed use community containing residential, commercial, open space and public facility uses in an area presently served by public transit and containing a regional transportation system. Moreover, the Specific Plan emphasizes mixed land use types scaled to pedestrian movement. This serves to limit automobile usage by placing employment and neighborhood serving uses within a short distance of residential areas. Based on the above, the Specific Plan is consistent with this Goal.

### **Objectives**<sup>7</sup>

- **Limit the urbanized area of the City and facilitate permanent greenbelts between Oxnard and Neighboring Cities.**
- **Preserve permanent agricultural land within the Oxnard Planning Area.**

### **Discussion**

The Growth Management Element of the *2020 General Plan* includes policies intended to manage the growth allowed by the *General Plan* while preserving natural resources. Historically, the primary method for preserving agricultural land is the City's participation in greenbelt agreements. For

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<sup>7</sup> City of Oxnard Planning Department: *City of Oxnard 2020 General Plan*, "Land Use Element," pp. V-15, V-24. Oxnard, California: December 2000.

example, the Cities of Oxnard and Camarillo originally established the Oxnard-Camarillo Greenbelt in mid-1982. The County Board of Supervisors endorsed the Greenbelt in late 1982. This greenbelt agreement includes approximately 29,200 acres of cultivated land.

Since that time, establishment of the City Urban Restriction Boundary (CURB) has provided a stronger method of growth management. Approval of the ordinance establishing a CURB created a mechanism in the City's Growth Management Element to protect agricultural and open space land within the City's Planning Area by limiting the provision of urban services and urbanized land uses to areas located within the CURB. This will promote a more compact development pattern that preserves the agricultural land in large contiguous blocks that are more economically viable and compatible with adjacent land uses. Consequently, development within the CURB, while leaving the balance of land in the City's Planning Area under a Resource Protection, Open Space, or Agricultural designation, is presumptively an appropriate balance.<sup>8</sup> Given that the RiverPark Specific Plan Area is entirely within the CURB, the Specific Plan can be found consistent with these objectives. In addition, by reclaiming the existing sand and gravel mine site for residential uses, the project accommodates projected growth in the City and reduces the pressure for growth to occur on agricultural land in and around the City.

- **Provide a variety of housing types throughout the City.**

### **Discussion**

The City of Oxnard is aggressively pursuing a wide variety of housing opportunities for the full range of economic segments. As part of this effort, the City has identified and set aside funds for the provision of such housing, along with incentives to encourage the private sector to construct affordable housing. The City is also pursuing housing opportunities for those with greater means in locations most appropriate for such uses. This is consistent with the economic diversity found within the City.

The City of Oxnard Housing Element contains an adequate inventory of vacant land that can accommodate residential development of all types. The Housing Element indicates that the City has a land inventory within the existing CURB boundary that can accommodate 8,500 units, which is sufficient to meet the range of housing required by the Regional Housing Needs Assessment. Within the current planning period, records indicate that the City has directly subsidized or facilitated the production of 572 affordable units, and plans an additional 230 units of affordable housing to lower

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<sup>8</sup> Oxnard SOAR Ordinance, City of Oxnard, adopted 1998.



income households. Additional opportunities for the development of multi-family housing are provided in the City's commercial zones.

The RiverPark Specific Plan would allow an array of housing types including single-family homes, patio homes, townhomes, and multi-family units (apartments). These products would appeal to a broad range of economic segments. Existing residential uses in the area are limited to single family uses along with two apartment complexes located in the adjacent El Rio West neighborhood. The proposed Specific Plan includes an Affordable Housing Program, requiring 15 percent of the total number of housing units to be affordable to very low and low income households. Housing affordable to households of very low income will likely consist of rental housing in the form of townhouses or apartments. Housing affordable to low income households will likely include apartments and townhouses for rent as well as townhouses and homes for sale. The proposed affordable program in the RiverPark Specific Plan also includes standards for the location of affordable housing to ensure distribution of affordable housing units in the community. In summary, build-out of the RiverPark Specific Plan would broaden the range of housing types available within the northern portion of the City, consistent with the intent of this policy.

- **Provide adequate space for schools, libraries, park and recreation areas, and the expansion needs of public facilities to enhance the quality of life for all residents.**

### **Discussion**

The proposed RiverPark Specific Plan would guide the development of a mixed-use community with a balanced range of residential, commercial, civic, entertainment and open space uses. Open space uses would occupy the greatest amount of land of any use in the Specific Plan Area at 269 acres, which represents 38 percent of the total amount of land in the 701-acre area. The Specific Plan would provide 86 acres of parkland and open space distributed throughout the community, including neighborhood park space and a trail system allowing for linkages to planned regional trails. A site for new elementary and middle schools to be developed by the Rio School District have also been designated. The playfields at the elementary/intermediate school site would be available for public use through a joint use between the Rio School District and the City of Oxnard Parks and Recreation Department. Planning District D, the Town Square Commercial District, allows the development of a branch library. For these reasons, the Specific Plan as proposed is consistent with this objective.

- **Ensure that all new development will be consistent with the Ventura County Air Quality Management Plan and other regional plans.**
- **Encourage the development of mixed uses in appropriate areas to reduce commuting.**

### **Discussion**

The Specific Plan is guided by the design principles of the ‘New Urbanism’ and ‘Smart Growth’ movements, which emphasize the importance of mixed land uses, communities scaled for pedestrian movement, limiting automobile usage and the importance of physical design in creating communities that people want to live, work and shop in. RiverPark will incorporate several residential neighborhoods, served by parks, neighborhood-oriented commercial, and a pedestrian movement system designed to reinforce and encourage pedestrian movement. These are linked by a project-wide open space and circulation system to a diverse mix of commercial, office, and recreational uses.

The location and design of the project also allows for the use of alternative means of transportation. The City of Oxnard is served by the South Coast Area Transit (SCAT), and the closest bus route is located adjacent to the Specific Plan Area along Vineyard Avenue. This route includes stops at the Oxnard Intermodal Transit Station. This station functions as a hub for the SCAT inter-city and local bus services and as a connection for Amtrak’s Metrolink. SCAT has indicated that transit service can be extended to the Specific Plan Area along Oxnard Boulevard, Ventura Road or other major streets in the community when demand warrants. The Specific Plan includes provisions for bus turnouts and other transit support facilities. As such, future residents of the Specific Plan have the opportunity to utilize several alternative modes of transportation including bus and rail service. In conclusion, physical design feature of the Specific Plan along with the location near an area served by existing transit act to reduce total vehicle miles traveled and hence, vehicle air emissions. Given the above, the project can be found consistent with these objectives. As discussed in **Section 4.8, Air Quality**, the RiverPark Specific Plan is consistent with the Ventura County Air Quality Management Plan.

### ***Growth Management Element***

#### **Goals<sup>9</sup>**

- **Orderly growth and development that is consistent over the life of the 2020 General Plan, fostered by the CURB**
- **Maintain the quality of life desired by the residents of Oxnard**
- **Sensible urban growth based on the ability to provide the necessary governmental services and municipal utilities.**

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<sup>9</sup> City of Oxnard Planning Department: *City of Oxnard 2020 General Plan*, “Growth Management Element,” pp. IV-19. Oxnard, California: December 2000.

### Discussion

The Growth Management Element of the *2020 General Plan* is intended to manage the growth allowed by the *General Plan*. One of the primary tools available to accomplish this task is the City Urban Restriction Boundary or CURB. As described above, the CURB represents a boundary within which development is planned to take place through the term of the *General Plan* (2020). During this time, the City of Oxnard will restrict urban services and urbanized land uses to land located within the CURB.

The proposed Specific Plan represents the orderly development of an area planned for urbanization by the *General Plan*. Not only is the Specific Plan area entirely within the CURB boundary, but RiverPark Area 'B' contains a Planning Reserve Overlay. This overlay was placed on certain open space areas contiguous to developed portions of the City to indicate that they may be considered for urbanization during the tenure of the *2020 General Plan*.

Finally, the project is located in an area that is afforded all necessary municipal services and utilities. The analysis contained in **Section 4.10** and **Section 4.11** of this Draft EIR found that the project would not significantly impact the ability of the utility and service providers to meet demand created by the project. In conclusion, the project is consistent with the goals of the Growth Management Element.

### Objectives<sup>10</sup>

- **Create an appropriate balance between urban development and preservation of agricultural uses within the Planning Area. Development exclusively within the CURB while leaving the balance in Resource Protection, Open Space, or Agricultural Designations is presumptively an appropriate balance.**

### Discussion

The RiverPark Specific Plan project is consistent with the objective to preserve agricultural land. By remaining within the urban boundaries established by the CURB, the Specific Plan would not hinder the objective to preserve agricultural land that surrounds the City. The Specific Plan also promotes an appropriate balance of development and open space uses by retaining 38 percent of the Specific Plan

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<sup>10</sup> City of Oxnard Planning Department: *City of Oxnard 2020 General Plan*, "Growth Management Element," pp. IV-19. Oxnard, California: December 2000.

Area in open space in the form of water quality basins, parks, and landscape buffers. Given the above, the project is consistent with this objective.

- **Insure that areas annexed into the City share equitably in the costs of all necessary municipal improvements.**

#### **Discussion**

The applicant of the RiverPark Specific Plan will be responsible for construction of backbone roadways and utility infrastructure needed to support future development. Development and connection fees provide additional revenue to fund capital improvements needed to support municipal service. A fiscal impact study completed for the project demonstrates that the revenues generated by the RiverPark Project will be sufficient to pay for all required public services from the City.<sup>11</sup> In Given the above, the project is consistent with this objective.

#### **Policies**

- **The Oxnard City Urban Restriction Boundary – The CURB sets the primary self-imposed demarcation for the geographic urbanization of the City. Although voters utilized the location of the LAFCO Sphere of Influence Boundary for locating the CURB, it serves a fundamentally different purpose. Whereas the LAFCO Sphere of Influence Line regulates annexation, the CURB identifies the area within which primarily urban land uses will be accommodated. Upon adjustment of the Sphere of Influence Line and annexation outside the CURB, more rural, agricultural and open space uses, as well as necessary schools, parks, or other necessary governmental uses may be accommodated under City jurisdiction.**

#### **Discussion**

The proposed RiverPark Specific Plan is within the urban area defined by the CURB to accommodate future growth of the City. The Specific Plan also provides a variety of public uses including schools parks, and a fire station consistent with this objective.

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<sup>11</sup> Urban Futures Fiscal Impact Study

## **Housing Element**

### **Goals**<sup>12</sup>

- **Housing costs [should be] within the ability-to-pay of all economic segments.**
- **Sufficient housing [should be provided] to satisfy the needs of the households with special housing needs (such as the homeless, farm worker households, handicapped, large families and elderly).**
- **[Provide] A variety of housing types throughout the City, which meet the needs of all economic segments.**
- **Address the housing needs for all income groups of Oxnard residents in the five-year housing production objectives.**
- **[Provide] adequate housing opportunities for all persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, marital status, age, handicapped condition, ancestry, national origin, sexual orientation, or family size or type.**

### **Discussion**

The City of Oxnard is aggressively pursuing a wide variety of housing opportunities for the full range of economic segments. The City of Oxnard has prepared an affordable housing production plan. The Affordable Housing Plan provides a description of the existing and anticipated production of affordable housing units to fulfill State housing requirements and identifies a strategy for producing homes to meet that need. Part of this strategy is to encourage the production of affordable housing through the use of incentives to developers. These incentives include the modification of design standards, height and density limits, parking requirements, etc., to make the construction of affordable housing economically viable.

The City of Oxnard also adopted Oxnard City Ordinance 2506, passed in October of 2000, which establishes affordable housing requirements for new developments. Ordinance 2545, which was passed in December of 2000, has since adjusted some of the requirements and added new information on the in-lieu Affordable Housing Payments program. Currently, for all new residential single-family projects that contain ten or more single-family dwelling units, at least ten percent of the project's dwelling units must be sold or rented to persons or families of lower income. Such affordable dwelling units must have at least three bedrooms. For all new residential apartment and condominium projects that contain ten or more dwelling units, at least five percent of the project's dwelling units must be sold or rented to persons

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<sup>12</sup> City of Oxnard Planning Department: *City of Oxnard 2020 General Plan*, "Housing Element," pp. XIII-60. Oxnard, California: December 2000.

or families of lower income and another five percent to persons and families of very low income. The developer of the project can make a request to the City to pay an in-lieu Affordable Housing Payment to the City's Affordable Housing Fund or contribute offsite land that is dedicated for affordable housing to that City.

In redevelopment plan areas, §33413 of State Redevelopment Law (Health & Safety Code) on inclusionary requirements for affordable housing applies. The basic requirements contained in §33413(b)(2) require that at least 15 percent of all new housing within the redevelopment project area be made affordable to low/moderate income households and that 40 percent of these units be made affordable to very low income households. This requirement is not project specific, but applies to the redevelopment project area as a whole. Further, this requirement can be met by development in all City redevelopment project areas.

The RiverPark 'A' portion of the Specific Plan Area is located in the HERO Redevelopment project area, thus it is required to comply with §33413 of State Redevelopment Law, which states that that at least 15 percent of all new housing within the redevelopment project area as a whole be made affordable to low/moderate income households and that 40 percent of these units be made affordable to very low-income households.

The RiverPark Specific Plan would require 15 percent of the total number of housing units to be affordable to very low and low-income households. This exceeds the existing City requirements. Housing affordable to households of very low income will likely consist of rental housing in the form of townhouses or apartments. Housing affordable to low-income households will likely include apartments and townhouses for rent as well as townhouses and homes for sale. The proposed affordable program in the RiverPark Specific Plan also includes standards for the location of affordable housing to ensure distribution of affordable housing units throughout the community.

### **Consistency with the City of Oxnard Zoning Ordinance**

As described earlier in this section, RiverPark Area 'A' is zoned Town Center Specific Plan, while Area 'B' is zoned Open Space by the County of Ventura. Prior to annexation of the property into the incorporated boundaries of the City of Oxnard, the Specific Plan Area must be pre-zoned. This action determines the zoning that will apply to the property subsequent to the annexation action. The proposed zoning designation for the Specific Plan Area is RiverPark Specific Plan.

One of the allowed uses within Planning District D, Town Square Planning District, is a multiplex theater. The proposal to amend this Ordinance to allow for construction of multiplex theaters in areas designated for regional commercial uses that have been master planned through a Specific Plan. Modification of the ordinance will not cause a significant impact because the Regional Commercial land use designation is applied to a small number of sites in the City. Of these sites, only the RiverPark project would be subject to a specific plan. For this reason, the only location outside of the downtown this change to the code would allow theaters is the RiverPark Specific Plan Area. Given the distance between the downtown and the RiverPark Specific Plan Area, this modification of the Ordinance would not substantially alter the intent to promote the downtown as an entertainment hub.

### **Consistency with the HERO Redevelopment Plan**

The HERO Redevelopment Plan provides flexibility in terms of its land uses controls. Specifically, Section 401 of the Redevelopment Plan states that the intention of the Redevelopment Plan that land uses permitted within the Redevelopment Area be as provided for in the City's *General Plan* as it may be amended from time to time. Accordingly, the proposed uses as approved subject to a *General Plan* Amendment would be consistent with the HERO Redevelopment Plan.

### **Consistency with the Local Agency Formation Commission Policies**

As previously discussed, the Specific Plan Area is located partially outside the incorporated City limits of Oxnard. Given this, prior to project approval and site development, a portion of the Specific Plan area must be annexed to the City. Section 56377 of the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 indicates that when reviewing and considering proposals that can be expected to induce, facilitate, or lead to the conversion of existing open space lands to uses other than open-space uses, the commission shall consider two specific principles:

- A) Development or use of land for other than open-space uses shall be guided away from existing prime agricultural lands in open-space use towards areas containing non-prime agricultural lands, unless that action would not promote the planned, orderly, efficient development of an area.**
- B) Development of existing vacant or non-prime agricultural lands for urban uses within the existing jurisdiction of a local agency or within the sphere of influence of a local agency should be encouraged before any proposal is approved which would allow for or lead to the development of existing open space lands for non –open space uses which are outside of the existing jurisdiction of the local agency or outside of the existing sphere of influence of the local agency.**

## Discussion

Approximately 432 acres of land located within RiverPark RiverPark Area 'B' is located outside the existing City of Oxnard incorporated boundary, but within the City's existing Sphere of Influence. This area can be considered open space under the definition set forth in Section 65560 of the State Planning and Zoning law.<sup>13</sup> The majority of the area proposed for annexation contains a sand and gravel mine and associated production facilities operated by Hanson Aggregates. The Hanson Aggregates site consists of an existing plant area, adjacent stockpile area, and open mine pits. The plant facilities included two ready mix concrete plants, an asphalt plant, a rock and sand plant, a recycler and related shop areas and offices. Mining operations began in the 1940s and the County of Ventura began regulating plant operations in 1965 through a CUP. Hanson Aggregates has ceased operations and recently undertook the actions necessary to reclaim the mine area as required by the CUP.

A small portion of this area contains drainage facilities owned and operated by the Ventura County Flood Control District. The Flood Control District built the two existing retention basins located on the property in 1997 to accept runoff from areas to the east of Vineyard Avenue. The basins were constructed to reduce flooding and eliminate nuisance runoff. A secondary use of this land is for agricultural production.

While a small portion of the El Rio Detention Basin No. 2 site located along Vineyard Avenue is presently utilized for crop production, and the bottom of this basin is also used for agriculture from time to time, this is a secondary use on land that is primarily used for flood control purposes. This agricultural land is a small fragment separated from farmland located in the Oxnard-Camarillo Greenbelt by Vineyard Avenue and the residential uses located in the El Rio neighborhood located immediately east of the Specific Plan Area. Moreover, production has ceased at the Hanson Aggregate facility as the resources at the Specific Plan Area have been extracted. The company has initiated actions to reclaim the mine pits pursuant to an approved mine reclamation plan. Upon completion of the reclamation project the facility will serve as a groundwater recharge basin, which represents another type of open space use.

The City of Oxnard is proposing to annex the 432 acres of land into the City to accommodate build-out of the proposed Specific Plan. The land is located within the CURB boundary, which represents the geographic area that is designated in the Growth Management Element of the *2020 General Plan* to

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<sup>13</sup> Open Space is defined by Section 65560 of Title 7, Planning and Land Use, of the California Government Code. This definition includes land used for managed production of resources such as food, fiber, areas containing major mineral deposits, or areas required for groundwater recharge.



accommodate future growth within the City. The Plans and Policies contained in the City of Oxnard 2020 General Plan provide for a balance between urban use and agricultural land and open spaces. Annexation of this property would promote the planned, orderly, efficient development of the City of Oxnard by allowing the City to comprehensively plan land located within the CURB. Not only is the Specific Plan Area entirely within the CURB boundary, but the area proposed for annexation already contains a Planning Reserve Overlay. This overlay was placed on certain parcels of land contiguous to developed portions of the City to indicate that they may be considered for urbanization during the tenure of the 2020 General Plan. Given that the existing agricultural land in the area proposed for annexation is small and isolated from the Oxnard-Camarillo Greenbelt by developed uses, the existing sand and gravel mining facility has ceased production due to depletion of resources, the mine pits themselves will be reclaimed and used for an alternate open space use (recharge basins), and because the area is located within the CURB, annexation of the 432 acres into the City of Oxnard is consistent with the two principles outlined above.

Section 5668 of the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg legislation also has guidelines for the review of proposed annexation requests. A detailed discussion of each topic can be found in the appropriate sections of this EIR. Following is a brief discussion of the factors considered by LAFCO when considering an annexation:

- (a) Population, population density; land area and land use; per capita assessed valuation; topography, natural boundaries, and drainage basins; proximity to other populated areas; the likelihood of significant growth in the area, and in adjacent incorporated and unincorporated areas, during the next 10 years.**
- (b) The conformity of both the proposal and its anticipated effects with both the adopted commission policies on providing planned, orderly, efficient patterns of urban development, and the policies and priorities set forth in Section 56377.**

### **Discussion**

Table 4.1-1 presented earlier in this section identifies the adopted population forecast for the City of Oxnard through the year 2025. As indicated in the table, the City is projected to undergo sustained growth during this period. These projections indicate that the City will increase by 23 percent or 37,679 persons by the year 2025. Housing stock of the City is also projected to increase by 32 percent or 14,036 units in order to support this level of population growth.

The City of Oxnard is proposing annexation of 432 acres of land (RiverPark Area 'B') that is located inside the CURB but outside of the existing incorporated boundary to plan for this projected growth in a

comprehensive manner. The area proposed for annexation contains an existing sand and gravel mine and drainage facilities owned and operated by the Ventura County Flood Control District. The topography of the property is gentle with the exception of the mining pits and little natural habitat is present due to disturbance caused by historic mining activity. Moreover, the property is outside of areas subject to the 100-year flood as depicted on the FIRM map for Oxnard.

Located to the west of the Specific Plan Area across the Santa Clara River is agricultural land and residential development in the City of Ventura. Across from the Large Woolsey Pit is a residential neighborhood located in the Serra Community as defined in the City of Ventura Comprehensive Plan. Further to the south, near the Ventura Freeway are residential neighborhoods in the Montalvo Community as defined in the Ventura Comprehensive Plan. Existing uses immediately east of the Specific Plan include the El Rio Community to the south and agricultural land to the north. The El Rio Community includes the residential and commercial uses located north of the Ventura Freeway between Vineyard Avenue and Rose Avenue to the east.

In conclusion, the City of Oxnard is expected to undergo sustained population growth through the term of the *2020 General Plan*. The entire Specific Plan Area, including the proposed annexation area, is suitable for urbanization because it does not contain severe topography, floodways, or sensitive biological resources that could pose a constraint to development. Moreover, it is located adjacent to developed uses and is within the CURB boundary, which represents the geographic boundary within which projected growth of the City is to be accommodated.

- (c) **Need for organized community services; the present cost and adequacy of governmental services and controls in the area; probable future needs for those services and controls; probable effect of the proposed incorporation, formation, annexation, or exclusion and of alternative courses of action on the cost and adequacy of services and controls in the area and adjacent areas.**
- (d) **The ability of the newly formed or receiving entity to provide the services which are the subject of the application to the area, including the sufficiency of revenues for such services following the proposed boundary change.**

### **Discussion**

Future uses developed within the Specific Plan will require utilities and public services. Existing and master-planned utilities and municipal service providers that presently serve existing commercial and residential uses in the immediate area can serve these proposed uses. Development within the Specific Plan Area would be coordinated and timed to ensure that adequate capacity exists to accommodate the project as it is developed. Furthermore, based on the information and analysis contained in **Section 4.10**,

**Public Services, and Section 4.11, Public Utilities,** of this EIR, the project can be afforded all necessary municipal services and utilities without significantly affecting their existing service obligations with the implementation of mitigation.

- (e) The effect of the proposed action and of alternative actions, on adjacent areas, on mutual social and economic interests, and on the local governmental structure of the county.**

#### **Discussion**

The Specific Plan is part of a larger community fabric found within the north portion of the City of Oxnard. The Specific Plan Area is part of the Del Norte Residential Community designated in the 2020 *General Plan*. This community is located north of the Ventura Freeway. One of the goals established by the *General Plan* is to ensure that each of the neighborhood communities defined by the *General Plan* contains adequate housing and public facilities. The project would be complementary to the existing uses in the Del Norte community as it allows a variety of housing types and provides public facilities in the form of park space and new school sites. Build-out of the Specific Plan would also contribute revenue to both the City of Oxnard and Ventura County in the form of sales and property taxes, gas taxes, and miscellaneous development fees imposed for connection to existing service systems.

- (f) The effect of the proposal on maintaining the physical and economic integrity of agricultural lands, as defined by Section 56016.**

#### **Discussion**

The proposed annexation will have no effect on the physical or economic integrity of agricultural lands contained within the Oxnard-Camarillo Greenbelt. While a small portion of the proposed annexation area is presently utilized for crop production, it is a secondary use on land that is improved for flood control purposes. More importantly, this land is located in the CURB and is a small parcel that is separated from farmland located in the Oxnard-Camarillo Greenbelt by Vineyard Avenue, residential development located due east of the Specific Plan Area, and a industrial park. As planned, the nearest residential neighborhood to the existing agricultural land across Vineyard Avenue would be 1,500 feet. Consequently, annexation to allow future development of said land promotes infill development that would not alter the physical boundary of the Greenbelt nor influence the economic integrity of agricultural lands.

- (g) The definiteness and certainty of the boundaries of the territory, the nonconformance of proposed boundaries with lines of assessment or ownership, the creation of islands or corridors of unincorporated territory, and other similar matters affecting the proposed boundaries.**

**Discussion**

The entirety of the Specific Plan Area is located within the existing City of Oxnard Sphere of Influence and CURB line, so annexation of RiverPark RiverPark Area 'B' into the City of Oxnard would be consistent with established jurisdictional boundaries. In addition, since the annexation is a contiguous piece of land located adjacent to the existing incorporated boundary, the proposed annexation action would not create islands of unincorporated County territory.

**(h) Consistency with city or county general and specific plans.**

**(i) Any information relating to existing land use designations.**

**Discussion**

As shown previously on **Figure 4.1-1**, that portion of the Specific Plan Area presently located within the City of Oxnard incorporated boundary is designated for development of Regional Commercial, Commercial Office, and Business and Research Park uses consistent with the adopted Oxnard Town Center Specific Plan. The adopted plan allows development of up to 4.4 million square feet of commercial and industrial space in the area addressed by that plan. That portion of the RiverPark Specific Plan located outside the City's boundary is designated as Open Space-Mineral Resource and Open Space-Buffer on the Oxnard *2020 General Plan* land use map. This area is also designated as a Planning Reserve area as defined by the Oxnard *2020 General Plan*, which represents land located adjacent to developed uses that can be considered for urbanization during the tenure of the *2020 General Plan*.

A comprehensive analysis of project consistency with the City of Oxnard *2020 General Plan* is provided above. The proposed Specific Plan has been found consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the *General Plan*.

**(j) The sphere of influence of any local agency which may be applicable to the proposal being reviewed.**

**Discussion**

The land proposed for annexation is located entirely within the City's existing Sphere of Influence line.

- (k) Timely availability of water supplies adequate for projected needs including, but not limited to, the projected needs as specified in Section 65352.5.**

**Discussion**

As presented in **Section 4.11, Public Utilities**, of this Draft EIR, the project will receive groundwater extraction allocations in the amount of approximately 1,580 acre-feet upon annexation of RiverPark Area 'B' and conversion of the existing uses to the proposed uses. The City has facilities with sufficient capacity to pump and provide this water as needed. As this projected demand for the uses allowed by the Specific Plan is 1,550 acre-feet City's Water Master Plan, available water will exceed the demand of the project. As adequate water can be supplied to meet the needs of the project in a timely manner, the project is consistent with this policy.

- (l) The extent to which the proposal will assist the receiving entity in achieving its fair share of the regional housing needs as determined by the appropriate council of governments.**

**Discussion**

The City of Oxnard's Regional Housing Needs Assessment allocation for the period 1998-2005 is 3,298 dwelling units (du). Of this total, 1,286 du are to be set aside for households of low and very-low income, while 2,012 du are for moderate and upper income households. The RiverPark Specific Plan provides a range of housing types to accommodate all economic segments of the community and includes an affordable housing program that will result in an increase in the number of affordable units in the City. Allowed uses within the Specific Plan available for affordable units include apartments, townhomes, lofts that are located over commercial buildings, and second units located on certain single-family lots.

**Consistency with the Guidelines for Orderly Development**

The Guidelines for Orderly Development contain a number of policies which are categorized based upon a proposed project's location relative to a local city's Sphere of Influence and incorporated boundary. The foundation of the Guidelines are articulated in the two general policies identified below:

- **Urban development should occur, whenever and wherever practical, within incorporated cities which exist to provide a full range of municipal services and are responsible for urban land use planning.**
- **The cities and County should strive to produce general plans, ordinance and policies which will fulfill these guidelines.**

Based upon the above, specific policies are identified for proposed actions that would occur either within a city's current Sphere of Influence, or within a city's Area of Interest. Those policies, which apply to projects within a Sphere of Influence, are identified as follows:

- **Applicants for land use permits or entitlements for urban uses shall be encouraged to apply to the City to achieve their development goals and discouraged from applying to the County.**
- **The City is primarily responsible for local land use planning and for the provision of municipal services.**
- **Prior to being developed for urban purposes or to receiving municipal services, land should be annexed to the City.**
- **Annexation to the City is preferable to the formation of new, or expansion of, existing County service areas.**
- **Land uses which are allowed by the County without annexation should be equal to or more restrictive than land uses allowed by the City.**
- **Development standards and capital improvement requirements imposed by the County for new or expanding developments should not be less than those that would be imposed by the City.**

Projects which are within a City's Area of Interest but outside the City's Sphere of Influence are subject to the following:

- **Applications for land use permits or entitlements shall be referred to the City for review and comment.**
- **The County is primarily responsible for local land use planning, consistent with the general land use goals and objectives of the City.**
- **Urban development should be allowed only within existing "communities" as designated on the County *General Plan*.**
- **Unincorporated urbanized areas should financially support County-administered urban services which are comparable to those services provided by Cities.**

### **Discussion**

The Specific Plan Area bears relation to the City's planning efforts due to its location within and adjacent to the incorporated boundaries of the City. The southern 269 acres of the Specific Plan Area are located within the existing City incorporated boundary and are also located within the Oxnard Community Development Commission's Historic Enhancement and Revitalization of Oxnard (HERO) Redevelopment Plan Area. The northern 432 acres of the Specific Plan Area were historically used as a

sand and gravel mine permitted by the County of Ventura in 1979 and detention basins operated by the Ventura County Flood Control District. All mining activities allowed by the current permit have been completed and the site is undergoing reclamation.

In order to facilitate the reclamation of the mine and plan for the future development of this portion of the City in a coordinated fashion, the City is requesting the annexation of the northern 432 acres of land. This will allow the City to regulate the development of this area through adoption and implementation of a Specific Plan in a manner consistent with the City's land use policies. Thus, the application for development of the Specific Plan Area consistent with the RiverPark Specific Plan was submitted to the City of Oxnard Planning Division for review and approval. Further, all development standards, capital improvement requirements, etc., would be governed based on City standards. These actions would be consistent with the County's Guidelines for Orderly Development which state that the primary responsibility for local land use planning should occur at the local level.

The Specific Plan Area is in close proximity to existing urban development located within the incorporated boundary of the City of Oxnard. In fact, the southern half of the Specific Plan is within the existing Del Norte Community as identified in the City's *2020 General Plan*. All necessary urban services exist in the area and could be readily provided upon annexation into the City of Oxnard. This is also consistent with the guidelines that state that cities are primarily responsible for the full range of urban services.

In conclusion, the requested actions are considered consistent with the Guidelines for Orderly Development. Unincorporated land within the Specific Plan Area is proposed for annexation into the City of Oxnard, which will be responsible for the land use decisions within this area. In addition, the City would be responsible for providing the full range of municipal services upon the completion of these actions consistent with the guidelines.

### **Consistency with SCAG Regional Comprehensive Plan & Guide**

The County of Los Angeles is within the six-county jurisdiction of the Southern California Association of Governments ("SCAG"), which also includes Ventura, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, and Imperial Counties. SCAG has divided its jurisdiction into 13 subregions to facilitate regional planning efforts. As previously mentioned the RiverPark Specific Plan Area is located in the Ventura Council of Governments Subregion as defined by SCAG.

The *Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide* (“RCPG”), dated March 1996, consists of five core chapters, which are growth management, regional mobility, air quality, water quality, and hazardous waste management. These core chapters respond directly to federal and state requirements placed on the Southern California Association of Governments and which local governments are required to use as the basis for their own plans. Under CEQA, local governments are required to discuss the consistency of projects with regional significance against policies contained in the RCPG. Special attention shall be afforded to the core sections and policies of the Plan.

The following is a brief discussion of the mandatory sections of the core chapters that apply to the proposed project, as well as a project consistency analysis with policies identified in each chapter. Goals contained in the Open Space Chapter of the RCPG, an ancillary Chapter, are also evaluated at the request of SCAG in the NOP comment letter dated May 19, 2000.

### **Growth Management Chapter**

Policies in this chapter reference SCAG’s mandate in the review of regionally significant projects are discussed below:

- *The population, housing, and jobs forecasts, which are adopted by SCAG’s Regional Council and that reflect local plans and policies, shall be used by SCAG in all phases of implementation and review.*

Build-out of the Specific Plan would result in construction of up to 2,805 dwelling units that would house a population of approximately 7,220 persons over the 10 to 15 year build-out period of the project. The Specific Plan is also estimated to create approximately 5,368 permanent jobs.<sup>14</sup> As indicated in **Table 4.1-4**, the VCOG subregion is predicted to undergo sustained growth through the year 2020. Population in this subregion is predicted to increase by 220,100 persons, while the housing stock is projected to increase by 89,400 units. Employment opportunities are also predicted to increase substantially.

**Table 4.1-4**  
**SCAG Demographic Projections - VCOG Subregion**

	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Growth 2000-2020</b>
Population	712,800	745,000	804,300	932,900	220,100 (31%)
Housing	237,000	252,400	274,700	326,400	89,400 (38%)
Employment	306,600	343,200	394,800	485,600	179,000 (58%)

Source: SCAG, *Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide, Growth Management Chapter*, (April 1998).

<sup>14</sup> Urban Futures, Inc., RiverPark Specific Plan Fiscal Impact Analysis, November 24, 2000.



The increased population resulting from build-out of the Specific Plan when added to the 2000 sub-regional population of 712,800 equates to a projected population of 720,020 residents by the year 2020. This is well within the demographic projection for the year 2020. Similarly, the incremental increase in housing stock is also within SCAG and VCOG growth projections for the year 2010. Project build-out will also generate employment opportunities consistent with subregional growth projections through the year 2020.

**Table 4.1-5** depicts SCAG demographic projections for the City of Oxnard. On a local level, build-out of the Specific Plan would result in a population of 158,920 when the estimated population for the project is added to the year 2000 forecast. This figure is well below the 186,900 persons projected to reside in the City by the year 2020. Consequently, the project would be consistent with SCAG population and housing forecasts for the City.

**Table 4.1-5**  
**SCAG Demographic Projections – City of Oxnard**

	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Growth 2000-2020</b>
Population	151,700	156,700	166,000	186,900	35,200 (23%)
Housing	42,200	44,400	47,600	55,000	89,400 (30%)
Employment	42,300	49,100	58,800	75,800	33,500 (79%)

Source: SCAG, *Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide, Growth Management Chapter*, (April 1998).

- *The timing, financing, and location of public facilities, utility systems, and transportation systems shall be used by SCAG to implement the region's growth policies.*

**Analysis:** As previously indicated, RiverPark Area 'A' is presently developed and utilities including water, sewer, electrical, natural gas, communication links exist to serve uses in this area. In addition, the City's water, sewer and storm drain master plans provide service to this area with planned capacity to serve the land uses proposed. Thus, municipal services and utilities are available to serve the Specific Plan Area. Final plans for on-site utilities will be approved by the City of Oxnard Department of Public Works prior to the issuance of building permits, and all utilities will be improved with each future subdivision constructed within the Specific Plan Area. In addition, project generated residents and businesses would generate revenue in the form of sales taxes, property taxes, fees, etc., which would be available to the City to fund the operation of public services on the Specific Plan Area, such as fire and police service, flood control, library service, street maintenance, etc. Revenues for capital improvements would also be generated by the project directly through various forms of

development fees, including, but not limited to water connection fees, sewer connection fees, and school fees. Therefore, the project is consistent with this policy.

- *SCAG shall encourage local jurisdiction's efforts to achieve a balance between the types of jobs they seek to attract and housing prices.*

Analysis: The RiverPark Specific Plan would provide a wide range of housing and employment opportunities, including a requirement for 15 percent of the housing built to be affordable. The RiverPark Specific Plan would allow an array of housing types including single-family homes, patio homes, townhomes, and multi-family units (apartments). These products would appeal to a broad range of economic segments consistent with the intent of this policy.

- *SCAG shall encourage efforts of local jurisdictions in the implementation of programs that increase the supply and quality of housing and provide affordable housing as evaluated in the Regional Housing Needs Assessment.*

Analysis: The City of Oxnard is aggressively pursuing a wide variety of housing opportunities for the full range of economic segments. The City has developed an Affordable Housing Plan to address the need for affordable housing. As part of this effort, the City has identified and set aside funds for the provision of such housing, along with incentives to encourage the private sector to construct affordable housing. The City is also pursuing housing opportunities for those with greater means in locations most appropriate for such uses. This is consistent with the economic diversity found within the City, which contains employment opportunities ranging from high paying professional jobs, such as attorneys, to those of field worker and retail employee.

The RiverPark Specific Plan would provide a wide range of housing and employment opportunities, including a requirement for 15 percent of the housing built to be affordable. The RiverPark Specific Plan would allow an array of housing types including single-family homes, patio homes, townhomes, and multi-family units (apartments). These products would appeal to a broad range of economic segments. Existing residential uses in the study area are limited to single family uses along with two apartment buildings located in the adjacent El Rio West neighborhood. In summary, build-out of the RiverPark Specific Plan would broaden the range of housing types available within the northern portion of the City, consistent with the intent of this policy.

- *SCAG shall encourage patterns of urban development and land use which reduce costs on infrastructure construction and make better use of existing facilities.*

- *SCAG shall support local jurisdictions' efforts to minimize the cost of infrastructure and public service delivery, and efforts to seek new sources of funding for development and the provision of services.*
- *SCAG shall support local jurisdictions and other service providers in their efforts to develop sustainable communities and provide equally to all members of society, accessible and effective services, such as: public education, housing, health care, social services, recreational facilities, law enforcement, and fire protection.*

**Analysis:** The Specific Plan Area is presently partially developed and the full range of infrastructure and municipal services are afforded to the property. The site is located in an area that is master planned for sewer, water and storm drain facilities by the City of Oxnard and is located within a Redevelopment Program Area. In addition, the Specific Plan Area is located on the Ventura Freeway. Caltrans will be making a major improvement project to this segment of the Ventura Freeway in early 2002 with completion in mid-2006. The State Route 101 Improvement and Santa Clara River Bridge Replacement Project will include the replacement of the existing bridges across the Santa Clara River and the widening of the freeway from three to six lanes in each direction from Vineyard Avenue in Oxnard to the Montalvo Spur Overhead, located just north of Johnson Drive in Ventura. The existing 7-lane bridges will be replaced with a single 12-lane bridge. In Oxnard, this project will include the reconstruction of the existing Oxnard Boulevard Interchange and the Ventura Road undercrossing of the freeway, which will be widened from two to five lanes. The new Oxnard Boulevard Interchange will be a tight diamond interchange design providing access from Oxnard Boulevard to the proposed RiverPark Specific Plan Area and existing commercial areas to the south of the freeway. The RiverPark Specific Plan will result in the proposed land uses being located in an area fully served by existing and planned regional and local infrastructure. A fiscal impact study prepared by the City of Oxnard indicates that the revenues generated by the RiverPark Project will be sufficient to pay for all municipal services required. The RiverPark Specific Plan includes sites and provisions to provide necessary public facilities including schools, fire stations, a storefront police station, a branch library, neighborhood and community parkland and affordable housing. The RiverPark Specific Plan is consistent with these RCPG policies.

- *SCAG shall support provisions and incentives created by local jurisdictions to attract housing growth in job rich subregions and job growth in housing subregions.*

**Analysis:** The purpose of this policy is to reduce vehicle trip lengths by promoting the ability of people to live near to their place of employment. As indicated in **Table 4.1-4**, the Specific Plan Area is located in a growth area that contains wide variety of employment opportunities. The RiverPark Specific Plan would allow an array of housing types including single-family homes, patio homes, townhomes, and

multi-family units (apartments). These products would appeal to a broad range of economic segments. The RiverPark Specific Plan is consistent with these RCPG policies.

- *SCAG shall encourage existing or proposed local jurisdictions' programs aimed at designing land uses which encourage the use of transit and thus reduce the need for roadway expansion, reduce the number of auto trips and vehicle miles traveled, and create opportunities for residents to walk and bike.*

**Analysis:** The RiverPark Specific Plan guides development of a balanced mixed use community containing residential, commercial, open space and public facility uses in an area presently served by public transit and containing a regional transportation system. Moreover, the Specific Plan emphasizes mixed land use types scaled to pedestrian movement. This serves to limit automobile usage by placing employment and neighborhood serving uses within a short distance of residential areas. Based on the above, the Specific Plan is consistent with this policy.

- *Encourage local jurisdiction's plans that maximize the use of existing urbanized areas accessible to transit through infill and redevelopment.*
- *Support local plans to increase density of future development located at strategic points along the regional commuter rail, transit systems, and activity centers.*
- *Support local jurisdiction strategies to establish mixed-use clusters and other transit-oriented developments around transit stations and along transit corridors.*

**Analysis:** The Specific Plan guides development of a mixed-use community located within the City Urban Restriction Boundary (CURB), which represents the geographic area that is designated in the Growth Management Element of the 2020 General Plan to accommodate future growth within the City. Moreover, the Specific Plan Area is served by the South Coast Area Transit (SCAT), and the closest bus route is located adjacent to the Specific Plan Area along Vineyard Avenue. This route includes stops at the Oxnard Intermodal Transit Station. This station functions as a hub for the SCAT inter-city and local bus services and as a connection for Amtrak's Metrolink. Finally, RiverPark RiverPark Area 'A' is located within the existing HERO Redevelopment Project Area. Given the above, the Specific Plan is consistent with these policies.

- *SCAG shall encourage the implementation of measures aimed at the preservation and protection of recorded and unrecorded cultural sites and archaeological site.*

**Analysis:** The Phase 1 Archaeological Report conducted for the Specific Plan area concluded that no prehistoric archaeological site is located within the Specific Plan Area. Thus, the Specific Plan is considered consistent with this policy.

- SCAG shall discourage development, or encourage the use of special design requirements, in areas with steep slopes, high fire, flood, and seismic hazards.

Analysis: The Specific Plan Area is not subject to flood hazards, wildland fire hazards, nor does the property contain any steep slopes. Like other locations in Southern California, the Specific Plan Area would be subject to seismic hazards common to the region. Through compliance with Uniform Building Code, as required, hazards to the Specific Plan Area associated with seismic events would be reduced to less than significant levels making the RiverPark Specific Plan consistent with this SCAG policy.

- SCAG shall encourage measures that reduce noise in certain locations, measures aimed at preservation of biological and ecological resources, measures that would reduce exposure to seismic hazards, minimize earthquake damage, and to develop emergency response and recovery plans.
- Support the protection of vital resources such as wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, woodlands, production lands, and land containing unique and endangered plants and animals.

Analysis: The Specific Plan Area is partially developed and is exposed to noise characteristic of an urban environment by its presence near U.S Highway 101. The Specific Plan Area and surroundings are largely disturbed due to previous mining, farming, and development activity, and no sensitive plants or animals are present on the property. One of the primary objectives of the RiverPark Specific Plan is to reclaim the existing mine pits in a manner that protects the quality of the exposed groundwater in the pits due to the location of these pits in the recharge area of the Oxnard Aquifer system. Upon reclamation of the mine pits, they will be used as water storage and recharge basins, which will further enhance groundwater management efforts for the entire aquifer system. Finally, through compliance with Building Code requirements, hazards to the RiverPark Specific Plan associated with seismic events would be reduced to less than significant levels. With implementation of the proposed improvements, code requirements, and mitigation, the RiverPark Specific Plan would be consistent with this RCPG policy.

## **Regional Mobility Chapter**

The Regional Mobility Chapter is a summary of another SCAG document entitled, *Regional Mobility Element* ("RME"). The RME, adopted in 1998, is the principal transportation policy, strategy and objective statement of SCAG, proposing a comprehensive strategy for achieving mobility and air quality mandates. The RME is also referred to as the *Regional Transportation Plan* ("RTP"), and it serves as both the Federal- and State-required regional long-range transportation plan for the SCAG region through the year 2015.

The Regional Mobility Element links the goal of sustaining mobility with the goals of fostering economic development, enhancing the environment, reducing energy consumption, promoting transportation-friendly development patterns, and encouraging fair and equitable access to residents affected by socio-economic, geographic, and commercial limitations.

Goals of the RME relevant to the RiverPark Specific Plan are listed below followed by a consistency analysis.

- *Support the coordination of land use and transportation decisions with land use and transportation capacity, taking into account the potential for demand management strategies to mitigate travel demand if provided for as a part of the entire package.*
- *Support efforts to educate the public on the efficacy of demand management strategies and increase the use of alternative transportation.*
- *Public transportation programs shall be considered an essential public service because of their social, economic, and environmental benefits.*
- *Specific service types, levels and configuration should be determined by the local transit providers, transit users, local jurisdictions, and applicable County transportation commissions.*

Analysis: As previously discussed, the RiverPark Specific Plan will accommodate projected regional growth in a location that is adjacent to existing and planned infrastructure, urban services, transportation corridors, and major employment centers. Moreover, the RiverPark Specific Plan is located in an area that is served by a number of mass transit providers. The RiverPark Specific Plan is, therefore, consistent with these policies.

- *Potential down-stream congestion impacts from capacity enhancing projects will be studied.*
- *Transportation investments shall mitigate environmental impacts to an acceptable level.*

Analysis: A traffic study has been prepared for the RiverPark Specific Plan and is discussed fully in **Section 4.7, Transportation and Circulation**, of this EIR. The study evaluates project-related, as well as long-term, cumulative traffic impacts on the local and regional transportation network. The proposed RiverPark Specific Plan would be responsible for improvements to the roadway network and would be required to participate in the City and County traffic impact fee programs in order to mitigate project-impacted road systems. The RiverPark Specific Plan, therefore, is consistent with this policy.

- *Expanded transportation system management by local jurisdictions will be encouraged.*
- *TSM activities throughout the region shall be coordinated among jurisdictions.*

Analysis: The RiverPark Specific Plan includes a number of transportation system management actions in order to speed the flow of traffic. For example, mitigation measures have been identified that will improve the level of service at the intersections significantly affected by this project. These improvements include not only physical actions such as the construction of dedicated left turn lanes or lane reconfiguration, but also include payment of traffic impact fees that will be used to fund improvements identified in the City's Capital Improvement Program. As a result, the RiverPark Specific Plan is consistent with these RCPG policies.

- *Transportation investments shall be based on SCAG's adopted Regional Performance Indicators.*

*Mobility – Transportation systems should meet the public need for improved access, and for safe, comfortable, convenient and economical movements of people and goods.*

- *Average work trip travel time in minutes – 22 minutes*
- *PM peak highway speed – 33 mph*
- *Percent of PM peak travel in delay All Trips\_ - 33 percent*

*Accessibility – Transportation systems should ensure the ease with which opportunities are reached. Transportation and land use measures should be employed to ensure minimal time and cost.*

- *Work opportunities within 25 minutes – 88 percent*

*Environment – Transportation systems should sustain development and preservation of the existing system and the environment (All trips).*

- *Meeting Federal and State standards – Meet Air Plan Emissions Budget*

*Reliability – Reasonable and dependable levels of service by mode (All Trips)*

- *Transit – 63 percent*
- *Highway – 76 percent*

*Safety – Transportation systems should provide minimal, risk, accident, death and injury (All Trips)*

- *Fatalities per million passenger miles – 0.008*
- *Injury accidents – 0.929*

*Livable Communities – Transportation systems should facilitate livable communities in which all residents have access to all opportunities with minimal travel time. (All Trips)*

- *Vehicle Trips Reduction – 1.5 percent*
- *Vehicle Miles Traveled Reduction – 10.0 percent*

*Equity – The benefits of transportation investments should be equitably distributed among all ethnic, age and income groups. (All Trips).*

- *Low-income households (Household income \$12,000) Share of Net Benefits – Equitable Distribution of Benefits.*

*Cost-Effectiveness – Maximize return on transportation investment. (All Trips).*

- *Net present value – Maximum return on transportation investment*
- *Value of a dollar invested – Maximum return on transportation investment*

- *Transportation Control Measures shall be a priority*
- *Implementing transit restructuring, including smart shuttles, freight improvements, advanced transportation technologies, airport ground access and travel information services are an RTP priority.*
- *All existing and new public transit services, facilities, and/or systems shall evaluate the potential for private sector participation through the use of competitive procurement.*
- *New freeway facilities shall be open for goods movement except where safety prohibits this.*

**Analysis:** These Core transportation policies are directed towards regional transportation planning. It is beyond the scope of an individual project to address the regional transportation issues raised in these policies. To the extent applicable, the RiverPark Specific Plan is considered consistent with the intent behind the policies. For example, the RiverPark Specific Plan would accommodate growth in an area already afforded municipal services and public transportation. Moreover, the physical design and mixed-use nature of the Specific Plan promote pedestrian circulation and reduce total vehicle miles traveled. Finally, mitigation has been identified in the Draft EIR that will reduce all traffic impacts to a level considered less than significant. Consequently, the RiverPark Specific Plan would be consistent with the goal to maintain a reliable transportation network that provides for the safe, comfortable, and economical movement of people and goods.

### ***Air Quality Chapter***

The Air Quality Chapter of the RCPG was written by SCAG to support the goals of the RCPG and is intended to facilitate an improved standard of living by encouraging sustained economic growth along with an improvement in air quality through the creation of new industries and products required to achieve cleaner air and by providing adequate transportation for all residents while meeting clean air goals.

The project's consistency with the Ventura County *Air Quality Management Plan* ("AQMP") is discussed in **Section 4.8** of this Draft EIR. As stated in the Air Quality Chapter, SCAG is responsible for preparing and approving the portions of the AQMP which relate to regional demographic projections and integrated regional land use; housing, employment, and transportation programs; control measures; and strategies. The RCPG Air Quality Chapter presents a series of air quality "issues" and "strategies."

The following policies address those issues presented in the Air Quality Chapter that are relevant to the proposed RiverPark Specific Plan.



- *Through the environmental documentation review process, ensure that plans at all levels of government (regional, air basin, county, subregional and local) consider air quality, land use, transportation and economic relationships to ensure consistency and minimize conflicts.*

**Analysis:** The Specific Plan is guided by the design principles of the ‘New Urbanism’ and ‘Smart Growth’ movements, which emphasize the importance of mixed land uses, communities scaled for pedestrian movement, limiting automobile usage and the importance of physical design in creating communities that people want to live, work and shop in. The proposed RiverPark Specific Plan will incorporate several residential neighborhoods, served by parks, neighborhood-oriented commercial, and a pedestrian movement system designed to reinforce and encourage pedestrian movement. These are linked by a project-wide open space and circulation system to a diverse mix of commercial, office, and recreational uses.

The location and design of the RiverPark Specific Plan also allows for the use of alternative means of transportation. The Specific Plan Area is in area served by the South Coast Area Transit (SCAT), and the closest bus route on Vineyard Avenue. This route includes stops at the Oxnard Intermodal Transit Station. This station functions as a hub for the SCAT inter-city and local bus services and as a connection for Amtrak’s Metrolink. As such, future residents of the Specific Plan have the opportunity to utilize several alternative modes of transportation including bus and rail service. In conclusion, physical design features of the Specific Plan along with the location near an area served by existing transit act to reduce total vehicle miles traveled and hence, vehicle air emissions. Although the proposed RiverPark Specific Plan has no control over the contents of regional, subregional, and local plans, those plans and policies that affect development in the Specific Plan Area are identified and evaluated throughout this EIR for project consistency.

- *Determine specific programs and associated actions needed (e.g., indirect source rules, enhanced use of telecommunications, provision of community based shuttle services, provision of demand management based programs, or vehicle miles traveled/emission fees) so that options to command and control regulations can be assessed.*

**Analysis:** This Core policy is directed towards regional air quality planning. It is beyond the scope of an individual project to address the regional issues raised in this policy. To the extent applicable, the RiverPark Specific Plan is considered consistent with the intent behind the policy as analyzed in the above consistency analysis.

## **Water Quality Chapter**

The stated purpose of this chapter is to provide a regional perspective on current water quality issues and the plans and programs for addressing these issues. The chapter also identifies the current water quality goals and objectives for the region under existing law and provides a framework for ensuring that growth in wastewater treatment capacity is consistent with regional growth projections. Policies of the Water Quality Chapter, which have some relevance to the proposed RiverPark Specific Plan, are discussed below:

- *Encourage “watershed management” programs and strategies, recognizing the primary role of local governments in such efforts.*

It is beyond the scope of the proposed project and EIR to provide watershed management programs and strategies. However, the RiverPark Specific Plan does incorporate measures to minimize the impact associated with the construction and operational impacts. For example, the RiverPark Specific Plan would comply with requirements for development projects under the County’s National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit, and would obtain all necessary permits for both the construction and ultimate development stages. One of the primary objectives of the RiverPark Specific Plan is to reclaim the existing mine pits in a manner that protects the quality of the exposed groundwater in the pits due to the location of these pits in the recharge area of the Oxnard Aquifer system. Upon reclamation of the mine pits, they will serve as groundwater recharge basins, which will further enhance groundwater management efforts for the entire aquifer system. The proposed RiverPark Specific Plan would, therefore, generally be consistent with the objective of water quality in the watershed.

## **Open Space Chapter (Ancillary Goals)**

- *Provide adequate land resources to meet the outdoor recreation needs of the present and future residents in the region and to promote tourism in the region.*
- *Increase the accessibility to open space lands for outdoor recreation.*
- *Promote self-sustaining regional recreation resources and facilities.*
- *Develop well-managed viable ecosystems or known habitats of rare, threatened and endangered species, including wetlands.*

**Analysis:** The proposed Specific Plan incorporates a diverse composition of parks, gardens, village squares and greens along with less formal open space in order to provide adequate outdoor recreation

facilities. The more formal spaces are located to serve as visual focal points that are easily accessible to local residents for recreational purposes. A trail system that allows for connection to planned regional trails is also included in the plan.

The less formal open spaces of the Specific Plan serve to buffer sensitive resources, promote water quality, and recharge the groundwater basin, which is supportive of the ancillary goal to create self-sustaining recreational resources. For example, a multi-layered habitat will be created along the edge of the Specific Plan adjacent to the Santa Clara River. This setback will utilize native vegetation communities to attract and support a wide range of wildlife species, especially birds. Selected tree species will provide nesting and foraging habitat for the many species.

The Specific Plan will also improve the character of open space on the existing Hansen Aggregate mine site. Presently little vegetation exists at the closed mine facility. The mine pits present in this area are characterized by irregular slope faces which have been incised by erosion caused by wind and wave action. Surface drainage is poorly controlled and flows into the pits despite the presence of earthen berms designed to control surface water runoff. Mine reclamation activity associated with the Specific Plan would stabilize the slopes of the existing mine pits. Improvements to the drainage system will also be created to capture and treat surface water runoff rather than release it directly into the pits as occurs under existing conditions. Finally, the area will be planted with native material that will provide additional foraging and nesting habitat for a variety of animals. The RiverPark Specific Plan, therefore, is consistent with this policy.

- *Maintain open space for adequate protection of lives and properties against natural and man-made hazards.*
- *Minimize potentially hazardous developments in hillsides, canyons, areas susceptible to flooding, earthquakes, wildfire and other known hazards, and areas with limited access for emergency equipment.*
- *Minimize public expenditure for infrastructure and facilities to support urban type uses in areas where public health and safety could not be guaranteed.*

Analysis: The topography of the property is gentle with the exception of the mine pits and the property is outside of areas subject to the 100-year flood as depicted on the FIRM map for Oxnard. All of southern California is a seismically active area and uses developed in the entire City of Oxnard are subject to earth movement and secondary seismic hazards such as liquefaction. Full analysis of all potential geotechnical hazards is provided in **Section 4.3, Earth Resources**, of this Draft EIR. Measures to mitigate all potential impacts have been identified. In addition, all future uses developed within

the Specific Plan Area will comply with all local and regional codes pertaining to the protection of people and property from seismic hazards. Standard mitigation for ground shaking is provided through enforcement of structural and non-structural seismic design provisions defined in the Uniform Building Code (UBC) and related City codes and regulations. The entire Specific Plan Area is suitable for urbanization because it does not contain severe topography, floodways, or hazardous soil conditions that could pose a constraint to development. Consequently, the Specific Plan is consistent with these ancillary goals.

- *Maintain adequate viable resource production lands, particularly lands devoted to commercial agriculture and mining operations.*

Analysis: The Specific Plan Area contains a sand and gravel mine and associated production facilities. Mining operations began in the 1940s and Hansen Aggregates has ceased operations as the resources at the Specific Plan Area have been extracted. The company recently undertook the actions necessary to reclaim the mine area pursuant to an approved Mine Reclamation Plan. Consequently, development as allowed by the Specific Plan would not effect the viability of resource production from the area since mining has ceased at the Specific Plan Area.

RiverPark Area 'A' includes agricultural land and, under this agricultural soil, sand and aggregate mineral resources. This portion of the Specific Plan Area is currently designated for urban uses by the City's *General Plan* and the Oxnard Town Center Specific Plan. As presented in **Section 4.3, Earth Resources**, it is not economically viable to mine the aggregate resources in RiverPark Area 'A'.

With regard to agriculture, establishment of the City Urban Restriction Boundary (CURB) has provided a strong means for preserving agricultural land in the City's Planning Area. The purpose of the CURB is to protect agricultural and open space land within the City's Planning Area by limiting the provision of urban services and urbanized land uses to areas located within the CURB. Consequently, the appropriate balance between urban development and the preservation of agricultural uses within the City's Planning Area is set by the City Urban Growth Boundary (CURB).<sup>15</sup> Given that the RiverPark Specific Plan Area is entirely within the CURB, the Specific Plan is consistent with this Open Space goal.

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<sup>15</sup> Oxnard SOAR Ordinance, City of Oxnard, adopted 1998.

## Land Use Compatibility

Consideration of a project's compatibility with surrounding uses is largely based on the interaction of the uses and the extent to which residential quality of life will be affected by this interaction. For purposes of this analysis, land use compatibility is evaluated based on the environmental factors discussed elsewhere in this Draft EIR. Specific issues include noise, traffic, air quality, and aesthetics. The following provides a discussion of land use compatibility with surrounding uses. The internal compatibility of land uses planned for the area is maintained by review of each future tract map against the land use controls and development standards of the Specific Plan.

The Specific Plan Area is adjacent to residential, open space, and industrial land uses, as well as the Ventura Freeway and Vineyard Avenue. The RiverPark Specific Plan contains a series of buffers and edge treatments that transition appropriately into neighboring land uses as a means to avoid land use incompatibilities. Along the southern boundary of the Specific Plan Area is the Ventura Freeway. The Landscape Master Plan includes an approximate 7-acre buffer area extending along the entire freeway frontage of the RiverPark Community that separates the highway from commercial uses found along this perimeter. Its edges will be planted with a mix of native and indigenous grasses, perennials, shrubs, and trees, providing a desirable visual edge and buffer to the freeway at the ground plane of the Commercial Planning Districts established by the Specific Plan.

A continuous landscape buffer is also proposed along the eastern edge of the Specific Plan Area where it abuts the existing El Rio West Neighborhood. At the northern edge of this neighborhood and along this section of the future Ventura Boulevard, a fifty-foot wide landscaped buffer is proposed. This area includes an eight-foot parkway and a six-foot walkway along Ventura Boulevard. The remaining thirty-six feet will be bermed and landscaped with dense plantings of evergreen trees and shrubs.

In addition to the Ventura Boulevard buffer, along the western perimeter of the El Rio Neighborhood, a continuous landscape buffer is planned further south. This edge treatment will include a five-foot area continuously planted with evergreen vertical trees (such as *Pinus* species). In addition, a twenty-five foot wide parkway will run continuously along the El Rio Neighborhood located west of Vineyard Avenue. This parkway will include evergreen and flowering canopy trees as well as a walking trail. Direct pedestrian access to this trail from the RiverPark Community will be limited to the gated pathway located at the proposed El Rio Children's Park. The use of these landscaped buffers will promote land use compatibility through minimizing noise, visual, and light/glare, impacts.

The Specific Plan also buffers existing natural resources in the Santa Clara River. As part of the proposed Landscape Master Plan, a multi-layered habitat will be created along the edge of the Specific Plan adjacent to the Santa Clara River. This setback will utilize native vegetation

communities to attract and support a wide range of wildlife species, especially birds. Selected tree species will provide nesting and foraging habitat for the many species. This newly created forest will also contain an understory of numerous species of compatible native shrubs. In addition to the habitat benefits provided by this buffer, it will also serve as a transition between developed uses within the Specific Plan and the natural resources found within the Santa Clara River.

As proposed, the RiverPark Project will not create any land use incompatibilities.

## **CUMULATIVE IMPACTS**

The proposed RiverPark Specific Plan, along with development of the land uses allowed by the City's *2020 General Plan*, will change the intensity of land uses in the City's Planning Area. In particular, this cumulative development scenario will increase development in the northern portion of the City, and provide additional housing, employment, shopping, and recreational opportunities. With the City's CURB boundary, no land is available for other major development projects north of the Ventura Freeway during the term of the *2020 General Plan*.

There are several related projects in the area at this time. These projects include commercial projects south of the Ventura Freeway in established regional commercial areas, a small residential project proposed in the El Rio West Neighborhood adjacent to the Specific Plan Area and, to the east of the Large Woolsey Mine Pit, the Ventura County Juvenile Justice Center. Each of these projects is consistent with applicable land use designations and development standards. No cumulative land use impacts, therefore, will result from the development of these projects and the RiverPark Specific Plan Area.

Given the land use controls and development standards presently in use within the City of Oxnard, cumulative land use impacts would be minimized to a level that is considered to be less than significant.

## **MITIGATION MEASURES**

No mitigation measures are required as no significant impacts have been identified.

## **UNAVOIDABLE SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS**

No unavoidable significant land use impacts will result from the RiverPark Project.