

**CEQA FINDINGS OF FACT
AND STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS
REGARDING THE
FINAL PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
FOR THE
SAN BERNARDINO COUNTYWIDE PLAN
STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NO. 2017101033**

Exhibit A

I. INTRODUCTION

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that a number of written findings be made by the lead agency in connection with certification of an environmental impact report (EIR) prior to approval of the project pursuant to Sections 15091 and 15093 of the CEQA Guidelines and Section 21081 of the Public Resources Code. This document provides the findings required by CEQA. The potential environmental effects of the proposed Countywide Plan (CWP or proposed project) have been analyzed in a Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) (State Clearinghouse [SCH] 2017101033) dated June 2019. A Final PEIR has also been prepared that incorporates the Draft PEIR and contains comments received on the Draft PEIR; responses to the individual comments; and revisions to the Draft PEIR, including any clarifications based on the comments and the responses to the comments. A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) for the proposed project was also prepared, in conformance with Section 15097 of the CEQA Guidelines and Section 21081.6 of the Public Resources Code. This document provides the findings required by CEQA for approval of the proposed project.

A. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS FOR FINDINGS

CEQA (Pub. Res. Code §§ 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (14 Ca. Code Regs §§ 15000 et seq.) require the environmental impacts of a project to be examined before a project is approved. Specifically, regarding findings, Guidelines Section 15091 states:

- (a) No public agency shall approve or carry out a project for which an EIR has been certified which identifies one or more significant environmental effects of the project unless the public agency makes one or more written findings for each of those significant effects, accompanied by a brief explanation of the rationale for each finding. The possible findings are:
 - 1. Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the FEIR.
 - 2. Such changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and not the agency making the finding. Such changes have been adopted by such other agency or can and should be adopted by such other agency.

3. Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the FEIR.
- (b) The findings required by subsection (a) shall be supported by substantial evidence in the record.
 - (c) The finding in subdivision (a)(2) shall not be made if the agency making the finding has concurrent jurisdiction with another agency to deal with identified feasible mitigation measures or alternatives. The finding in subsection (a)(3) shall describe the specific reasons for rejecting identified mitigation measures and project alternatives.
 - (d) When making the findings required in subdivision (a)(1), the agency shall also adopt a program for reporting on or monitoring the changes which it has either required in the project or made a condition of approval to avoid or substantially lessen significant environmental effects. These measures must be fully enforceable through permit conditions, agreements, or other measures.
 - (e) The public agency shall specify the location and custodian of the documents or other material which constitute the record of the proceedings upon which its decision is based.
 - (f) A statement made pursuant to Section 15093 does not substitute for the findings required by this section.

The “changes or alterations” referred to in Section 15091(a)(1) that are required in or incorporated into the project and which mitigate or avoid the significant environmental effects of the project, may include a wide variety of measures or actions, according to Guidelines Section 15370:

- (a) Avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action.
- (b) Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation.
- (c) Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the impacted environment.
- (d) Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action.
- (e) Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

Regarding a Statement of Overriding Considerations, Guidelines Section 15093 states:

- (a) CEQA requires the decision-making agency to balance, as applicable, the economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits, including region-wide or statewide environmental benefits, of a proposed project against its unavoidable environmental risks when determining whether to approve the project. If the specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits, including region-wide or statewide environmental benefits, of a proposal [sic] project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects, the adverse environmental effects may be considered "acceptable."
- (b) When the lead agency approves a project which will result in the occurrence of significant effects which are identified in the final EIR but are not substantially lessened, the agency shall state in writing the specific reasons to support its action based on the final EIR and/or other information in the record. The statement of overriding considerations shall be supported by substantial evidence in the record.
- (c) If an agency makes a statement of overriding considerations, the statement should be included in the record of the project approval and should be mentioned in the notice of determination. This statement does not substitute for, and shall be in addition to, findings required pursuant to Section 15091.

B. CERTIFICATION

Having received, reviewed, and considered the PEIR for the San Bernardino Countywide Plan, State Clearinghouse No. 2017101033, as well as other information in the record of proceedings on this matter, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors adopts the following Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations in its capacity as the legislative body for San Bernardino County, which is the CEQA Lead Agency. The Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations set forth the environmental and other bases for current and subsequent discretionary actions to be undertaken by the County and responsible agencies for the implementation of the proposed project.

In addition, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors hereby make findings pursuant to and in accordance with Section 21081 of the California Public Resources Code and the State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15090 and 15091 and hereby certifies one of three findings for each potentially significant impact:

- (1) Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project which mitigate or avoid the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR.
- (2) Such changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and not the agency making the finding. Such changes have been adopted by such other agency or can and should be adopted by such other agency.

- (3) Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR.

C. PROJECT ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT AND DISCRETIONARY ACTIONS

The Final PEIR addresses the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental effects of future construction and operation activities associated with the proposed project. The Final PEIR provides the environmental information necessary for the County to make a final decision on the requested discretionary actions for all phases of this project. The Final PEIR was also intended to support discretionary reviews and decisions by other responsible agencies. Discretionary actions to be considered by the County may include, but are not limited to:

- Certify that the Final PEIR for the proposed project has been completed in compliance with CEQA and reflects the independent judgement and analysis of the County; find that the Board of Supervisors has reviewed and considered the information in the Final PEIR prior to approving the project; adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, finding that it is adequately designed to ensure compliance with the mitigation measures during project implementation; and determine that the significant adverse effects of the project either have been reduced to an acceptable level or are outweighed by the specific overriding considerations of the project, as described in this Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations.
- Approve the proposed project and related discretionary actions needed for future construction and operation as a result of the proposed project.

II. PROCEDURAL COMPLIANCE WITH CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

The County published a Draft PEIR on June 17, 2019. A Final PEIR was prepared in August 2020 in compliance with CEQA requirements. The Final PEIR was prepared in accordance with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines, as amended. As authorized in the State CEQA Guidelines Section 15084(d)(2), the County retained a consultant to assist with the preparation of the environmental documents. County staff from multiple departments, representing the lead agency, have directed, reviewed, and modified where appropriate all material prepared by the consultant. The Final PEIR reflects the County's independent analysis and judgement. The key milestones associated with the preparation of the PEIR are summarized in this section. Extensive public involvement and agency notification was conducted to solicit input on the scope and content of the PEIR and to solicit comments on the results of the environmental analysis presented in the Draft PEIR.

A. PUBLIC NOTIFICATION AND OUTREACH

In conformance with CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines, San Bernardino County conducted an extensive environmental review of the proposed project.

- Completion of a Notice of Preparation (NOP) on October 13, 2017. The public review period extended from October 13, 2017, to November 20, 2017. The NOP was published in the *Big Bear Life* and the *Grizzly* (publishing date October 18, 2017), the *Daily Press* (publishing date October 19, 2017), the *Hi-Desert Star* (publishing date October 19, 2017), the *Mountain News* (publishing date October 26, 2017), and the *San Bernardino County Sun* (publishing date October 17, 2017). The NOP was posted at the San Bernardino County Clerk's office on October 13, 2017. Copies of the NOP were made available for public review at the County's Land Use Services Department main office, the Jerry Lewis High Desert Government Center, and the Bob Burke Joshua Tree Government Center. The NOP was also available on the County's website.
- Completion of the scoping process. The public was invited by the County to participate in a scoping meeting held October 26, 2017, from 9:30 to 11:30 am at the San Bernardino County Government Center, 385 N Arrowhead Avenue, San Bernardino. The notice of a public scoping meeting was included in the NOP.
- Preparation of a Draft PEIR, which was made available for a 60-day public review period beginning June 17, 2019, and ending August 15, 2019. The scope of the Draft PEIR was determined based on the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Checklist, comments received in response to the NOP, and comments received at the scoping meeting conducted by the County. Section 2.2 of the Draft PEIR describes the issues identified for analysis in the Draft PEIR. The Notice of Availability (NOA) for the DEIR was sent to interested persons and organizations, sent to the State Clearinghouse in Sacramento for distribution to public agencies, and posted at the County of San Bernardino. The NOA was posted at the San Bernardino County Clerk's office on June 17, 2019.
- Preparation of a Final PEIR, including the responses to comments to the Draft PEIR. The Final PEIR was distributed to commenting public agencies in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15088 (at least 10 days prior to lead agency certification of the Final PEIR).
- Public hearings on the proposed project, including a Planning Commission hearing and a Board of Supervisors hearing.

In summary, the County conducted all required noticing and scoping for the proposed project in accordance with Section 15083 of the CEQA Guidelines, and the public review period for the PEIR exceeded the requirements of Section 15087 of the CEQA Guidelines.

B. FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT AND BOARD of SUPERVISORS PROCEEDINGS

The County prepared a Final PEIR, including Responses to Comments to the Draft PEIR. The Final PEIR/Response to Comments contains comments on the Draft PEIR, responses to those comments, revisions to the Draft PEIR, and appended documents. Twenty-four comment letters were received: seven from agencies, eight from organization, and nine from individuals.

The Final PEIR found that prior to mitigation, implementation of the proposed project will result in potentially significant impacts to Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Greenhouse

Gas Emission, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Mineral Resources, Noise, and Transportation and Traffic. However, mitigation measures (MMs) were developed to avoid or reduce impacts to levels considered less than significant for Cultural Resources. The County prepared a Statement of Overriding Considerations for the impacts found to be significant and unavoidable in Air Quality, Biological Resources, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Mineral Resources, Noise, and Transportation and Traffic.

Members of the public can view searchable agendas for scheduled County Board of Supervisors meetings and access agenda-related County information and services directly on the following website: <http://www.sbcounty.gov/main/pages/bos.aspx>.

The Final PEIR has been posted for viewing and downloading on the County's website with the previously posted Draft PEIR prior to the County's consideration of the Final PEIR and project recommendations.

A date for consideration of the Final PEIR and project recommendations at the Board of Supervisors was set for the proposed project and notice of the meeting was provided consistent with the Brown Act (Government Code Sections 54950 et seq.). The Board of Supervisors will take testimony on the proposed project and may continue on its calendar to a subsequent meeting date in its discretion.

C. RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

For purposes of CEQA and these Findings, the Record of Proceedings for the proposed project consists of the following documents and other evidence, at a minimum:

- The NOP, NOA, and all other public notices issued by the County in conjunction with the proposed project.
- The Draft PEIR and Final PEIR for the proposed project.
- All written comments submitted by agencies or members of the public during the public review comment period on the Draft PEIR.
- All responses to those written comments submitted by agencies or members of the public during the public review comment period on the Draft PEIR.
- All written and verbal public testimony presented during a noticed public hearing for the proposed project.
- The Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.
- The reports and technical memoranda included or referenced in the Final PEIR.
- All documents, studies, EIRs, or other materials incorporated by reference in the Draft PEIR and Final PEIR.

- The Resolutions adopted by the County in connection with the proposed project, and all documents incorporated by reference therein, including comments received after the close of the comment period and responses thereto.
- Matters of common knowledge to the County, including but not limited to federal, state, and local laws and regulations.
- Any documents expressly cited in these Findings.
- Any other relevant materials required to be in the record of proceedings by Public Resources Code Section 21167.6(e).

D. CUSTODIAN AND LOCATION OF RECORDS

The documents and other materials that constitute the administrative record for the County's actions related to the project are at the County's Land Use Services Department at 385 North Arrowhead Avenue, San Bernardino. The County's Land Use Services Department is the custodian of the administrative record for the project. Copies of these documents, which constitute the record of proceedings, are and at all relevant times have been and will be available upon request at the offices of the Land Use Services Department. This information is provided in compliance with Public Resources Code Section 21081.6(a)(2) and Guidelines Section 15091(e).

E. PROJECT LOCATION

At just over 20,000 square miles, San Bernardino County is the largest county in the nation. It is bordered by Los Angeles County, Orange County, and Kern County on the west; Inyo County and the southwest corner of Clark County, Nevada, on the north; the Colorado River and the states of Arizona and Nevada on the east; and Riverside County on the south. Regional connectivity to San Bernardino County is provided by Interstate 15 (I-15), I-40, I-10, US Route 395, and State Route 58.

The county is defined primarily by its four geographical subregions—the Valley, Mountain, North Desert, and East Desert. Only 4 percent of the land in the county is in incorporated jurisdictions; 96 percent of the land area is unincorporated. However, of the unincorporated area, nearly all (87 percent) is outside of the County's administrative control (primarily under federal control).

F. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The proposed Countywide Plan is guided by the following goals:

1. **Character and Heritage.** Recognition, preservation, and celebration of the distinct character, history, culture, and heritage of the county and its communities.
2. **Collaboration.** Greater coordination within the County government alongside expanded partnerships with other public and private entities to create a more complete county.
3. **Community Capacity.** A public equipped with tools to create positive changes in their communities, empowered by civic involvement and a network of relationships.

4. **Education.** A cradle-to-career education system and a culture of lifelong learning that gives residents the opportunity to obtain skills and education needed to achieve a rich and satisfying life.
5. **Fiscally Sustainable Growth.** A pattern of growth and development that facilitates logical, cost-effective, and fiscally sustainable provision of public services and infrastructure.
6. **Health and Wellness.** Active and engaged people and communities with access to infrastructure, programs, and services to support physical, social, and economic health and well-being.
7. **Prosperity.** Diverse opportunities for residents to pursue their desired standard and style of living and for businesses to work toward their economic success.
8. **Resiliency.** A County with a system of communities and services that can persevere in the face of emergencies, external forces, or unexpected circumstances and continue to carry out core missions despite formidable challenges.
9. **Security.** A real and perceived sense of safety that allows and encourages people, businesses, and organizations to thrive, build community, and invest.
10. **Stewardship.** Communities that protect the viability of natural resources and open spaces as valuable environmental, aesthetic, and economic assets.

G. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Countywide Plan

The proposed project is a comprehensive plan that is driven by the Countywide Vision (2011) and meets California Code requirements for a general plan. The Countywide Plan includes four major components:

1. A County Policy Plan, an update and expansion of the County's General Plan, including a new approach to county planning that includes social services, healthcare services, public safety, and other regional county services provided in both incorporated and unincorporated areas.
2. A Community Action Guide to replace existing Community Plans with a greater focus on community self-reliance, grass-roots action, and implementation. Goals, policies, land use, and infrastructure decisions for the community planning areas will be addressed in the County Policy Plan.
3. A County Business Plan, with governance policies, operational metrics, and implementation strategies that outline the County's approach to providing municipal services in the unincorporated areas and regional services for both incorporated and unincorporated areas.
4. A Regional Issues Forum, an online resource for sharing information and resources related to issues confronting the county as a whole, including the work of the Countywide Vision element groups.

The PEIR focuses on the potential County Policy Plan because it is this component that includes the proposed land use designations and policies that have the potential to result in physical environmental impacts.

Buildout Scenario

The county is defined primarily by its four geographical regions—the Valley, Mountain, North Desert, and East Desert.

Valley Region

The Valley Region is in the southwesternmost part of the county. Although the smallest region in land area, it is the most populated and the most urbanized—nearly half of the incorporated land is in the Valley region. The region is generally defined as all land that is south and west of the San Bernardino National Forest boundaries. The San Bernardino Mountains and Yucaipa and Crafton Hills form the eastern limits of the Valley Region, and the Santa Ana River and Jurupa Mountains form the southern limits.

Mountain Region

The Mountain Region is north of the Valley Region and encompasses the San Bernardino Mountains and the eastern end of the San Gabriel Mountains. Most of the Mountain Region is public land managed by state and federal agencies, primarily the US Forest Service.

North Desert Region

The North Desert Region is the largest of the four regions and is north of the Mountain Region to the northern county limits and east of the East Desert Region to the eastern county limits (Nevada and Arizona state lines). A significant portion of the region encompasses the Mojave Desert.

East Desert Region

The East Desert Region is east of the Mountain region and encompasses approximately two million acres. Most of the East Desert land is federally owned.

Table 1 identifies projected growth between 2016 and 2040 for incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county. The Countywide Plan only addresses changes in land use for unincorporated areas of the county. Unincorporated growth is also shown by region and then further divided into three areas: 1) community planning area (CPA), i.e., unincorporated areas within a CPA; 2) sphere of influence (SOI), i.e., unincorporated areas in an incorporated city/town SOI but not in a CPA; and 3) unincorporated areas that are not in a CPA or SOI.

Table 1 Projected Growth in San Bernardino County, 2016 to 2040

| Geography | | Population | Housing Units | Employment | Building SF ¹ |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| COUNTYWIDE | | | | | |
| San Bernardino County | 12,766,951 Ac. | 630,456 | 232,978 | 316,572 | 682,609,354 |
| Incorporated only | 503,679 Ac. | 580,776 | 217,622 | 304,026 | 663,211,453 |
| Unincorporated only | 12,263,271 Ac. | 49,680 | 15,365 | 12,546 | 19,397,900 |
| UNINCORPORATED^{2,3,4} | | | | | |
| Valley⁵ | 42,095 Ac. | 24,893 | 7,978 | 11,541 | 18,387,448 |
| Bloomington CPA | | 19,270 | 6,169 | 2,727 | 3,756,069 |
| Mentone CPA | | 323 | 108 | 501 | 271,603 |
| Muscoy CPA | | 449 | 154 | 715 | 384,787 |
| San Antonio Heights CPA | | 49 | 15 | 1 | 793 |
| East Valley Area Plan | | 3,243 | 977 | 2,138 | 4,129,593 |
| Chino SOI | | 141 | 51 | 109 | 300,031 |
| Colton SOI | | 194 | 65 | - | - |
| Fontana SOI | | 482 | 225 | 4,397 | 8,724,613 |
| Loma Linda SOI | | 548 | 155 | 10 | 6,347 |
| Montclair SOI | | 58 | 21 | - | - |
| San Bernardino SOI | | 137 | 38 | 944 | 813,614 |
| Other Unincorporated Areas | | - | - | - | - |
| Mountain⁶ | 528,027 Ac. | 2,355 | 702 | 202 | 162,356 |
| Bear Valley CPA | | 650 | 199 | 62 | 49,052 |
| Crest Forest CPA | | 342 | 103 | 37 | 28,414 |
| Hilltop CPA | | 343 | 103 | 16 | 18,310 |
| Lake Arrowhead CPA | | 602 | 180 | 45 | 32,840 |
| Lytle Creek CPA | | 87 | 25 | 20 | 16,523 |
| Mount Baldy CPA | | 53 | 10 | - | - |
| Oak Glen CPA | | 191 | 56 | 4 | 2,451 |
| Wrightwood CPA | | 88 | 26 | 18 | 14,766 |
| North Desert⁷ | 9,642,978 Ac. | 21,073 | 6,281 | 725 | 783,047 |
| Baker CPA | | 83 | 25 | 3 | 1,836 |
| Daggett CPA | | 83 | 25 | 9 | 7,025 |
| El Mirage CPA | | 84 | 26 | 3 | 1,605 |
| Helendale CPA | | 1,397 | 413 | 47 | 34,797 |
| Lucerne Valley CPA | | 531 | 158 | 28 | 20,314 |
| Newberry Springs CPA | | 205 | 62 | 29 | 22,894 |
| Oak Hills CPA | | 693 | 212 | 26 | 15,726 |
| Oro Grande CPA | | 83 | 26 | 20 | 16,100 |
| Phelan/Pinon Hills CPA | | 1,241 | 364 | 45 | 27,103 |

Table 1 Projected Growth in San Bernardino County, 2016 to 2040

| Geography | Population | Housing Units | Employment | Building SF ¹ |
|--|--------------|---------------|------------|--------------------------|
| Yermo CPA | 88 | 26 | 20 | 16,614 |
| Apple Valley SOI | 16,280 | 4,841 | 483 | 613,380 |
| Victorville SOI | 107 | 42 | 5 | 1,884 |
| Other Unincorporated Areas | 198 | 60 | 6 | 3,769 |
| East Desert⁸ 2,050,172 Ac. | 1,359 | 394 | 78 | 65,050 |
| Homestead Valley CPA | 355 | 105 | 12 | 7,220 |
| Joshua Tree CPA | 827 | 238 | 53 | 39,970 |
| Morongo Valley CPA | 177 | 52 | 14 | 17,859 |

Sources: County of San Bernardino 2018 for unincorporated areas; SCAG 2016 RTP/SCS Growth Forecast for incorporated jurisdictions, adjusted for growth in housing and population from 2012 to 2016 based on ACS population/housing estimates; U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 LEHD Employment Statistics for growth in employment from 2012 to 2015.

- ¹ Building SF refers to projected square footage of nonresidential structures.
- ² For the purposes of this table, the unincorporated geography is divided into three areas: 1) community planning area (CPA): unincorporated areas in a CPA boundary, 2) spheres of influence (SOI): unincorporated areas in an incorporated city/town SOI, but not in a CPA, and 3) other unincorporated areas that are not in a CPA or incorporated SOI.
- ³ Overlap of CPA and SOI boundaries. **Bear Valley:** The Bear Valley CPA includes the entire Big Bear Lake SOI; SOI growth is included in Bear Valley CPA. **Bloomington:** Bloomington CPA is primarily in Rialto SOI as well as a small portion in Fontana SOI and CPA growth not included in either SOI. **Muscoy:** The Muscoy CPA is in the San Bernardino SOI. **Oak Hills:** The Oak Hills CPA is in the Hesperia SOI. **Oro Grande:** A very small section of the Oro Grande CPA is in the Victorville SOI. **San Antonio Heights:** The San Antonio Heights CPA occupies the entire unincorporated Upland SOI.
- ⁴ Jurisdictions with limited or no unincorporated SOIs: Chino Hills, Grand Terrace, Highlands, Ontario, and Yucca Valley SOIs.
- ⁵ No growth is projected (outside of the CPA boundaries) in the Valley region SOIs of Chino Hills, Grand Terrace, Highland, Ontario, Rancho Cucamonga, Redlands, Rialto, Upland, and Yucaipa. No growth is projected in unincorporated areas of the Valley outside of a CPA, SOI, or Area Plan.
- ⁶ No growth is projected in the Mountain region areas of Angeles Oaks CPA, Big Bear Lake SOI, and unincorporated areas outside of a CPA or incorporated SOI.
- ⁷ No growth is projected in the North and East Desert region areas of Pioneertown CPA, Adelanto SOI, Barstow SOI, Hesperia SOI, and Needles SOI unincorporated areas outside of a CPA or SOI. No growth is projected outside of the CPA boundaries in Twentynine Palms SOI and Yucca Valley SOI.
- ⁸ No growth is projected in the East Desert region areas of Pioneertown CPA, areas outside CPA boundaries in the Twentynine Palms SOI, or unincorporated areas outside a CPA or SOI.

III. CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT FINDINGS

A. FORMAT

Section 15091 of the CEQA Guidelines requires that a lead agency make a finding for each significant effect for the project. This section summarizes the significant environmental impacts of the project, describes how these impacts are to be mitigated, and discusses various alternatives to the proposed project, which were developed in an effort to reduce the remaining significant environmental impacts. All impacts are considered potentially significant prior to mitigation unless otherwise stated in the findings.

This remainder of this section is divided into the following subsections:

Section B, Findings on “No Impact” and “Less Than Significant Impacts,” presents environmental issues, as identified in Chapter 5 of the Draft PEIR, that would result in no impact or less than significant impacts.

Section C, Findings on Impacts Mitigated to Less Than Significant, presents significant impacts of the proposed project that were identified in the Final PEIR, the mitigation measures identified in the Mitigation Monitoring Program, and the rationales for the findings.

Section D, Significant and Unavoidable Impacts That Cannot be Mitigated to Below the Level of Significance, presents significant impacts of the proposed project that were identified in the Final PEIR, the mitigation measures identified in the Mitigation Monitoring Program, the findings for significant impacts, and the rationales for the findings.

Section IV, Alternatives to the Proposed Project, presents alternatives to the project and evaluates them in relation to the findings set forth in Section 15091(a)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines, which allows a public agency to approve a project that would result in one or more significant environmental effects if the project alternatives are found to be infeasible because of specific economic, social, or other considerations.

Section V, Statement of Overriding Considerations, presents a description of the proposed project's significant and unavoidable adverse impacts and the justification for adopting a statement of overriding considerations.

Section VI, Findings on Responses to Comments on the Draft PEIR and Revisions to the Final PEIR, presents the County's findings on the response to comments and revisions to the Final PEIR, and decision on whether a recirculated Draft PEIR is necessary or not.

B. FINDINGS OF “NO IMPACT” AND “LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS”

Based on the environmental issue area assessment in the Final PEIR, the County determined that the proposed project would have no impact or less than significant impacts, including direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts, for the environmental issues summarized below. The rationale for the conclusion that no significant impact would occur in each of the issue areas is based on the environmental evaluation in the listed topical PEIR sections in Section 5 of the Draft PEIR, which include Environmental Setting, Environmental Impacts, Cumulative Impacts, and Mitigation Measures.

Relevant Countywide Plan policies are listed and numbered in the Draft PEIR; additionally, applicable local, state, and federal regulations that are required independently of CEQA review and also serve to prevent the occurrence of, or reduce the significance of, potential environmental effects are included in the Draft PEIR.

The PEIR concluded that all or some of the impacts of the proposed project with respect to the following topical sections either will not be significant or will be reduced to below a level of significance by implementing policies from the Countywide Plan or existing regulatory requirements as detailed in Chapter 5 of the Draft PEIR. The topics are: Aesthetics, Agriculture and Forestry Resources, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Noise, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, Transportation and Traffic, Tribal Cultural Resources, and Utilities and Service Systems. CEQA Guidelines Section 15901 states that an EIR may not be certified for a project which has one or more significant environmental effects unless one of three possible findings is made for each significant effect. Since the following environmental issues were determined to have no impact or a less than significant impact, no findings for these issues are required.

- (a) Aesthetics: The CWP would not result in a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista or alter scenic resources within a state scenic highway. The CWP would alter the visual appearance and character of some communities but would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality. The CWP would also create new sources of light or glare in portions of the county, but none of these would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.
- (b) Agriculture and Forestry Resources: Countywide Plan buildout would convert some Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Unique Farmland to nonagricultural land use; however, compliance with existing regulatory requirements and Countywide Plan policies would minimize adverse impacts on agriculture and forestry resources to less than significant levels. Furthermore, the Countywide Plan would not conflict with existing Williamson Act contracts and would not convert substantial areas of forest land to nonforest areas.
- (c) Biological Resources: The proposed CWP includes policies that would minimize or avoid impacts to jurisdictional waters by requiring the protection and preservation of such resources.
- (d) Cultural Resources: Human remains may be discovered during clearing and grading activities. In the event human remains are uncovered, impacts would be less than significant upon compliance with California and Safety Code Section 7050.5.
- (e) Geology and Soils: The proposed CWP would expose people to potential seismic-related hazards. However, seismic hazard impacts of CWP buildout would be less than significant after compliance with regulatory requirements for geotechnical investigations and seismic safety. Furthermore, development of projects under the Countywide Plan could cause substantial soil erosion, but both state and local regulations would effectively mitigate erosion impacts to less than significant. State and local regulations can also mitigate impacts from landslides, ground disturbance, expansive and collapsible soils, and the use of septic tanks to less than significant.
- (f) Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emission of GHGs.
- (g) Hazards and Hazardous Materials: Substantial hazards to the public or the environment arising from the routine use, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials during construction and long-term operation of development pursuant to the CWP would be mitigated to less than significant after compliance with state and local laws and regulations. Furthermore, compliance with the existing laws and regulations would mitigate impacts associated with areas that are on a list of hazardous sites. The CWP would not create an obstruction to air navigation or cause safety hazards to people working or residing in the proximity of airports and would not impair the implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. Additionally, unincorporated growth per the Countywide Plan would not expose people or structures

to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to the urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands. CWP policies focus growth into (or near) existing urbanized areas, and numerous policies address provision of fire protection and emergency services. The Countywide Plan would limit growth in fire-prone areas and areas far from emergency services.

- (h) Hydrology and Water Quality: Development pursuant to the Countywide Plan would not increase surface water flows into drainage systems within the watershed and would not provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff. Development would also not substantially reduce groundwater recharge. Portions of development pursuant to the Countywide Plan are in a 100-year flood hazard area; however, impacts would be less than significant after compliance with existing regulations for development in flood hazard zones. Additionally, Countywide Plan buildout would not exacerbate flood hazards arising from dam failure or risks of inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow.
- (i) Land Use Planning: Implementation of the proposed Countywide Plan would not divide an established community or conflict with applicable plans adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. The proposed Countywide Plan would not conflict with an adopted habitat conservation plan.
- (j) Noise: The proximity of the project area to an airport or airstrip would not result in exposure of future residents and/or workers to new airport-related noise.
- (k) Population and Housing: The proposed Countywide Plan includes policies to promote the development of housing appropriate for rural and suburban areas served by adequate infrastructure and services, and development would result in population increases that are consistent with regional growth projections. Furthermore, implementation of the Countywide Plan would not result in the displacement of people and/or housing.
- (l) Public Services: The proposed CWP would not create significant impacts related to fire services, police protection, school services, or library services.
- (m) Recreation: The proposed project would generate additional residents that would increase the use of existing park and recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration may occur or be accelerated. However, the increased use and growth will be accompanied by increased revenue to serve the increase in demand and prevent accelerated deterioration. Additionally, the proposed CWP would not result in environmental impacts to provide new and/or expanded recreational facilities.
- (n) Transportation and Traffic: The CWP is consistent with adopted programs, plans, and policies addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. Furthermore, project-related trip generation in combination with existing and proposed cumulative development would not result in designated road and/or highways exceeding County Congestion Management Agency service standards. Circulation improvements associated with future development that would be

accommodated by the Countywide Plan would be designed to adequately address potentially hazardous conditions (sharp curves, etc.), potential conflicting uses, and emergency access.

- (o) Tribal Cultural Resources: The proposed Countywide Plan would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource.
- (p) Utilities and Service Systems: Project-generated wastewater would not result in a determination by the wastewater treatment that it has inadequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments. Project-generated wastewater would also not exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board. Water demands would be adequately served by existing and proposed water supply and delivery systems, and stormwater flow would be adequately served by existing and proposed drainage systems. The development pursuant to the CWP would not exceed the capacity of the existing storm drain system. Additionally, existing and/or proposed facilities could accommodate project-generated solid waste and comply with related solid waste regulations, and implementation of the Countywide Plan would not result in wasteful, inefficient or unnecessary consumption of energy. Existing and/or proposed facilities would be able to accommodate project-generated utility demands.

C. FINDINGS ON SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS THAT CAN BE REDUCED TO A LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT LEVEL

The following summary describes impacts of the proposed project that, without mitigation, would result in significant adverse impacts. Upon implementation of the mitigation measures provided in the PEIR, these impacts would be considered less than significant.

1. Air Quality

Impact 5.3-5: Some land uses associated with buildout of the Countywide Plan have the potential to create objectionable odors. [Threshold AQ-5]

Operation-Related Odors

Development allowed under the Countywide Plan could generate new sources of odors. Odors from the types of land uses that could generate objectionable odors are regulated under SCAQMD Rule 402 and MDAQMD Rule 402.

Industrial land uses, including indoor agricultural uses, are the primary types of land uses that have the potential to generate objectionable odors. Future environmental review would be required for industrial projects to ensure that sensitive land uses are not exposed to nuisance odors. SCAQMD Rule 402 and MDAQMD Rule 402 require abatement of any nuisance generating an odor complaint. Typical abatement includes passing air through a drying agent followed by two successive beds of activated carbon to generate odor-free air. Facilities would need to consider measures to reduce odors as part of their CEQA review.

Consequently, review of projects proximate to sensitive land uses is necessary to ensure that odor impacts are minimized. Odor impacts could be significant for new projects that have the potential to generate odors within the odor screening distances.

Construction-Related Odors

During construction activities, construction equipment exhaust and application of asphalt and architectural coatings would temporarily generate odors. Any construction-related odor emissions would be temporary and intermittent in nature. Additionally, noxious odors would be confined to the immediate vicinity of the construction equipment. By the time such emissions reach any sensitive receptor sites, they would be diluted to well below any level of air quality concern. Furthermore, short-term construction-related odors are expected to cease upon the drying or hardening of the odor-producing materials. Therefore, impacts associated with construction-generated odors are considered less than significant.

Mitigation Measure

The following mitigation measure was included in the Draft PEIR and the Final PEIR and is applicable to the proposed project. The measure as provided includes any revisions incorporated in the Final PEIR.

AQ-4 If it is determined during project-level environmental review that a discretionary project has the potential to emit nuisance odors beyond the property line, an odor management plan shall be prepared and submitted by the project applicant prior to project approval to ensure compliance with the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) Rule 402 for projects in the South Coast Air Basin (SoCAB) or Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD) Rule 402 for projects in the Mojave Desert Air Basin (MDAB). The following facilities that are within the specified buffer distances from sensitive receptors (in parentheses) have the potential to generate substantial odors:

- Wastewater Treatment Plan (2 miles)
- Sanitary Landfill (1 mile)
- Transfer Station (1 mile)
- Composting Facility (1 mile)
- Petroleum Refinery (2 miles)
- Asphalt Batch Plant (1 mile)
- Chemical Manufacturing (1 mile)
- Fiberglass Manufacturing (1 mile)
- Painting/Coating Operations (1 mile)
- Food Processing Facility (1 mile)
- Feed Lot/ Dairy (1 mile)

- Rendering Plant (1 mile)

The Odor Management Plan prepared for these facilities shall identify control technologies that will be utilized to reduce potential odors to acceptable levels, including appropriate enforcement mechanisms. Control technologies may include but are not limited to scrubbers (e.g., air pollution control devices) at an industrial facility. Control technologies identified in the odor management plan shall be identified as mitigation measures in the environmental document and/or incorporated into the site plan.

Finding

Finding 1: Changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the Countywide Plan as Mitigation Measure AQ-4, which avoids or substantially lessens the significant environmental effect identified in the Draft PEIR. San Bernardino County hereby finds that implementation of the mitigation measure is feasible, and the measure is therefore adopted.

2. Biological Resources

Impact 5.4-4: The proposed project would affect wildlife movement corridors. [Threshold B-4]

Substantial interference with the movement of any native resident or migratory wildlife species or with resident or migratory wildlife corridors would occur if changes in land use within the proposed CWP would prevent or hinder wildlife movement through established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors or habitat linkages.

The proposed Countywide Plan includes policies that would avoid or minimize impacts to wildlife movement. Policy NR-3.1, Open space preservation, would benefit wildlife corridors by preserving such resources. Policy NR-5.1, Coordinated habitat planning, would conserve wildlife corridors through coordination with landscape-scale habitat conservation planning. Policy NR-5.2, Capacity for resource protection and management, would benefit wildlife corridors by increasing funding and other resources to protect, restore, and maintain wildlife corridors.

The Countywide Plan includes policies that may result in indirect impacts to wildlife movement corridors. The County maintains and improves a regional trail system, as described in Policy NR-3.8, and supports local and community parks, trails, and recreation facilities, as described in Policy NR-3.9. Policy NR-3.10, Joint use facilities, promotes the creation of joint use facilities for local parks and recreation programs. Regional trails, such as the Santa Ana River trail in the Valley Region, are often situated along existing wildlife movement corridors, such as the Santa Ana River. Maintenance and improvement of these facilities, described in Policies NR-3.8 and NR-3.9, would result in indirect impacts to adjacent wildlife movement corridors through construction and operation noise and emissions, light pollution from nighttime activities, and increased pedestrian traffic from users. Similarly, multiuse facilities would facilitate construction and operation of recreation facilities alongside existing wildlife movement corridors such as flood control facilities. Although maintenance and improvement of recreation facilities typically results in less than significant impacts to wildlife

movement corridors, impacts would be significant if a facility resulted in an obstruction to wildlife movement or significant increased noise or light pollution.

In addition to potential impacts from CWP policies, future development in undeveloped areas allowed under the proposed CWP could result in direct or indirect impacts to the movement of wildlife through impacts to habitat or fragmentation of open space. Discussions of these potential impacts are provided below by bioregion.

Valley Region

The foothill areas of the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mountains and associated washes are considered habitat linkage and wildlife corridors in the Valley Region. Proposed development areas occur within the San-Gabriel-San Bernardino Connection and could result in significant impacts to wildlife movement corridors.

Mountain Region

The California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project identifies habitat connections between the San Gabriel Mountains, San Bernardino Mountains, and the Little San Bernardino Mountains, including the San Gabriel–San Bernardino Connection, San Bernardino–Granite Connection, San Bernardino–Little San Bernardino Connection, and the San Bernardino–San Jacinto Connection. In addition, there are a multitude of corridors that link existing blocks of habitat, including the San Bernardino Mountains, to habitat blocks in the Desert Regions. Both proposed development and proposed conservation areas occur within the San Gabriel–San Bernardino Connection in the western portion of the Mountain Region. Proposed development areas could result in significant impacts to wildlife movement corridors.

Desert Regions

The Desert Regions include the following wildlife corridors and wildlife linkages: San Gabriel–San Bernardino Connection, San Bernardino–Little San Bernardino Connection, San Bernardino–San Jacinto Connection, and Joshua Tree–Twentynine Palms Connection. Several other corridors in the Desert Region link together existing blocks of habitat, including the China Lake North and South Ranges, Edwards Air Force Base, Kingston Mesquite Mountains, Mojave National Preserve, Stepladder and Turtle Mountains, Whipple Mountains, Twentynine Palms and Newberry-Rodman, and Joshua Tree National Park. Desert tortoise linkages also exist between the following tortoise conservation areas: Chemehuevi, Joshua Tree National Park, Pinto Mountains, Ord-Rodman, Fremont Kramer, Mojave National Preserve, Superior Cronese, Death Valley, Ivanpah, and Greenwater Valley (outside the county).

Buildout of the proposed CWP land uses would result in development in the southwestern part of the North Desert Region within the South Coast Wildlands Desert Linkage Network, the San Gabriel–San Bernardino Connection, and the San Bernardino–Granite Connection. In the central part of the North Desert Region, development would occur within the Desert Tortoise Conservation Areas/Least Cost Corridor as well as South Coast Wildlands Desert Linkage Network. In the East Desert, buildout of the proposed CWP land uses would result in development within the South Coast Wildlands Joshua

Tree-Twenty-nine Palms Wildlife Corridor. Proposed development areas could result in significant impacts to wildlife movement corridors.

Mitigation Measure

The following mitigation measure was included in the Draft PEIR and the Final PEIR and is applicable to the Countywide Plan. The measure as provided includes any revisions incorporated in the Final PEIR.

BIO-1 For each development project that would disturb special status vegetation on vacant land, or that might impact a wildlife movement corridor or jurisdictional waters pursuant to the Countywide Plan and subject to CEQA, a qualified biologist shall determine the potential for a significant biological resource impact and determine whether a field survey of the project site is warranted. If warranted, a qualified biologist shall prepare a biological resources technical report meeting current requirements of CEQA, and addressing applicable County goals and policies, applicable Habitat Conservation Plans and Natural Community Conservation Plans, and applicable federal, state, and local regulatory requirements. The report shall include documentation of biological resources present or potentially present (including special-status species, special-status vegetation communities, jurisdictional waters, and wildlife movement corridors), an impacts analysis, avoidance measures, and mitigation measures to reduce significant impacts to less than significant if applicable and feasible.

Finding

Finding 1: Changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the Countywide Plan as Mitigation Measure BIO-1, which avoids or substantially lessens the significant environmental effect identified in the Draft PEIR. San Bernardino County hereby finds that implementation of the mitigation measure is feasible, and the measure is therefore adopted.

Impact 5.4-5: Implementation of the Countywide Plan would require compliance with local conservation plans. [Thresholds B-5 and B-6]

The Countywide Plan includes Policy NR-5.1, Coordinated habitat planning, which states that the County participates in landscape-scale habitat conservation planning and coordinates with existing or proposed habitat conservation and natural resource management plans. This policy would result in positive impacts to local HCPs.

There are no Countywide Plan policies that would result in a negative impact to HCPs, natural community conservation plans (NCCPs), or local ordinances.

Several HCPs have been completed or are being planned in the County. Some of these are limited to municipal limits or federal lands and do not overlap County jurisdiction. HCPs that overlap County jurisdiction may limit development or pose additional requirements or analysis when proposing a project in the county that overlaps an HCP area.

Valley Region

Within the Valley Region, the only conservation plan overlapping proposed development areas is the Upper Santa Ana River HCP. This HCP is currently being prepared and has not been approved; therefore, the CWP is not in conflict with any HCPs or NCCPs. Furthermore, any development projects implemented in accordance with the CWP would have to be in compliance with approved HCPs at the time of their entitlement. As described under CWP Policy NR-5.7, Development review, entitlement, and mitigation, projects would comply with state and federal regulations regarding protected species of animals and vegetation through the development review, entitlement, and environmental clearance processes. Implementation of Policy NR-5.7 would include compliance with HCPs and/or NCCPs. With implementation of this CWP policy, impacts would be less than significant.

Mountain Region

Within the Mountain Region, the only conservation plan overlapping proposed development areas is the Upper Santa Ana River HCP. This HCP is currently being prepared and has not been approved; therefore, the CWP is not in conflict with any HCPs or NCCPs. Furthermore, any development projects implemented in accordance with the CWP would have to be in compliance with approved HCPs at the time of their entitlement. As described under CWP Policy NR-5.7, Development review, entitlement, and mitigation, projects would comply with state and federal regulations regarding protected species of animals and vegetation through the development review, entitlement, and environmental clearance processes. Implementation of Policy NR-5.7 would include compliance with HCPs and/or NCCPs. With implementation of this CWP policy, impacts would be less than significant.

Desert Region

Within the Desert Region, buildout of the proposed CWP land uses would result in development within the Lower Colorado River HCP plan area as well as the following site-specific, single-species HCPs: Copper Mountain Community College Expansion Site, Cushenbury Sand & Gravel Quarry, AgCon Oro Grande North Mine Pit Expansion, and Joshua Tree Campground. Additionally, the CWP land uses would result in development in the proposed Town of Apple Valley Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan/ Natural Community Conservation Plan, although this plan is not yet approved.

Any development projects implemented in accordance with the CWP would have to be in compliance with approved HCPs at the time of their entitlement. As described under CWP Policy NR-5.7, Development review, entitlement, and mitigation, projects would comply with state and federal regulations regarding protected species of animals and vegetation through the development review, entitlement, and environmental clearance processes. Implementation of Policy NR-5.7 would include compliance with HCPs and/or NCCPs. With implementation of this CWP policy, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure

The following mitigation measure was included in the Draft PEIR and the Final PEIR and is applicable to the Countywide Plan. The measure includes any revisions incorporated in the Final PEIR.

BIO-1 For each development project that would disturb special status vegetation on vacant land, or that might impact a wildlife movement corridor or jurisdictional waters pursuant to the Countywide Plan and subject to CEQA, a qualified biologist shall determine the potential for a significant biological resource impact and determine whether a field survey of the project site is warranted. If warranted, a qualified biologist shall prepare a biological resources technical report meeting current requirements of CEQA, and addressing applicable County goals and policies, applicable Habitat Conservation Plans and Natural Community Conservation Plans, and applicable federal, state, and local regulatory requirements. The report shall include documentation of biological resources present or potentially present (including special-status species, special-status vegetation communities, jurisdictional waters, and wildlife movement corridors), an impacts analysis, avoidance measures, and mitigation measures to reduce significant impacts to less than significant if applicable and feasible.

Finding

Finding 1: Changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the Countywide Plan as Mitigation Measure BIO-1, which avoids or substantially lessens the significant environmental effect identified in the Draft PEIR. San Bernardino County hereby finds that implementation of the mitigation measure is feasible, and the measure is therefore adopted.

3. Cultural Resources

Impact 5.5-1: Development of the project could impact an identified historic resource. [Threshold C-1]

Many buildings and structures in areas under the County's jurisdiction are more than 50 years old. Table 5.5-3 on page 5.5-14 of the Draft PEIR lists the number of historical resources in San Bernardino County with one or more of four statuses: listed on the National Register of Historic Places (44); National Historic Landmark (1); listed on the California Register of Historic Resources (2); or California Historical Landmarks (42).

Historic built environment resources are present in all geographic regions in the county but are most common in the Valley Region. Main areas of the county that are anticipated for growth in the Countywide Plan include: the Bloomington CPA and the Apple Valley SOI. The Bloomington CPA is in the Valley Region, which has more historic built environment resources than surrounding regions due to historic development of the county's population centers. Growth in the Bloomington CPA has the potential to affect historic built environment resources directly through demolition of historic buildings and structures to make way for redevelopment. It could also have indirect impacts—temporary effects associated with construction-related noise, dust, and vibration, and permanent effects such as changes to the integrity of historical resources (e.g., setting and feeling). Apple Valley is

in the North Desert Region, where historic resources are less common but still present. New residential and commercial development in Apple Valley and the North Desert Region could directly and/or indirectly affect historic built environment resources through redevelopment and new construction. Little growth is anticipated for the Mountain and East Desert Regions.

The Cultural Resources Element of the proposed Countywide Plan is designed to address potential impacts to historical resources. Specifically, Policies CR-2.1 through 2.5 call for preservation of resources significant at the national, state, and local levels; avoidance and mitigation of impacts; the building of partnerships; and the promotion of public awareness and education. These policies will guide the County's overall approach to historical resources as the County implements the Countywide Plan.

Nevertheless, it is possible that future development or improvements related to changes in land use could potentially affect historic buildings and structures and cause significant adverse impacts to historical resources.

Mitigation Measure

The following mitigation measure was included in the Draft PEIR and the Final PEIR and is applicable to the Countywide Plan. The measure includes any revisions incorporated in the Final PEIR.

CUL-1 In areas of documented or inferred historic resource presence, prior to construction or demolition activities that may impact historic resources, a historical resources assessment shall be prepared by a qualified architectural historian or historian who meets the Secretary of the Interior's PQS in architectural history or history. Potential historic resources include buildings, structures, objects, sites, historic districts, and landscape/site plan features falling within the project area and its immediate vicinity that are at least 45 years of age and are not substantially altered. The qualified architectural historian or historian shall conduct an evaluation of the potential historic resources in accordance with the guidelines and best practices promulgated by the State OHP and shall document the evaluation in a report meeting the State OHP guidelines, on Department of Parks and Recreation Series 523 forms. The report will be submitted to the County for review and concurrence, to ensure that any project requiring rehabilitation or alteration of a historical resource will not impair its significance.

Finding

Finding 1: Changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the Countywide Plan as Mitigation Measure CUL-1, which avoids or substantially lessens the significant environmental effect identified in the Draft PEIR. San Bernardino County hereby finds that implementation of the mitigation measure is feasible, and the measure is therefore adopted.

**Impact 5.5-2: Development of the project could impact archaeological resources.
[Threshold C-2]**

There are 438 historical resources in San Bernardino County that are listed on the California Register and/or the National Register or have been determined to be eligible for listing on one or both of those registers. Coordination with tribal organizations also indicates that the area under County jurisdiction is culturally sensitive. The area under County jurisdiction contains archaeological resources. Although portions of this area have been previously studied, future development or improvements related to changes in land use could potentially cause significant adverse impacts to archaeological resources.

Archaeological resources are present in all geographic regions of the county. Of the four main areas anticipated for growth under the Countywide Plan, the Bloomington CPA, Fontana SOI, and East Valley Area Plan area are in the Valley Region, and the Apple Valley SOI is in the North Desert Region. The Valley Region has fewer archaeological resources than surrounding regions due to disturbance and development. However, archaeological resources can be found below ground, and intact deposits could be present below the level of historical and modern disturbance. Therefore, growth in the Bloomington CPA and the Valley Region in general has the potential to affect buried archaeological resources through ground-disturbing construction activities associated with residential and commercial construction. The North Desert Region is home to numerous archaeological resources. New residential and commercial development in the Apple Valley SOI and the North Desert Region has the potential to affect surface level and subsurface archaeological resources through ground-disturbing construction activities. Little growth is anticipated for the Mountain Region and East Desert Region.

The Cultural Resources Element of the proposed Countywide Plan addresses potential impacts to archaeological resources. Specifically, Policies CR-2.1 through 2.5 call for preservation of resources significant at the national, state, and local levels; avoidance and mitigation of impacts; the building of partnerships; and the promotion of public awareness and education. These policies will guide the County's overall approach to archaeological resources as it implements the Countywide Plan. However, additional mitigation measures are recommended to ensure the avoidance and mitigation of potential impacts to archaeological resources from future projects in the County's jurisdiction.

Mitigation Measure

The following mitigation measures were included in the Draft PEIR and the Final PEIR and are applicable to the Countywide Plan. The measures include any revisions incorporated in the Final PEIR.

CUL-2 In areas of documented or inferred archaeological resource presence, archaeological resource assessments shall be required prior to ground disturbance related to a development project. To determine the archaeological sensitivity of a proposed project area, the County may rely on an expert opinion from the County Museum staff, or on the results of a CHRIS records search at the SCCIC [South Central Coastal Information Center] or the Sacred Lands File maintained by the NAHC. Archaeological resources assessments shall be performed under the supervision of an archaeologist that meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards (PQS) in either prehistoric or historic archaeology. The archaeological resources assessment shall include

a Phase I pedestrian survey, undertaken to locate any surface cultural materials that may be present.

- CUL-3 If potentially significant archaeological resources are identified through an archaeological resources assessment, and impacts to these resources cannot be avoided, a Phase II Testing and Evaluation investigation shall be performed by an archaeologist who meets the PQS prior to any construction-related ground-disturbing activities to determine significance. If resources determined significant or unique through Phase II testing, and site avoidance is not possible, appropriate site-specific mitigation measures shall be established and undertaken. These might include a Phase III data recovery program implemented by a qualified archaeologist and performed in accordance with the OHP's Archaeological Resource Management Reports (ARMR): Recommended Contents and Format (OHP 1990) and Guidelines for Archaeological Research Designs (OHP 1991).
- CUL-4 If the archaeological assessment did not identify potentially significant archaeological resources within the proposed project area but indicated the area to be highly sensitive for archaeological resources, a qualified archaeologist shall prepare a monitoring plan for all ground-disturbing construction and pre-construction activities in areas with previously undisturbed soil. The archaeologist shall inform all construction personnel prior to construction activities of the proper procedures in the event of an archaeological discovery. The training shall be held in conjunction with the project's initial on-site safety meeting, and shall explain the importance and legal basis for the protection of significant archaeological resources. In the event that archaeological resources (artifacts or features) are exposed during ground-disturbing activities, construction activities in the immediate vicinity of the discovery shall be halted while the resources are evaluated for significance by an archaeologist who meets the PQS. If the discovery proves to be significant, it shall be curated with a recognized scientific or educational repository.

Finding

Finding 1: Changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the Countywide Plan as Mitigation Measures CUL-2, -3, and -4, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect identified in the Draft PEIR. San Bernardino County hereby finds that implementation of the mitigation measures is feasible, and the measures are therefore adopted.

Impact 5.5-3: The proposed project could destroy paleontological resources or a unique geologic feature. [Threshold C-3]

Paleontological Resources

The Countywide Plan area contains paleontological resources. The younger alluvium across the valley floor is too young to preserve fossil resources in the upper layers, but the deeper layers and underlying sediments have high paleontological sensitivity. All three of the Valley growth areas lie in areas of low to high sensitivity. The broad alluvial plains between the mountains in the North Desert Region generally have low to high sensitivity where younger alluvium is mapped at the surface and likely

overlies older, high-sensitivity sediments. These older sediments are often exposed along the margins of the alluvial plains as they approach the intervening mountain ranges.

Policy CR 2.3 of the Countywide Plan protects paleontological and archaeological resources from loss or destruction and requires that new development include appropriate mitigation to preserve the quality and integrity of these resources, avoid them when possible, and salvage and preserve them if avoidance is not possible. However, future development or improvements related to changes in land use could potentially cause significant adverse impacts to paleontological resources.

Unique Geological Features

There are numerous unique geological features in San Bernardino County. One of these features—the San Andreas Fault—is in the Valley and Mountain Regions; another is in the Mountain Region; a third is in the East Desert Region; and 10 are in the North Desert Region.

Some projects developed under the Countywide Plan could damage unique geological features. Most of the features are on land under federal or state control rather than County jurisdiction; thus, Countywide Plan buildout would not damage those features. Only portions of the San Andreas Fault in the Valley and Mountain Regions and Pisgah Crater in the North Desert Region are within County jurisdiction, and Pisgah Crater is surrounded by federal land.

None of the four growth areas has any unique geological features. The three growth areas in the Valley Region are nearly flat, and the portion of the Jurupa Mountains in the Bloomington CPA is not a unique geological feature. In the Apple Valley SOI in the North Desert Region, portions of the Hacienda Fairview Valley Specific Plan are on the feet of slopes of the Granite Mountains. However, the specific plan designates Granite Mountain slopes and Fairview Creek as Open Space; thus, implementation of the Countywide Plan would not impact mountain slopes or Fairview Creek in the specific plan area. Impacts would be less than significant for unique geological features.

Mitigation Measure

The following mitigation measures were included in the Draft PEIR and the Final PEIR and are applicable to the Countywide Plan. The measures include any revisions incorporated in the Final PEIR.

CUL-5 In areas of documented or inferred paleontological resource presence, development projects proposed on previously undisturbed soils shall require consultation with a qualified paleontologist meeting the standards of the Society for Vertebrate Paleontology (2010). The initial consultation may be provided by a qualified paleontologist on staff at the County Museum. The qualified paleontologist will determine the degree of paleontological resource sensitivity, as outlined below, and will recommend a project-specific paleontological resources monitoring and mitigation plan (PRMMP). This plan will address specifics of monitoring and mitigation for the development project, and will take into account updated geologic mapping, geotechnical data, updated paleontological records searches, and any changes to the regulatory framework. This PRMMP should usually meet the standards of the SVP (2010), unless the project is on BLM land or subject to federal jurisdiction, in which case the BLM standards (2009) should be used. The

following provisions would be typical for units mapped with the different levels of paleontological sensitivity:

- High (SVP)/Class 4–5 (BLM)—All projects involving ground disturbances in previously undisturbed areas sediments mapped as having high paleontological sensitivity will be monitored by a qualified paleontological monitor on a full-time basis under the supervision of the Qualified Paleontologist. Undisturbed sediments may be present at the surface, or present in the subsurface, beneath earlier developments. This monitoring will include inspection of exposed sedimentary units during active excavations within sensitive geologic sediments. The monitor will have authority to temporarily divert activity away from exposed fossils to evaluate the significance of the find and, should the fossils be determined to be significant, professionally and efficiently recover the fossil specimens and collect associated data. Paleontological monitors will use field data forms to record pertinent location and geologic data, will measure stratigraphic sections (if applicable), and collect appropriate sediment samples from any fossil localities.
- Low to High (SVP)/Class 2 to Class 4–5 (BLM)—All projects involving ground disturbance in previously undisturbed areas mapped with low-to-high paleontological sensitivity will only require monitoring if construction activity will exceed the depth of the low sensitivity surficial sediments. The underlying sediments may have high paleontological sensitivity, and therefore work in those units might require paleontological monitoring, as designated by the Qualified Paleontologist in the PRMMP. When determining the depth at which the transition to high sensitivity occurs and monitoring becomes necessary, the Qualified Paleontologist should take into account: a) the most recent local geologic mapping, b) depths at which fossils have been found in the vicinity of the project area, as revealed by the museum records search, and c) geotechnical studies of the project area, if available.
- Low (SVP)/Class 2–3 (BLM)—All projects involving ground disturbance in previously undisturbed areas mapped as having low paleontological sensitivity should incorporate worker training to make construction workers aware that while paleontological sensitivity is low, fossils might still be encountered. The Qualified Paleontologist should oversee this training as well as remain on-call in the event fossils are found. Paleontological monitoring is usually not required for sediments with low (Low / Class 2–3) paleontological sensitivity.
- None (SVP)/Class 1 (BLM)—Projects determined by the Qualified Paleontologist to involve ground-disturbing activities in areas mapped as having no paleontological sensitivity (i.e., plutonic igneous or high-grade metamorphic rocks) will not require further paleontological mitigation measures.

CUL-6 In the event of any fossil discovery, regardless of depth or geologic formation, construction work will halt within a 50-ft. radius of the find until its significance can be determined by a Qualified Paleontologist. Significant fossils will be recovered, prepared to the point of curation, identified by qualified experts, listed in a database to facilitate

analysis, and deposited in a designated paleontological curation facility in accordance with the standards of the SVP (2010) and BLM (2009). A repository will be identified and a curatorial arrangement will be signed prior to collection of the fossils. Although the San Bernardino County Museum is specified as the repository for fossils found in the county in the current General Plan (San Bernardino County, 2007), the museum may not always be available as a repository. Therefore, any accredited institution may serve as a repository.

Finding

Finding 1: Changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the Countywide Plan as Mitigation Measures CUL-5 and -6, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect identified in the Draft PEIR. San Bernardino County hereby finds that implementation of the mitigation measures is feasible, and the measures are therefore adopted.

4. Noise

Impact 5.12-3: Buildout of the individual land uses and projects for implementation of the Countywide Plan may expose sensitive uses to strong levels of groundborne vibration. [Threshold N-2]

Construction Vibration Impacts

Construction activity would generate varying degrees of ground vibration, depending on the construction procedures and equipment. Operation of construction equipment generates vibrations that spread through the ground and diminish with distance from the source. The effect on buildings in the vicinity of the construction site varies depending on soil type, ground strata, and receptor-building construction. The results from vibration can range from no perceptible effects at the lowest vibration levels, to low rumbling sounds and perceptible vibrations at moderate levels, to slight structural damage at the highest levels. Vibration from construction activities rarely reaches levels that can damage structures, but can achieve the audible and perceptible ranges in buildings close to the construction site. Table 5.12-13 on page 5.12-40 of the Draft PEIR lists reference vibration levels for construction equipment.

As shown in Table 5.12-13, vibration generated by construction equipment has the potential to be substantial, since it has the potential to exceed the FTA criteria for human annoyance of 78 VdB and architectural damage of 0.2 in/sec. However, groundborne vibration is almost never annoying to people who are outdoors, so it is usually evaluated in terms of indoor receivers.

Construction details and equipment for future project-level developments under the Countywide Plan are not known at this time, but may cause vibration impacts. Therefore, this would be a potentially significant impact.

Operational Vibration Impacts

Commercial and industrial operations would generate varying degrees of ground vibration, depending on the operational procedures and equipment. The effect on buildings in the vicinity of the vibration source varies depending on soil type, ground strata, and receptor-building construction. In addition,

future sensitive receptors could be placed within close proximity to existing railroad lines through buildout of the Countywide Plan.

County Development Code Section 83.01.090 prohibits vibration that can be felt without the aid of instruments or produces a particle velocity greater than or equal to two-tenths of an inch per second (i.e., 0.20 in/sec PPV) at or beyond the lot line of the source. Because specific project-level information is not available at this time, it is not possible to quantify future vibration levels at vibration-sensitive receptors that may be in close proximity to existing and future vibration sources. Therefore, with the potential for sensitive uses to be exposed to annoying and/or interfering levels of vibration from commercial or industrial operations and existing railroad lines, operations-related vibration impacts associated with implementation of the Countywide Plan are considered potentially significant.

Mitigation Measure

The following mitigation measures were included in the Draft PEIR and the Final PEIR and are applicable to the Countywide Plan. The measures include any revisions incorporated in the Final PEIR.

- N-2 Individual projects that use vibration-intensive construction activities, such as pile drivers, jack hammers, and vibratory rollers, near sensitive receptors shall be evaluated for potential vibration impacts. If construction-related vibration is determined to exceed the maximum level of 0.2 in/sec PPV at residential structures per Development Code Section 83.01.090 additional requirements, such as use of less-vibration-intensive equipment or construction techniques, shall be implemented during construction (e.g., drilled piles to eliminate use of vibration-intensive pile driver).

- N-3 During the project-level CEQA process for individual discretionary development projects likely to generate noise or vibration exceeding limits established under the Countywide Plan or County Development Code at the site of a nearby sensitive receptor, a noise and vibration analysis shall be conducted to assess and mitigate potential noise and vibration impacts related to the operations of that development. This analysis shall be conducted by a qualified, experienced acoustical consultant or engineer and shall follow the latest CEQA guidelines, practices, and precedents.

- N-4 Require that new discretionary residential projects (or other sensitive uses) within 200 feet of existing railroad lines conduct a groundborne vibration and noise evaluation consistent with FTA-approved methodologies.

Finding

Finding 1: Changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the Countywide Plan as Mitigation Measures N-2, -3, and -4, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect identified in the Draft PEIR. San Bernardino County hereby finds that implementation of the mitigation measures is feasible, and the measures are therefore adopted.

D. SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS THAT CANNOT BE MITIGATED TO BELOW THE LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The following summary describes the unavoidable adverse impacts of the Countywide Plan, where mitigation measures were found to be infeasible or under the control of another agency. The following impacts would remain significant and unavoidable:

1. Air Quality

Impact 5.3-1: Growth associated with the Countywide Plan would not exceed the SCAG forecast for the unincorporated county; however, emissions generated by growth have the potential to affect the emissions forecasts in the SCAQMD and MDAQMD Air Quality Management Plans. [Threshold AQ-1]

Although the Countywide Plan would result in a substantial increase in long-term criteria pollutant emissions compared to existing conditions, it would support a more sustainable development pattern for the unincorporated areas. The goals and policies of the Countywide Plan would accommodate future growth in the unincorporated county while minimizing long-term emissions of criteria air pollutants by promoting infill mixed-use development, complete streets, and increased capacity for alternative transportation modes and active transit, which would help reduce mobile-source air pollutant emissions.

The County has identified several goals and policies in the Countywide Plan to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and other sources of criteria air pollutant emissions. The land use plan for the county minimizes VMT by promoting compact and transit-oriented development (Policies NR-1.1, TM-3.1, LU-1.2). The Policy Plan provides transportation strategies that reduce VMT and trips by providing trip reduction strategies, first/last mile connectivity, and new transportation options (Policies TM-3.2, TM-3.3, TM-1.10, TM-3.1, TM-4.2, TM-4.7, TM 4-8, TM-4.9). The Countywide Plan directs the County to actively work with transit agencies to provide transit access for residents in unincorporated areas (Policies TM-4.3, TM-4.4, TM-4.5, TM-4.6). The Policy Plan and policies in the adopted Renewable Energy and Conservation Element include several measures that reduce energy use in the built environment through energy conservation and greater access to and reliance on renewable energy systems (Policies NR-1.9, RE-1.2, RE-1.4, RE-2.1, RE-2.2, RE-2.3, RE-2.4, RE-2.6, RE-3.1 through RE-3.7, RE 6.1 through RE-6.7).

However, despite furthering the regional transportation and planning objectives, as stated, development allowed under the Countywide Plan would represent a substantial increase in emissions compared to existing conditions and would exceed SCAQMD and MDAQMD's regional operational significance thresholds. As a result, the Countywide Plan could slightly (0.5 percent) exceed the growth assumptions in the SCAG region and would not be considered consistent with the emissions forecast in the AQMPs. Therefore, impacts are considered significant.

Mitigation Measures

AQ-1 Prior to discretionary approval by the County for development projects subject to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review (i.e., nonexempt projects), project

applicants shall prepare a technical assessment evaluating potential air quality impacts related to the project operation phase and submit it to the County Land Use Services Department for review and approval. The evaluation shall be prepared in conformance with South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) methodology, for projects in the South Coast Air Basin (SoCAB), and conformance with the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD) for projects in the Mojave Desert Air Basin (MDAB). If operation-related air pollutants are determined to have the potential to exceed the SCAQMD/MDAQMD-adopted thresholds of significance, the County Land Use Services Department shall require that applicants for new development projects incorporate mitigation measures to reduce air pollutant emissions during operational activities. The identified measures shall be included as part of the conditions of approval. Possible mitigation measures to reduce long-term emissions can include, but are not limited to:

- For site-specific development that requires refrigerated vehicles, the construction documents shall demonstrate an adequate number of electrical service connections at loading docks for plug-in of the anticipated number of refrigerated trailers to reduce idling time and emissions.
- Applicants for manufacturing and light industrial uses shall consider energy storage and combined heat and power in appropriate applications to optimize renewable energy generation systems and avoid peak energy use.
- Site-specific developments with truck delivery and loading areas and truck parking spaces shall include signage as a reminder to limit idling of vehicles while parked for loading/unloading in accordance with Section 2485 of 13 CCR Chapter 10.
- Provide changing/shower facilities as specified, at minimum, or greater than in the guidelines in Section A5.106.4.3 of the CALGreen Code (Nonresidential Voluntary Measures).
- Provide bicycle parking facilities equivalent to or greater than as specified in Section A4.106.9 (Residential Voluntary Measures) of the CALGreen Code.
- Provide preferential parking spaces for low-emitting, fuel-efficient, and carpool/van vehicles equivalent to or greater than Section A5.106.5.1 of the CALGreen Code (Nonresidential Voluntary Measures).
- Provide facilities to support electric charging stations per Section A5.106.5.3 (Nonresidential Voluntary Measures) and Section A5.106.8.2 (Residential Voluntary Measures) of the CALGreen Code.
- Applicant-provided appliances shall be Energy Star-certified appliances or appliances of equivalent energy efficiency (e.g., dishwashers, refrigerators, clothes washers, and dryers). Installation of Energy Star-certified or equivalent appliances shall be verified by Building & Safety during plan check.

- Applicants for future development projects along existing and planned transit routes shall coordinate with the County of San Bernardino and the applicable transit agency to ensure that bus pad and shelter improvements are incorporated, as appropriate.

AQ-2

Prior to issuance of any construction permits for development projects subject to California Environmental Quality Act review (i.e., non-exempt projects), development project applicants shall prepare and submit to the County Land Use Services Department a technical assessment evaluating potential project construction-related air quality impacts. The evaluation shall be prepared in conformance with South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) methodology for projects within the South Coast Air Basin (SoCAB), and conformance with the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD) for projects in the Mojave Desert Air Basin (MDAB). If construction-related criteria air pollutants are determined to have the potential to exceed the adopted thresholds of significance of the applicable air district, the County Land Use Development Services Department shall require that applicants for new development projects incorporate mitigation measures to reduce air pollutant emissions during construction activities to below these thresholds. These identified measures shall be incorporated into appropriate construction documents (e.g., construction management plans) submitted to the County and shall be verified by the County's Public Works Department. Mitigation measures to reduce construction-related emissions could include, but are not limited to:

- Use of construction equipment rated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency as having Tier 3 (model year 2006 or newer) or Tier 4 (model year 2008 or newer) emission limits, applicable for engines between 50 and 750 horsepower. A list of construction equipment by type and model year shall be maintained by the construction contractor on-site and available for County review upon request.
- Ensure construction equipment is properly serviced and maintained to the manufacturer's standards.
- Use of alternative-fueled or catalyst-equipped diesel construction equipment, if available and feasible.
- Clearly posted signs that require operators of trucks and construction equipment to minimize idling time (e.g., five minute maximum).
- Preparation and implementation of a fugitive dust control plan that may include the following measures:
 - Disturbed areas (including storage piles) that are not being actively utilized for construction purposes shall be effectively stabilized using water or chemical stabilizer/suppressant, or covered with a tarp or other suitable cover (e.g., revegetated).
 - On-site unpaved roads and offsite unpaved access roads shall be effectively stabilized using water or chemical stabilizer/suppressant.

- Land clearing, grubbing, scraping, excavation, land leveling, grading, cut and fill, and demolition activities shall be effectively controlled utilizing application of water or by presoaking.
- Material shall be covered or effectively wetted to limit visible dust emissions, and at least six inches of freeboard space from the top of the container shall be maintained when materials are transported off-site.
- Operations shall limit or expeditiously remove the accumulation of mud or dirt from adjacent public streets at the end of each workday. (The use of dry rotary brushes is expressly prohibited except where preceded or accompanied by sufficient wetting to limit the visible dust emissions. Use of blower devices is expressly forbidden.)
- Following the addition of materials to or the removal of materials from the surface of outdoor storage piles, said piles shall be effectively stabilized to prevent fugitive dust emissions utilizing sufficient water or chemical stabilizer/suppressant.
- Within urban areas, trackout shall be immediately removed when it extends 50 or more feet from the site and at the end of each workday.
- Any site with 150 or more vehicle trips per day shall prevent carryout and trackout.
- Limit traffic speeds on unpaved roads to 15 mph.
- Install sandbags or other erosion control measures to prevent silt runoff to public roadways from sites with a slope greater than 1 percent.
- Install wheel washers for all exiting trucks or wash off all trucks and equipment leaving the project area.

Finding

Finding 3: Changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the Countywide Plan that lessen the significant environmental effect identified in the Draft PEIR. These changes take the form of Mitigation Measures AQ-1 and -2. The County hereby finds that implementation of the mitigation measures is feasible, and the measures are therefore adopted.

However, the County finds that there are no other mitigation measures that are feasible, taking into consideration specific economic, legal, social, technological or other factors, that would mitigate this impact to a less-than-significant level, and further, that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including considerations for the provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the alternatives identified in the PEIR, as discussed in Section IV of these Findings (Public Resources Code §§ 21081(a)(1) and (3); CEQA Guidelines §§ 15091(a)(1) and (3)). As described in the Statement of Overriding Considerations, the County has determined that this impact is acceptable because specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits, including regionwide or statewide environmental benefits, of the Countywide Plan outweigh its significant effects on the environment.

Impact 5.3-2: Buildout of the Countywide Plan would generate a net increase of 49,680 people and 12,546 jobs, resulting in an increase in criteria air pollutant emissions from transportation, energy, and area sources that would exceed the SCAQMD and MDAQMD significance thresholds and would contribute to the nonattainment designations of the SoCAB and MDAB. [Thresholds AQ-2 and AQ-3]

2040 Unincorporated San Bernardino County Community Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions Forecast

Although implementation of the Countywide Plan is not linked to a specific development time frame, by the horizon year of 2040, the Countywide Plan would result in a net increase of 49,680 people and 12,546 jobs in the unincorporated communities of San Bernardino County, resulting in a net increase of approximately 1.31 million vehicle miles per day. The majority of the growth would occur in the Valley and North Desert Regions. Approximately 50 percent of the population growth and 92 percent of the employment growth would occur in the Valley Region, and the North Desert Region would experience a 42 percent increase in population growth and 6 percent increase in employment growth. Very little growth is anticipated in the Mountain and East Desert Regions. Table 5.3-8, *Unincorporated San Bernardino County Communitywide Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions Forecast*, on page 5.3-35 of the Draft PEIR, provides an estimate of the criteria air pollutant emissions at the plan horizon year of 2040.

As shown in Table 5.3-8, development allowed under the Countywide Plan would generate long-term air pollutant emissions that exceed SCAQMD's and MDAQMD's regional significance thresholds. Emissions of VOC and NO_x that exceed the regional threshold would cumulatively contribute to the O₃ nonattainment designation of the SoCAB and MDAB. Emissions of NO_x that exceed regional significance thresholds would cumulatively contribute to the O₃ and particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) nonattainment designations of the SoCAB and MDAB. Emissions of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} would contribute to the PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} nonattainment designations.

Several goals and policies in the Countywide Plan would reduce emissions, to the extent feasible. Policy NR-1.3 directs the County to collaborate with air quality management districts and other local agencies to monitor and reduce at the emission source major pollutants affecting the county. The land use plan minimizes VMT and associated GHG emissions by promoting compact and transit-oriented development (Policies NR-1.1, TM-3.1, LU-1.2). The Policy Plan provides transportation strategies that reduce VMT and trips by providing trip reduction strategies, first/last mile connectivity, and new transportation options (Policies TM-3.2, TM-3.3, TM-1.10, TM-3.1, TM-4.2, TM-4.7, TM 4-8, TM-4.9). The Countywide Plan directs the County to actively work with transit agencies to provide transit access for residents in the unincorporated areas (Policies TM-4.3, TM-4.4, TM-4.5, TM-4.6). The Policy Plan includes several measures that reduce energy use in the built environment through energy conservation and greater access to and reliance on renewable energy systems (Policies NR-1.9, RE-1.2, RE-1.4, RE-2.1, RE-2.2, RE-2.3, RE-2.4, RE-2.6, RE-3.1 through RE-3.7, RE 6.1 through RE-6.7). The County also requires that construction activities reduce fugitive dust and utilize low-emissions equipment (Policies NR-1.6 and NR-1.8).

Though SCAQMD and MDAQMD rules and the goals and policies of the Countywide Plan may reduce operation-related regional air quality impacts of individual projects, due to the magnitude of

development allowed, the projected cumulative emissions associated with future development projects would exceed the thresholds. Therefore, implementation of the Countywide Plan would significantly contribute to the nonattainment designations of the SoCAB and MDAB, resulting in a significant impact.

Mitigation Measure

AQ-1 Prior to discretionary approval by the County for development projects subject to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review (i.e., nonexempt projects), project applicants shall prepare a technical assessment evaluating potential air quality impacts related to the project operation phase and submit it to the County Land Use Services Department for review and approval. The evaluation shall be prepared in conformance with South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) methodology, for projects in the South Coast Air Basin (SoCAB), and conformance with the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD) for projects in the Mojave Desert Air Basin (MDAB). If operation-related air pollutants are determined to have the potential to exceed the SCAQMD/MDAQMD-adopted thresholds of significance, the County Land Use Services Department shall require that applicants for new development projects incorporate mitigation measures to reduce air pollutant emissions during operational activities. The identified measures shall be included as part of the conditions of approval. Possible mitigation measures to reduce long-term emissions can include, but are not limited to:

- For site-specific development that requires refrigerated vehicles, the construction documents shall demonstrate an adequate number of electrical service connections at loading docks for plug-in of the anticipated number of refrigerated trailers to reduce idling time and emissions.
- Applicants for manufacturing and light industrial uses shall consider energy storage and combined heat and power in appropriate applications to optimize renewable energy generation systems and avoid peak energy use.
- Site-specific developments with truck delivery and loading areas and truck parking spaces shall include signage as a reminder to limit idling of vehicles while parked for loading/unloading in accordance with Section 2485 of 13 CCR Chapter 10.
- Provide changing/shower facilities as specified, at minimum, or greater than in the guidelines in Section A5.106.4.3 of the CALGreen Code (Nonresidential Voluntary Measures).
- Provide bicycle parking facilities equivalent to or greater than as specified in Section A4.106.9 (Residential Voluntary Measures) of the CALGreen Code.
- Provide preferential parking spaces for low-emitting, fuel-efficient, and carpool/van vehicles equivalent to or greater than Section A5.106.5.1 of the CALGreen Code (Nonresidential Voluntary Measures).

- Provide facilities to support electric charging stations per Section A5.106.5.3 (Nonresidential Voluntary Measures) and Section A5.106.8.2 (Residential Voluntary Measures) of the CALGreen Code.
- Applicant-provided appliances shall be Energy Star-certified appliances or appliances of equivalent energy efficiency (e.g., dishwashers, refrigerators, clothes washers, and dryers). Installation of Energy Star-certified or equivalent appliances shall be verified by Building & Safety during plan check.
- Applicants for future development projects along existing and planned transit routes shall coordinate with the County of San Bernardino and the applicable transit agency to ensure that bus pad and shelter improvements are incorporated, as appropriate.

Finding

Finding 3: Changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the Countywide Plan that lessen the significant environmental effect identified in the Draft PEIR. These changes take the form of Mitigation Measure AQ-1. The County hereby finds that implementation of the mitigation measure is feasible, and the measure is therefore adopted.

However, the County finds that there are no other mitigation measures that are feasible, taking into consideration specific economic, legal, social, technological or other factors, that would mitigate this impact to a less-than-significant level, and further, that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including considerations for the provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the alternatives identified in the PEIR, as discussed in Section IV of these Findings (Public Resources Code §§ 21081(a)(1) and (3); CEQA Guidelines §§ 15091(a)(1) and (3)). As described in the Statement of Overriding Considerations, the County has determined that this impact is acceptable because specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits, including regionwide or statewide environmental benefits, of the Countywide Plan outweigh its significant effects on the environment.

Impact 5.3-3: Short-term construction activities associated with the Countywide Plan would exceed the SCAQMD and MDAQMD significance thresholds and would contribute to the nonattainment designations of the SoCAB and MDAB. [Thresholds AQ-2 and AQ-3]

Construction activities associated with development allowed under the Countywide Plan would occur through 2040 and cause short-term emissions of criteria air pollutants. Construction activities would temporarily increase PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, VOC, NO_x, SO_x, and CO regional emissions within the SoCAB and MDAB. The primary source of NO_x, CO, and SO_x emissions is the operation of construction equipment. The primary sources of particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) emissions are activities that disturb the soil, such as grading and excavation, road construction, and building demolition and construction. The primary source of VOC emissions is the application of architectural coating and off-gas emissions associated with asphalt paving.

Construction activities associated with development allowed under the Countywide Plan are anticipated to occur sporadically over an approximately 20-year period or longer. Implementation

would consist of multiple smaller projects, each having its own construction timeline and activities. Development of multiple properties could occur at the same time. However, there is no defined development schedule for these future projects at this time. Information regarding specific development projects, soil types, and the locations of receptors would be needed in order to quantify the level of impact associated with construction activity. Some of the future individual projects accommodated under the Countywide Plan may not generate construction air pollutants emissions that exceed the SCAQMD or MDAQMD regional significance thresholds. However, due to the scale of development activity associated with the Countywide Plan, emissions would likely exceed the SCAQMD or MDAQMD regional significance thresholds and would cumulatively contribute to the nonattainment designations of the SoCAB or MDAB.

The San Bernardino County portion of SoCAB is currently designated nonattainment for O₃ and particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}). Portions of the MDAB are designated nonattainment for O₃, particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}), and hydrogen sulfide. Emissions of VOC and NO_x are precursors to the formation of O₃. In addition, NO_x is a precursor to the formation of particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}). Therefore, growth in the unincorporated county regions would cumulatively contribute to the existing nonattainment designations of the SoCAB and MDAB for O₃ and particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}). The Countywide Plan includes policies to reduce construction emissions, to the extent feasible. The County requires that construction activities reduce fugitive dust and utilize low-emissions equipment (Policies NR-1.6 and NR-1.8).

Although adherence to existing and proposed regulations may reduce short-term emissions, the likely scale and extent of construction activities associated with the Countywide Plan would likely continue to exceed the SCAQMD and the MDAQMD thresholds for some projects. Therefore, construction-related regional air quality impacts associated with implementation of the proposed project are deemed significant.

Mitigation Measure

AQ-2 Prior to issuance of any construction permits for development projects subject to California Environmental Quality Act review (i.e., non-exempt projects), development project applicants shall prepare and submit to the County Land Use Services Department a technical assessment evaluating potential project construction-related air quality impacts. The evaluation shall be prepared in conformance with South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) methodology for projects within the South Coast Air Basin (SoCAB), and conformance with the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD) for projects in the Mojave Desert Air Basin (MDAB). If construction-related criteria air pollutants are determined to have the potential to exceed the adopted thresholds of significance of the applicable air district, the County Land Use Development Services Department shall require that applicants for new development projects incorporate mitigation measures to reduce air pollutant emissions during construction activities to below these thresholds. These identified measures shall be incorporated into appropriate construction documents (e.g., construction management plans) submitted to the County and shall be verified by the County's Public Works

Department. Mitigation measures to reduce construction-related emissions could include, but are not limited to:

- Use of construction equipment rated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency as having Tier 3 (model year 2006 or newer) or Tier 4 (model year 2008 or newer) emission limits, applicable for engines between 50 and 750 horsepower. A list of construction equipment by type and model year shall be maintained by the construction contractor on-site and available for County review upon request.
- Ensure construction equipment is properly serviced and maintained to the manufacturer's standards.
- Use of alternative-fueled or catalyst-equipped diesel construction equipment, if available and feasible.
- Clearly posted signs that require operators of trucks and construction equipment to minimize idling time (e.g., five minute maximum).
- Preparation and implementation of a fugitive dust control plan that may include the following measures:
 - Disturbed areas (including storage piles) that are not being actively utilized for construction purposes shall be effectively stabilized using water or chemical stabilizer/suppressant, or covered with a tarp or other suitable cover (e.g., revegetated).
 - On-site unpaved roads and offsite unpaved access roads shall be effectively stabilized using water or chemical stabilizer/suppressant.
 - Land clearing, grubbing, scraping, excavation, land leveling, grading, cut and fill, and demolition activities shall be effectively controlled utilizing application of water or by presoaking.
 - Material shall be covered or effectively wetted to limit visible dust emissions, and at least six inches of freeboard space from the top of the container shall be maintained when materials are transported off-site.
 - Operations shall limit or expeditiously remove the accumulation of mud or dirt from adjacent public streets at the end of each workday. (The use of dry rotary brushes is expressly prohibited except where preceded or accompanied by sufficient wetting to limit the visible dust emissions. Use of blower devices is expressly forbidden.)
 - Following the addition of materials to or the removal of materials from the surface of outdoor storage piles, said piles shall be effectively stabilized to prevent fugitive dust emissions utilizing sufficient water or chemical stabilizer/suppressant.
 - Within urban areas, trackout shall be immediately removed when it extends 50 or more feet from the site and at the end of each workday.
 - Any site with 150 or more vehicle trips per day shall prevent carryout and trackout.

- Limit traffic speeds on unpaved roads to 15 mph.
- Install sandbags or other erosion control measures to prevent silt runoff to public roadways from sites with a slope greater than 1 percent.
- Install wheel washers for all exiting trucks or wash off all trucks and equipment leaving the project area.

Finding

Finding 3: Changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the Countywide Plan that lessen the significant environmental effect identified in the Draft PEIR. These changes take the form of Mitigation Measure AQ-2. The County hereby finds that implementation of the mitigation measure is feasible, and the measure is therefore adopted.

However, the County finds that there are no other mitigation measures that are feasible, taking into consideration specific economic, legal, social, technological or other factors, that would mitigate this impact to a less-than-significant level, and further, that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including considerations for the provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the alternatives identified in the PEIR, as discussed in Section IV of these Findings (Public Resources Code §§ 21081(a)(1) and (3); CEQA Guidelines §§ 15091(a)(1) and (3)). As described in the Statement of Overriding Considerations, the County has determined that this impact is acceptable because specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits, including regionwide or statewide environmental benefits, of the Countywide Plan outweigh its significant effects on the environment.

Impact 5.3-4: The proposed project could expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. [Threshold AQ-4]

Development and operation of new land uses consistent with the Countywide Plan could generate new sources of criteria air pollutants and toxic air contaminants (TAC) in the unincorporated County from area/stationary sources and mobile sources. The following describes potential localized operational air quality impacts from implementation of the Countywide Plan.

CO Hotspots

Areas of vehicle congestion have the potential to create pockets of CO called hotspots. These pockets have the potential to exceed the State 1-hour standard of 20 ppm or the 8-hour standard of 9.0 ppm. However, emissions from motor vehicles, the largest source of CO emissions, have been declining since 1985 despite increases in VMT due to the introduction of new automotive emission controls and fleet turnover. Under existing and future vehicle emission rates, a project would have to increase traffic volumes at a single intersection by more than 44,000 vehicles per hour—or 24,000 vehicles per hour where vertical and/or horizontal air does not mix—in order to generate a significant CO impact. Because this volume at a single intersection in a single hour is not possible, no CO hotspots have been reported in the SoCAB or MDAB even at the most congested intersections. Therefore, implementation of the Countywide Plan would not have the potential to substantially increase CO hotspots at

intersections in the vicinity of sensitive receptors in the unincorporated County, and impacts would be less than significant.

Health Risk: Toxic Air Contaminants

Various industrial and commercial processes (e.g., manufacturing, dry cleaning) allowed under the Countywide Plan would be expected to release TACs. TAC emissions generated by stationary and point sources of emissions within the SoCAB and MDAB are regulated and controlled by SCAQMD and MDAQMD, respectively. However, emissions of TACs from mobile sources when operating at a property (e.g., truck idling) are regulated by statewide rules and regulations and have the potential to generate substantial concentrations of air pollutants.

Permitted Stationary Sources

Land uses that would require a permit from SCAQMD or MDAQMD for emissions of TACs include chemical processing facilities, chrome-plating facilities, dry cleaners, and gasoline-dispensing facilities. Emissions of TACs from stationary sources would be controlled by SCAQMD or MDAQMD through permitting and would be subject to further study and health risk assessment prior to the issuance of any necessary air quality permits. Adherence to SCAQMD's and MDAQMD's New Source Review program would ensure that stationary source emissions (permitted sources) would be reduced or mitigated below SCAQMD and MDAQMD significance thresholds of ten in one million cancer risk and one for acute risk at the maximally exposed individual. Though these sources would incrementally contribute to the Countywide Plan's inventory individually, they would be mitigated to the standards identified in Table 5.3-7 on page 5.3-25 of the Draft PEIR. In addition to the permitting process, the County collaborates with SCAQMD and MDAQMD to monitor and reduce major pollutants affecting the county at the emission source (Policy NR-1.3).

Nonpermitted Sources

Mobile sources of TACs are not regulated by SCAQMD or MDAQMD. The primary driver of health risk in the SoCAB and MDAB is diesel particulate matter (DPM). Mobile sources of DPM in the unincorporated areas are truck travel, truck idling, and use of off-road equipment. New warehousing operations could generate substantial diesel particulate matter emissions from off-road equipment use and truck idling. In addition, some warehousing and industrial facilities may include use of transport refrigeration units (TRUs) for cold storage. New land uses in the unincorporated area that would be permitted under the Countywide Plan that use trucks, including trucks with TRUs, could generate an increase in DPM that would contribute to cancer and noncancer health risk in the SoCAB and MDAB. Additionally, these types of facilities could also generate particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) that may cause an exceedance or contribute to the continuing exceedance of the federal and state AAQS. These new land uses could be near existing sensitive receptors within and outside the unincorporated areas. In addition, trucks would travel on regional transportation routes through the SoCAB and MDAB, contributing to near-roadway DPM concentrations.

For this programmatic general plan-level assessment, it is not feasible to conduct dispersion modeling to determine the contribution of health risks associated with individual land use types since site-specific information on emissions and emissions quantities is not known. This is because a general plan does not directly result in development without additional approvals. Before any development can occur in

the county, it must be analyzed for consistency with the Countywide Plan, zoning requirements, and other applicable local and state requirements; comply with CEQA requirements; and obtain necessary clearances and permits. The Countywide Plan includes policies that require a cumulative health risk assessment (HRA) when a project potentially affects sensitive-receptors in the unincorporated environmental justice focus areas (Policy HZ-3.2). This includes evaluating the effect of truck travel on local arterials to the freeway. However, modeling conducted by SCAQMD identified that portions of the Valley Region in the SoCAB are exposed to elevated cancer risk. Individual projects may result in emissions under the 10 in a million cancer risk threshold. However, when clustered, warehouse/industrial projects could cumulatively exceed the 10 in a million threshold. Therefore, for this program-level analysis, health risk impacts from nonpermitted sources associated with development of industrial and commercial land uses are conservatively considered significant.

Localized Significant Thresholds

With a 2040 horizon-year, implementation of the Countywide Plan would occur over an extended period and would consist of smaller individual projects with their own construction time frames, construction equipment, and operational characteristics. Due to the broad, policy nature of the Countywide Plan, specific details of future land use development projects that would be accommodated are currently unknown. The Policy Plan would generally support a sustainable development pattern for accommodating future growth within the unincorporated areas, which would generally contribute to reducing long-term criteria air pollutant emissions. However, construction and operation of future individual development projects allowed under the Countywide Plan could potentially result in an exceedance of SCAQMD's or MDAQMD's localized thresholds. Therefore, impacts to air quality would be significant.

Mitigation Measure

AQ-3 Applicants for new discretionary industrial or warehousing projects or commercial land uses that would generate substantial diesel truck travel—i.e., 100 diesel trucks per day or 40 or more trucks with diesel-powered transport refrigeration units per day based on the California Air Resources Board recommendations for siting new sensitive land uses—shall contact the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) or Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD) in conjunction with County staff to determine the appropriate level of health risk assessment (HRA) required. If preparation of an HRA is required, all HRAs shall be submitted to the County Land Use Services Department and the SCAQMD or MDAQMD for evaluation.

The HRA shall be prepared in accordance with policies and procedures of the State Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment and SCAQMD, for projects within the South Coast Air Basin (SoCAB), or MDAQMD for projects within the Mojave Desert Air Basin (MDAB). The HRA shall consider cumulative impacts from industrial/warehouse projects within 1,000 feet of the boundary of the project site. If the HRA shows that the project-level or cumulative incremental cancer risk exceeds ten in one million (10E 06) or the risk thresholds in effect at the time a project is considered, or that the appropriate noncancer hazard index exceeds 1.0 or the thresholds as determined by SCAQMD or

MDAQMD at the time a project is considered, the applicant will be required to identify and demonstrate that measures are capable of reducing potential cancer and noncancer risks to an acceptable level, including appropriate enforcement mechanisms.

Measures to reduce risk impacts may include but are not limited to:

- Restricting idling onsite beyond Air Toxic Control Measures idling restrictions, as feasible.
- Electrifying warehousing docks.
- Requiring use of newer equipment and/or vehicles.
- Restricting offsite truck travel through the creation of truck routes.

Measures identified in the HRA shall be identified as mitigation measures in the environmental document and/or incorporated into the site development plan as a component of the proposed project.

Finding

Finding 3: Changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the Countywide Plan that lessen the significant environmental effect identified in the Draft PEIR. These changes take the form of Mitigation Measure AQ-3. The County hereby finds that implementation of the mitigation measure is feasible, and the measure is therefore adopted.

However, the County finds that there are no other mitigation measures that are feasible, taking into consideration specific economic, legal, social, technological or other factors, that would mitigate this impact to a less-than-significant level, and further, that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including considerations for the provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the alternatives identified in the PEIR, as discussed in Section IV of these Findings (Public Resources Code §§ 21081(a)(1) and (3); CEQA Guidelines §§ 15091(a)(1) and (3)). As described in the Statement of Overriding Considerations, the County has determined that this impact is acceptable because specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits, including regionwide or statewide environmental benefits, of the Countywide Plan outweigh its significant effects on the environment.

2. Biological Resources

Impact 5.4-1: Implementation of the Countywide Plan would impact several special-status species. [Threshold B-1]

The proposed Countywide Plan includes policies that would result in positive direct and indirect impacts to special-status species by requiring the protection and preservation of such resources. None of the Countywide Plan policies would result in adverse impacts to special-status species.

Development in accordance with the proposed Countywide Plan land use designations would allow for the conversion of undeveloped land to new urban uses, or the redevelopment of existing developed

areas. Development would introduce new uses in or adjacent to habitats that support a number of special-status species. Direct impacts to special-status species could result from the conversion of habitat either temporarily, as a result of grading, excavation, and construction activities, or permanently from the ongoing operation and/or maintenance of a project or plan. Indirect impacts could result from generation of fugitive dust, elevated noise levels, increased sediment loads in runoff from construction activities and the adverse effect of invasive plant species. Indirect impacts could also result from permanent alterations to hydrology upstream of habitats supporting special-status species, including increased runoff, sedimentation, or pollutant loads, and increased human activity.

Valley Region

Buildout of the Countywide Plan would result in development occurring within areas designated by the USFWS as Critical Habitat for listed species. Whether or not these areas of buildout would result in adverse modification to Critical Habitat would depend on presence/absence of species constituent elements within specific build out areas and would be analyzed on a project-specific level as identified in Countywide Plan policy NR-5.7 Development Review, Entitlement, and Mitigation. Some areas within designated USFWS Critical Habitat are within proposed conserved land uses such as Resource Land Management where they are not currently designated for preservation or within land uses with lower impacts than under existing conditions. Table 5.4-14, on page 5.4-53 of the Draft PEIR summarizes the acreage of Critical Habitat in the Valley Region that falls within development areas and within positive land use changes.

A total of 31 special-status plant species have been documented in the Valley Region, including three species that are federally and/or state listed as endangered or threatened, and 27 non-listed species. A total of 36 special-status animal species have been documented in the Valley Region, including 10 species that are federally endangered or threatened, six that are state endangered or threatened, one that is a state threatened candidate, two that are state fully protected, and 24 that are non-listed species. Suitable and/or occupied habitat for special-status species could be permanently impacted through build out of the Countywide Plan. The Countywide Plan would also result in positive impacts to some areas of suitable and/or occupied habitat for special-status species through preservation of areas not currently preserved. Table 5.4-15 on page 5.4-53 of the Draft PEIR summarizes the acreage of potential habitat for special-status species in the Valley Region that falls within development areas and within positive land use changes.

The proposed buildout of the Countywide Plan could also result in direct impacts to special-status species that have been documented in these areas. However, species documented within proposed development areas would not necessarily be impacted either due to no longer occurring in that locale or due to avoidance measures implemented by projects. Conversely, species that have not been documented in a locale may be present at the time of development and may be impacted.

Implementation of the proposed Countywide Plan may result in actions that could adversely affect special-status species. Compliance with regulatory requirements would reduce potential impacts to special-status species.

Mountain Region

Buildout of the Countywide Plan would result in development occurring within areas designated by the USFWS as Critical Habitat for listed species. Whether or not these areas of buildout would result in adverse modification to Critical Habitat would depend on presence/absence of species constituent elements within specific build out areas and would be analyzed on a project-specific level as identified in Countywide Plan policy NR-5.7 Development Review, Entitlement, and Mitigation. Some areas within designated USFWS Critical Habitat are within proposed conserved land uses such as Resource Land Management where they are not currently designated for preservation or within land uses with lower impacts than under existing conditions. Table 5.4-16 on page 5.4-55 of the Draft PEIR summarizes the acreage of Critical Habitat in the Mountain Region that falls within development areas and within positive land use changes.

A total of 91 special-status plant species have been documented in the Mountain Region, including 14 species that are federally listed as endangered or threatened, five that are listed as state endangered or rare, and 73 non-listed special-status species. A total of 44 special-status animal species have been documented in the Mountain Region, including seven species that are federally endangered or threatened, eight that are state endangered or threatened, one that is a state threatened candidate, six that are state fully protected, and 28 that are non-listed special-status species. Suitable and/or occupied habitat for special-status species could be permanently impacted through build out of the Countywide Plan. The Countywide Plan would also result in positive impacts to some areas of suitable and/or occupied habitat for special-status species through preservation of areas not currently preserved. Table 5.4-17 on page 5.4-56 of the Draft PEIR summarizes the acreage of potential habitat for special-status species in the Mountain Region that falls within development areas and within positive land use changes.

The proposed buildout of the Countywide Plan could also result in direct impacts to special-status species that have been documented in these areas. However, species documented within proposed development areas would not necessarily be impacted either due to no longer occurring in that locale or due to avoidance measures implemented by projects. Conversely, species that have not been documented in a locale may be present at the time of development and may be impacted.

Implementation of the proposed Countywide Plan may result in actions that could adversely affect special-status species. As discussed under the Valley Region, implementation of the proposed Countywide Plan policies as well as compliance with regulatory requirements would avoid, minimize and/or mitigate impacts to special-status species by requiring the protection and preservation of such resources. Absent implementation of Countywide Plan policies, potential impacts to special-status species from implementation of the proposed Countywide Plan would be significant.

Desert Region

Buildout of the Countywide Plan would result in development occurring within areas designated by the USFWS as Critical Habitat for listed species. Whether or not these areas of buildout would result in adverse modification to Critical Habitat would depend on presence/absence of species constituent elements within specific build out areas and would be analyzed on a project-specific level as identified in Countywide Plan policy NR-5.7 Development Review, Entitlement, and Mitigation. Some areas within designated USFWS Critical Habitat are within proposed conserved land uses such as Resource

Land Management where they are not currently designated for preservation or within land uses with lower impacts than under existing conditions. Table 5.4-18 on page 5.4-58 of the Draft PEIR summarizes the acreage of Critical Habitat in the Desert Region that falls within development areas and within positive land use changes.

A total of 176 special-status plant species have been documented in the Desert Region, including six species that are federally listed as endangered or threatened, two that are listed as state endangered, and 168 non-listed species. A total of 58 special-status animal species have been documented in the Desert Region, including 11 species that are federally endangered or threatened, 17 that are state endangered or threatened, one state threatened candidate, eight that are state fully protected, and 35 that are non-listed special-status species. Suitable and/or occupied habitat for special-status species could be permanently impacted through build out of the Countywide Plan. The Countywide Plan would also result in positive impacts to some areas of suitable and/or occupied habitat for special-status species through preservation of areas not currently preserved. Table 5.4-19 on page 5.4-59 of the Draft PEIR summarizes the acreage of potential habitat for special-status species in the Desert Region that falls within development areas and within positive land use changes.

The proposed buildout of the Countywide Plan could potentially result in direct impacts to special-status species that have been documented in these areas. However, species documented within proposed development areas would not necessarily be impacted either due to no longer occurring in that locale or due to avoidance measures implemented by projects. Conversely, species that have not been documented in a locale may be present at the time of development and may be impacted.

Implementation of the proposed Countywide Plan may result in actions that could adversely affect special-status species. As discussed under the Valley Region, implementation of the proposed Countywide Plan policies as well as compliance with regulatory requirements would avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate impacts to special-status species by requiring the protection and preservation of such resources. Absent implementation of Countywide Plan policies, potential impacts to special-status species from implementation of the proposed Countywide Plan would be significant.

Mitigation Measures

BIO-1 For each development project that would disturb special status vegetation on vacant land, or that might impact a wildlife movement corridor or jurisdictional waters pursuant to the Countywide Plan and subject to CEQA, a qualified biologist shall determine the potential for a significant biological resource impact and determine whether a field survey of the project site is warranted. If warranted, a qualified biologist shall prepare a biological resources technical report meeting current requirements of CEQA, and addressing applicable County goals and policies, applicable Habitat Conservation Plans and Natural Community Conservation Plans, and applicable federal, state, and local regulatory requirements. The report shall include documentation of biological resources present or potentially present (including special-status species, special-status vegetation communities, jurisdictional waters, and wildlife movement corridors), an impacts analysis, avoidance measures, and mitigation measures to reduce significant impacts to less than significant if applicable and feasible.

Finding

Finding 3: Changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the Countywide Plan that lessen the significant environmental effect identified in the Draft PEIR. These changes take the form of Mitigation Measures BIO-1. The County hereby finds that implementation of the mitigation measure is feasible, and the measure is therefore adopted.

However, the County finds that there are no other mitigation measures that are feasible, taking into consideration specific economic, legal, social, technological or other factors, that would mitigate this impact to a less-than-significant level, and further, that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including considerations for the provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the alternatives identified in the PEIR, as discussed in Section IV of these Findings (Public Resources Code §§ 21081(a)(1) and (3); CEQA Guidelines §§ 15091(a)(1) and (3)). As described in the Statement of Overriding Considerations, the County has determined that this impact is acceptable because specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits, including regionwide or statewide environmental benefits, of the Countywide Plan outweigh its significant effects on the environment.

Impact 5.4-2: Implementation of the Countywide Plan would result in the loss of several special-status vegetation communities. [Threshold B-2]

A substantial adverse effect on riparian habitat or other special-status natural communities would occur if the Countywide Plan would result in a net loss of riparian habitat or other special-status natural community. The proposed Countywide Plan includes policies that would result in positive impacts to special-status vegetation communities by requiring the protection and preservation of such resources; none of the Countywide Plan policies would result in adverse impacts to special-status vegetation communities.

Development in accordance with the proposed Countywide Plan would allow for the conversion of undeveloped land to new urban uses that could result in direct and indirect impacts to special-status vegetation communities. Direct impacts to special-status vegetation communities could result from the conversion of habitat either temporarily, as a result of grading, excavation, and construction activities, or permanently from the ongoing operation and/or maintenance of a project or plan. Indirect impacts could result from generation of fugitive dust, increased sediment loads in runoff from construction activities or the adverse effect of invasive plant species. Indirect impacts could also result from permanent alterations to hydrology upstream of habitats, including increased runoff, sedimentation, or pollutant loads, and increased human activity, which could result in trampling and disturbance. Should new development occur within undeveloped areas of the County due to land use designation changes, acreages of special-status natural communities could be permanently reduced, resulting in a potentially significant impact to special-status natural communities.

Valley Region

Special-status vegetation communities are present within the Valley Region. Some areas mapped with special-status vegetation communities are within proposed development areas of the Countywide Plan and some areas are within proposed preserved land uses where they are not currently proposed for

conservation. Table 5.4-20, on page 5.4-62 of the Draft PEIR, summarizes acreage of special-status vegetation communities within developed and conserved land uses under the Countywide Plan.

Implementation of the proposed Countywide Plan may result in actions that could adversely affect special-status species. However, implementation of the proposed Countywide Plan policies and compliance with regulatory requirements would avoid, minimize and/or mitigate impacts to special-status vegetation communities by requiring the protection and preservation of such resources. Absent implementation of the Countywide Plan policies, potential impacts to special-status vegetation communities from implementation of the proposed Countywide Plan would be significant.

Mountain Region

Special-status vegetation communities are present within the Mountain Region. Some areas mapped with special-status vegetation communities are within proposed development areas of the Countywide Plan and some areas are within proposed preserved land uses where they are not currently proposed for conservation. Table 5.4-21, on page 5.4-63 of the Draft PEIR, summarizes acreage of special-status vegetation communities within developed and conserved land uses under the Countywide Plan.

Implementation of the proposed Countywide Plan may result in actions that could adversely affect special-status vegetation communities. As discussed under the Valley Region, implementation of the proposed Countywide Plan policies and compliance with regulatory requirements would avoid, minimize and/or mitigate impacts to special-status vegetation communities by requiring the protection and preservation of such resources. Absent implementation of Countywide Plan policies, potential impacts to special-status vegetation communities from implementation of the proposed Countywide Plan would be significant.

Desert Region

Special-status vegetation communities are present within the Desert Region. Some areas mapped with special-status vegetation communities are within proposed development areas of the Countywide Plan and some areas are within proposed preserved land uses where they are not currently proposed for conservation. Table 5.4-22 on page 5.4-65 of the Draft PEIR, summarizes acreage of special-status vegetation communities within developed and conserved land uses under the Countywide Plan.

Implementation of the proposed Countywide Plan may result in actions that could adversely affect special-status vegetation communities. As discussed under the Valley Region, implementation of the proposed Countywide Plan policies and compliance with regulatory requirements would avoid, minimize and/or mitigate impacts to special-status vegetation communities by requiring the protection and preservation of such resources. Absent implementation of Countywide Plan policies, potential impacts to special-status vegetation communities would be significant.

Mitigation Measures

BIO-1 For each development project that would disturb special status vegetation on vacant land, or that might impact a wildlife movement corridor or jurisdictional waters pursuant to the Countywide Plan and subject to CEQA, a qualified biologist shall determine the potential for a significant biological resource impact and determine whether a field survey of the

project site is warranted. If warranted, a qualified biologist shall prepare a biological resources technical report meeting current requirements of CEQA, and addressing applicable County goals and policies, applicable Habitat Conservation Plans and Natural Community Conservation Plans, and applicable federal, state, and local regulatory requirements. The report shall include documentation of biological resources present or potentially present (including special-status species, special-status vegetation communities, jurisdictional waters, and wildlife movement corridors), an impacts analysis, avoidance measures, and mitigation measures to reduce significant impacts to less than significant if applicable and feasible.

Finding

Finding 3: Changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the Countywide Plan that lessen the significant environmental effect identified in the Draft PEIR. These changes take the form of Mitigation Measure BIO-1. The County hereby finds that implementation of the mitigation measure is feasible, and the measure is therefore adopted.

However, the County finds that there are no other mitigation measures that are feasible, taking into consideration specific economic, legal, social, technological or other factors, that would mitigate this impact to a less-than-significant level, and further, that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including considerations for the provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the alternatives identified in the PEIR, as discussed in Section IV of these Findings (Public Resources Code §§ 21081(a)(1) and (3); CEQA Guidelines §§ 15091(a)(1) and (3)). As described in the Statement of Overriding Considerations, the County has determined that this impact is acceptable because specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits, including regionwide or statewide environmental benefits, of the Countywide Plan outweigh its significant effects on the environment.

3. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Impact 5.7-1: The County of San Bernardino would experience a decrease in GHG emissions from existing conditions but would not achieve the GHG reduction targets established under SB 32 or Executive Order B-03-05. [GHG-1]

Unincorporated areas in the County would experience a reduction in GHG emissions from existing conditions despite the anticipated population and employment growth. Consequently, implementation of the General Plan would not result in a substantial increase in magnitude in GHG emissions. However, GHG emissions impacts are also based on consistency with the GHG reduction objectives under SB 32 and Executive Order S-03-05. As identified in the Tables 5.7-8 and 5.7-9 on pages 5.7-32 and 5.7-33, the unincorporated County would not achieve the state's GHG emissions efficiency target for year 2040 or 2050 without implementation of additional local GHG reduction measures. Goals and policies in the Countywide Plan and actions in the County's GHG Reduction Plan would further minimize GHG emissions generated by the residential and nonresidential land uses in the unincorporated county. However, the County cannot achieve the long-term efficiency targets without additional federal and state reductions. The state's climate stabilization goals are contingent on

decarbonization of the state's transportation and energy sectors. Consequently, the overall GHG impact is conservatively considered significant.

Mitigation Measures

GHG-1 Within 18 months of adoption of the Countywide Plan, the County of San Bernardino shall update the County of San Bernardino GHG Reduction Plan. The plan shall provide:

- GHG inventories of existing, 2030, and 2050 GHG levels
- Targets for 2030 and 2050 from land uses under the County's jurisdiction based on the goals of SB 32 and Executive Order S-03-05
- Tools and strategies for reducing GHG emissions in accordance with the 2030 goal

In addition, to implement the GHG Reduction Strategy, the County shall develop key programs, and policies required to promote voluntary, incentive-based measures in the plan, establish the planning framework for the performance based development review process, and support and implement the local mandatory GHG reduction measures. These implementation tasks include:

- Update the community GHG inventory to monitor emissions trends every five years.
- In 2030, develop a plan for post-2030 actions.

GHG-2 Prior to adoption of the Unincorporated County of San Bernardino's GHG Reduction Plan update, the County of San Bernardino shall designate an Implementation Coordinator to oversee the successful implementation of all selected GHG reduction strategies. The primary function of the Implementation Coordinator will be to create a streamlined approach to manage implementation of the GHG Reduction Plan.

GHG-3 Prior to adoption of the Unincorporated County of San Bernardino's GHG Reduction Plan update, for projects with a post-2020 buildout date that have potentially significant impacts, the County of San Bernardino shall consider the following measures identified in the 2017 Scoping Plan:

Construction

- Enforce idling time restrictions for construction vehicles.
- Require construction vehicles to operate with the highest tier engines commercially available.
- Divert and recycle construction and demolition waste, and use locally-sourced building materials with a high recycled material content to the greatest extent feasible.
- Minimize tree removal, and mitigate indirect GHG emissions increases that occur due to vegetation removal, loss of sequestration, and soil disturbance.
- Utilize existing grid power for electric energy rather than operating temporary gasoline/diesel powered generators.

- Increase use of electric and renewable fuel powered construction equipment and require renewable diesel fuel where commercially available.
- Require diesel equipment fleets to be lower emitting than any current emission standard.

Operation

- Comply with County's standards for mitigating transportation impacts under SB 743.
- Require on-site EV charging capabilities for parking spaces serving the project to meet jurisdiction-wide EV proliferation goals.
- Allow for new construction to install fewer on-site parking spaces than required by the County Development Code as an incentive to provide pedestrian, transit and bicycle amenities, if appropriate.
- Dedicate on-site parking for shared vehicles.
- Provide adequate, safe, convenient, and secure on-site bicycle parking and storage in multi-family residential projects and in non-residential projects.
- Provide on- and off-site safety improvements for bike, pedestrian, and transit connections, and/or implement relevant improvements identified in an applicable bicycle and/or pedestrian master plan.
- Require on-site renewable energy generation.
- Prohibit wood-burning fireplaces in new development, and require replacement of wood-burning fireplaces or clean-burning inserts for renovations over a certain size.
- Require cool roofs and "cool parking" that promotes cool surface treatment for new parking facilities as well as existing surface lots undergoing resurfacing.
- Require solar-ready roofs.
- Require organic collection in new developments.
- Require low-water landscaping in new developments (see CALGreen Divisions 4.3 and 5.3 and the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance [MWELO], which is referenced in CALGreen). Require water efficient landscape maintenance to conserve water and reduce landscape waste.
- Encourage Zero Net Energy performance building standards prior to dates required by the Energy Code.
- Encourage new construction, including municipal building construction, to achieve third-party green building certifications, such as the GreenPoint Rated program, LEED rating system, or Living Building Challenge.
- Encourage additional bike lanes to connect to the regional bicycle network.
- Expand urban forestry and green infrastructure in new land development.

- Require preferential parking spaces to incentivize carpooling, vanpooling, commuter bus, electric vehicles, and rail service use.
- Require a transportation management plan for specific plans which establishes a numeric target for non-SOV travel and overall VMT.
- Develop a rideshare program targeting commuters to major employment centers.
- Require the design of bus stops/shelters/express lanes in new developments to promote the usage of mass transit, where available.
- Require gas outlets in residential backyards for use with outdoor cooking appliances such as gas barbeques if natural gas service is available.
- Require the installation of electrical outlets on the exterior walls of both the front and back of residences to promote the use of electric landscape maintenance equipment.
- Require the design of the electric outlets and/or wiring in new residential unit garages to promote electric vehicle usage.
- Require parking lot designs to accommodate electric vehicle charging stations (conductive/inductive) and signage for non-residential developments.
- Provide electric outlets to promote the use of electric landscape maintenance equipment to the extent feasible on parks and public/quasi-public lands.
- Require each residential unit to be “solar ready,” including installing the appropriate hardware and proper structural engineering.
- Require the installation of energy conserving appliances such as on-demand tank-less water heaters and whole-house fans.
- Require each residential and commercial building equip buildings with energy efficient AC units and heating systems with programmable thermostats/timers.
- Require large-scale residential developments and commercial buildings to report energy use, and set specific targets for per-capita energy use.
- Require each residential and commercial building to utilize low flow water fixtures such as low flow toilets and faucets (see CALGreen Divisions 4.3 and 5.3 as well as Appendices A4.3 and A5.3).
- Require the use of energy-efficient lighting for all street, parking, and area lighting.
- Require the landscaping design for parking lots to utilize tree cover and compost/mulch.
- Incorporate water retention in the design of parking lots and landscaping, including using compost/mulch.
- Require the development project to propose an off-site mitigation project which should generate carbon credits equivalent to the anticipated GHG emission

reductions. This would be implemented via an approved protocol for carbon credits from California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA), the California Air Resources Board, or other similar entities determined acceptable by the local air district.

- Require the project to purchase carbon credits from the CAPCOA GHG Reduction Exchange Program, American Carbon Registry (ACR), Climate Action Reserve (CAR) or other similar carbon credit registry determined to be acceptable by the local air district.
- Encourage the applicant to consider generating or purchasing local and California-only carbon credits as the preferred mechanism to implement its off-site mitigation measure for GHG emissions and that will facilitate the state's efforts in achieving the GHG emission reduction goal.

Finding

Finding 3: Changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the Countywide Plan that lessen the significant environmental effect identified in the Draft PEIR. These changes take the form of Mitigation Measures GHG-1, -2, and -3. The County hereby finds that implementation of the mitigation measures is feasible, and the measures are therefore adopted.

However, the County finds that there are no other mitigation measures that are feasible, taking into consideration specific economic, legal, social, technological or other factors, that would mitigate this impact to a less-than-significant level, and further, that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including considerations for the provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the alternatives identified in the PEIR, as discussed in Section IV of these Findings (Public Resources Code §§ 21081(a)(1) and (3); CEQA Guidelines §§ 15091(a)(1) and (3)). As described in the Statement of Overriding Considerations, the County has determined that this impact is acceptable because specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits, including regionwide or statewide environmental benefits, of the Countywide Plan outweigh its significant effects on the environment.

4. Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Impact 5.8-6: Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, unincorporated growth in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones could expose occupants to or exacerbate risks from pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or from the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire. [Threshold H-8]

Figures 5.8-4, 5.8-5, and 5.8-6 on pages 5.8-37, 5.8-39, 5.8-41 of the Draft PEIR show areas of planned unincorporated growth with respect to fire severity zones. Figure 5.8-3 on page 5.8-35 of the Draft PEIR shows state responsibility areas.

In addition to the regulations and policies described under Impact 5.8-5, additional measures are in place to sidestep the impacts of pollutant concentrations from wildfire ash. Recognition of the growing

threat that wildfire smoke poses to public health and safety has resulted in a response led by the US Forest Service and enhanced through partnership with many other agencies, such as the National Park Service. The Wildland Fire Air Quality Response Program (WFAQRP) was created to directly assess, communicate, and address risks posed by wildfire smoke to the public as well as fire personnel. The program depends on four primary components: specially trained personnel called Air Resource Advisors (ARAs), air quality monitoring, smoke concentration and dispersion modeling, and coordination and cooperation with agency partners.

ARAs are technical specialists that are trained to work on smoke issues from wildland fire. They are deployed nationwide during large smoke events. Air Resource Advisors are dispatched to an incident to assist with understanding and predicting smoke impacts on the public and fire personnel. They analyze, summarize, and communicate these impacts to incident teams, air quality regulators, and the public.

Furthermore, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) issues air quality alerts, advisories, and forecasts by email through AirAlerts.org. SCAQMD also maintains an interactive online map to view current air quality conditions in the region.

The primary purpose of the Countywide Plan's wildfire hazard policies, prevailing regulatory requirements, and air quality response programs, is to minimize the exposure of people to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death due to natural hazards. However, due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors it is not possible to eliminate the impact from pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or from the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire to less than significant.

Mitigation Measure

Feasible mitigation for wildfire pollutant exposure has not been identified.

Finding

Finding 3: The County finds that there are no mitigation measures that are feasible, taking into consideration specific economic, legal, social, technological or other factors, that would mitigate this impact to a less-than-significant level, and further, that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including considerations for the provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the alternatives identified in the PEIR, as discussed in Section IV of these Findings (Public Resources Code §§ 21081(a)(1), (3); Guidelines §§ 15091(a)(1), (3)). As described in the Statement of Overriding Considerations, the County has determined that this impact is acceptable because specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits, including regionwide or statewide environmental benefits, of the proposed project outweigh its significant effects on the environment.

Impact 5.8-8: Unincorporated growth may expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of post fire slope instability. [Threshold H-8]

Catastrophic wildfire can create favorable conditions for other hazards, such as flooding and landslides during the rainy season. In addition to fire hazard regulations and policies described under Impact 5.8-5, mitigation measures are in place to sidestep the risk from flooding and landslides.

The Forest Service’s Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) program is designed to determine the need for and to prescribe and implement emergency treatments on federal lands to minimize threats to life or property resulting from the effects of a fire or to stabilize and prevent unacceptable degradation to natural resources. A BAER assessment usually begins before the wildfire has been fully contained. Severely burned areas, very steep slopes, places where water runoff will be excessive, fragile slopes above homes or businesses, municipal water supplies, and other valuable facilities are focus areas. The treatments are installed as soon as possible, generally before the next damaging storm. There are a variety of emergency stabilization techniques that the BAER team might recommend. Primary techniques are reseeding ground cover; mulching; constructing straw, rock, or log dams in small tributaries; and placing logs to catch sediment on slopes. The team also assesses the need to modify road and trail drainage mechanisms such as debris traps, culverts, drainage dips, and emergency spillways.

BAER assessment plans and implementation are often a cooperative effort between federal agencies and state, tribal, and local forestry and emergency management departments. They are closely coordinated with private landowners. The National Resource Conservation Service’s EWP program, or Emergency Watershed Protection program, provides similar services on private lands. These two programs are often run cooperatively on a large fire, with both agencies working together. EWP work is not limited exclusively to any one set of prescribed measures. A case-by-case investigation of the needed work is made by NRCS.

Landslides are another hazard that are exacerbated by wildfire. They are influenced by the nature of the rock or soil type, slope angle, groundwater levels, and rainfall. Landslide susceptibility is shown on Figure 5.6-3 Chapter 5.6, *Geology and Soils*, of the Draft PEIR. New subdivisions and developments must either be built outside of debris flow hazard areas or debris flow hazards must be mitigated for new developments such that occupants would have adequate time to evacuate out of the debris flow hazard area during times of relatively high debris flow hazard—that is, during and shortly after intense rainstorms—under Countywide Plan Hazard Element policies HZ-1.1 and HZ-1.2. Furthermore, each project would be required to conduct a geotechnical investigation of its site that would assess existing landslide susceptibility and impacts of proposed grading and construction on landslide hazard and provide any needed recommendations to minimize landslide hazards. Furthermore, all projects will implement the Wildfire SRA Fire Safe Regulations’ basic wildland fire protection standards and the FHA program shall enforce the fire hazard requirements outlined in San Bernardino County Code Sections 23.0301 to 23.0319.

The primary purpose of the Countywide Plan’s wildfire hazard policies, prevailing regulatory requirements, and the BAER program, is to minimize risks from downslope or downstream flooding

or landslides as a result of post fire slope instability. However, it is not possible to reduce this impact to less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

Feasible mitigation for postfire slope stability has not been identified.

Finding

Finding 3: The County finds that there are no mitigation measures that are feasible, taking into consideration specific economic, legal, social, technological or other factors, that would mitigate this impact to a less-than-significant level, and further, that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including considerations for the provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the alternatives identified in the PEIR, as discussed in Section IV of these Findings (Public Resources Code §§ 21081(a)(1), (3); Guidelines §§ 15091(a)(1), (3)). As described in the Statement of Overriding Considerations, the County has determined that this impact is acceptable because specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits, including regionwide or statewide environmental benefits, of the proposed project outweigh its significant effects on the environment.

5. Mineral Resources

Impact 5.11-1: Project implementation would result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource. [Thresholds M-1 and M-2]

Mineral Resource Zones and Regionally Significant Resource Areas

Valley Region

Most development in the Valley Region under the Countywide Plan would occur in the Bloomington CPA, the City of Fontana SOI (west), and the East Valley Area Plan area. The three entire growth areas are mapped a combination of MRZ-2 and MRZ-3, as shown in Table 5.11-2 on page 5.11-19 of the Draft PEIR. Approximately 64 acres, or 1.2 percent, of the Fontana SOI are also mapped in three Mineral Resource Sectors by the State Geologist and recognized by the State Mining and Geology Board. Note that the total acreages of each of the three areas in Table 5.11-2 reflect total areas, and thus differ from acreages presented elsewhere in this Draft PEIR, which are based on parcelized data, and thus omit nonparcelized areas such as roadways and some flood control areas.

Future developments under the Countywide Plan would be required to identify known and likely significant mineral resources in their project sites. Projects would comply with Countywide Plan policies by designating MRZ-2 and MRZ-3 areas for land uses compatible with future mining, such as open space, to the greatest extent feasible.

Desert Region

Most development in the Desert Region under the Countywide Plan would be in two areas of the Town of Apple Valley SOI: the potential annexation area (PAA) and the Hacienda Fairview Valley Specific Plan (HFVSP) area. Approximately 910 acres in the western and central parts of the HFVSP

area—or about 58 percent—are mapped MRZ-3a, that is, areas containing known minerals of unknown resource significance (see Figure 5.11-6, on page 5.11-21 of the Draft PEIR). The MRZ-3a area is designated for gold and silver deposits. The remainder of the HFVSP area is mapped MRZ-4, that is, areas of no known mineral occurrences where geologic information does not rule out either the presence or the absence of significant mineral resources. About 183 acres along the northwest margin of the PAA are mapped MRZ-3a. No mines are mapped in that part of the PAA. Of the four nearest historical mines to that area—about 1 to 1.5 miles to the northwest—three were clay and one was stone. No mines, either active or closed, are mapped in or near either the HFVSP area or the PAA on the Mines Online map.

Future developments in the HFVSP area under the Countywide Plan would be required to identify known and likely significant mineral resources in their project sites. Projects would comply with Countywide Plan policies by designating MRZ-2 and MRZ-3 areas for land uses compatible with future mining, such as open space, to the greatest extent feasible.

Impacts on Oil and Gas Fields

The two oil fields in San Bernardino County are in the City of Chino Hills in the southwest corner of the Valley Region. Countywide Plan implementation would not impact the oil fields.

Implementation of the proposed Countywide Plan may result in actions that could adversely affect mineral resources. As discussed above, implementation of the proposed Countywide Plan policies would avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate impacts to mineral resources by requiring the protection and preservation of such resources. Absent implementation of the proposed Countywide Plan policies, potential impacts to mineral resources from implementation of the proposed Countywide Plan would be significant.

Mitigation Measures

- MIN-1: Prior to project approval for proposed development of properties classified as either MRZ-2a, 2b or MRZ-3a containing a specialty commodity, a mineral resource evaluation shall be conducted to determine the significance and economic viability of mining the resource. If development of a property would preclude future extraction of a significant mineral resource, in accordance with CEQA, the County shall make the appropriate findings and adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations prior to permitting development of the property.

- MIN-2: Prior to approval of any project on lands classified as either MRZ-2a, 2b or MRZ-3a containing a specialty commodity, a report shall be prepared that analyzes the project's value in relation to the mineral values found onsite. The analysis shall consider the importance of construction aggregate mineral resource onsite to the market region as a whole, and not just the importance of the resources found within the San Bernardino County area. The report shall be submitted to the County, such that the County has adequate information to develop a statement of reasons for permitting the proposed land use to the California Department of Conservation, State Mining and Geology Board, for

subsequent review, in accordance with SMARA [Surface Mining and Reclamation Act], Article 2, Section 2762 and 2763 for areas designated of regional significance.

Finding

Finding 3: Changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the Countywide Plan that lessen the significant environmental effect identified in the Draft PEIR. These changes take the form of Mitigation Measures MIN-1 and -2. The County hereby finds that implementation of the mitigation measures is feasible, and the measures are therefore adopted.

However, the County finds that there are no other mitigation measures that are feasible, taking into consideration specific economic, legal, social, technological or other factors, that would mitigate this impact to a less-than-significant level, and further, that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including considerations for the provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the alternatives identified in the PEIR, as discussed in Section IV of these Findings (Public Resources Code §§ 21081(a)(1) and (3); CEQA Guidelines §§ 15091(a)(1) and (3)). As described in the Statement of Overriding Considerations, the County has determined that this impact is acceptable because specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits, including regionwide or statewide environmental benefits, of the Countywide Plan outweigh its significant effects on the environment.

6. Noise

Impact 5.12-1: Construction activities would result in temporary noise increases. [Threshold N-3]

The Countywide Plan would implement the Project objectives described in Chapter 3 of the PEIR and result in buildout of the County with a horizon year of 2040. As part of that implementation, various individual land use development and other projects would be constructed. Two types of temporary noise impacts could occur during construction. First, the transport of workers and movement of materials to and from the site could incrementally increase noise levels along local access roads. The second type of temporary noise impact is related to demolition, site preparation, grading, and/or physical construction. Construction is performed in distinct steps, each of which has its own mix of equipment, and, consequently, its own noise characteristics. Table 5.12-11 on page 5.12-37 of the Draft PEIR lists typical construction equipment noise levels recommended for noise-impact assessments, based on a distance of 50 feet between the equipment and noise receptor.

As shown, construction equipment generates high levels of noise, with maximums ranging from 71 dBA to 101 dBA. Construction of individual developments associated with implementation of the plan would temporarily increase the ambient noise environment and would have the potential to affect noise-sensitive land uses in the vicinity of an individual project. According to the Development Code Section 83.01.080, construction activities are exempt from the noise standards between 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM, except on Sundays and federal holidays.

Implementation of the plan anticipates an increase in development intensity to accommodate populations and employment growth. Construction noise levels are highly variable and dependent

upon the specific locations, site plans, and construction details of individual projects. Significant noise impacts may occur from operation of heavy earthmoving equipment and truck haul operations associated with construction of individual development projects, particularly if construction techniques such as impact or vibratory pile driving are proposed. The time of day that construction activity is conducted would also determine the significance of each project, particularly during the more sensitive nighttime hours. However, construction would be localized and would occur intermittently for varying periods of time.

Because specific, project-level information is not available at this time, it is not possible nor appropriate to quantify the construction noise impacts at specific sensitive receptors. In most cases, construction of individual developments associated with implementation of the plan would temporarily increase the ambient noise environment in the vicinity of each individual project, potentially affecting existing and future nearby sensitive uses. Because construction activities associated with any individual development may occur near noise-sensitive receptors and because, depending on the project type, equipment list, time of day, phasing and overall construction durations, noise disturbances may occur for prolonged periods of time or during the more sensitive nighttime hours, construction noise impacts associated with implementation of the plan are considered potentially significant.

Mitigation Measures

N-1 Prior to issuance of demolition, grading and/or building permits on sites adjacent to sensitive receptors, a note shall be provided on construction plans indicating that during grading, demolition, and construction, the project applicant shall be responsible for requiring contractors to implement the following measures to limit construction-related noise:

- During the entire permitted activity, equipment and trucks used for the project shall utilize the best available noise control techniques (e.g., improved mufflers, intake silencers, ducts, engine enclosures, and acoustical attenuation), wherever feasible.
- Require impact tools (e.g., jack hammers and hoe rams) that are hydraulically or electrically powered whenever feasible. Where the use of pneumatic tools is unavoidable, an exhaust muffler on the compressed air exhaust shall be used along with external noise jackets on the tools.
- Stationary equipment such as generators and air compressors shall be located as far as feasible from nearby noise-sensitive uses.
- Stockpiling shall be located as far as feasible from nearby noise-sensitive receptors.
- Prior to the start of construction activities, a sign shall be posted at the job site, clearly visible to the public, that includes permitted construction days and hours, as well as contact information for the County Building Inspection Supervisor and contractor's authorized representative. If the authorized contractor's representative receives a noise or vibration complaint, he/she shall investigate, take appropriate corrective action, and report the action to the County.

- Signs shall be posted at the job site entrance(s), within the on-site construction zones, and along queueing lanes (if any) to reinforce the prohibition of unnecessary engine idling. All other equipment shall be turned off if not in use for more than 5 minutes.
- During the entire active construction period, the use of noise-producing signals, including horns, whistles, alarms, and bells, shall be for safety warning purposes only. The construction manager shall be responsible for adjusting alarms based on the background noise level, or to utilize human spotters when feasible and in compliance with all safety requirements and laws.
- Erect temporary noise barriers, where feasible, when construction noise is predicted to exceed the County noise standards and when the anticipated construction duration is greater than is typical (e.g., two years or greater).

Finding

Finding 3: Changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the Countywide Plan that lessen the significant environmental effect identified in the Draft PEIR. These changes take the form of Mitigation Measure N-1. The County hereby finds that implementation of the mitigation measure is feasible, and the measure is therefore adopted.

However, the County finds that there are no other mitigation measures that are feasible, taking into consideration specific economic, legal, social, technological or other factors, that would mitigate this impact to a less-than-significant level, and further, that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including considerations for the provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the alternatives identified in the PEIR, as discussed in Section IV of these Findings (Public Resources Code §§ 21081(a)(1) and (3); CEQA Guidelines §§ 15091(a)(1) and (3)). As described in the Statement of Overriding Considerations, the County has determined that this impact is acceptable because specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits, including regionwide or statewide environmental benefits, of the Countywide Plan outweigh its significant effects on the environment.

Impact 5.12-2: Buildout of the Countywide Plan would cause a substantial noise increase related to traffic on highways and local roadways and could locate sensitive receptors in areas that exceed established noise standards. [Thresholds N-1 and N-3]

Future development in accordance with the Countywide Plan would cause increases in traffic along local roadways. Traffic noise levels were estimated using the FHWA Highway Traffic Noise Prediction Model. Traffic volumes for existing and 2040 conditions, obtained from the traffic impact analysis prepared for the Project. Figures 5.12-8 through 5.12-10 on pages 5.12-41, 5.12-43, and 5.12-45 of the Draft PEIR illustrate the modeled roadways and future noise contours for 60 dBA CNEL, 65 dBA CNEL, and 70 dBA CNEL. As shown on Figures 5.12-8 through 5.12-10, future development of noise-sensitive land uses could be located in areas that exceed the “Normally Acceptable” noise and land use compatibility standards in Table 5.12-4 on page 5.12-39 of the Draft PEIR.

In addition, future noise-sensitive land uses could be in areas that exceed the “Normally Acceptable” noise standards due to airport operations (see Appendix J of the Draft PEIR for airport noise contours) and railroad activity. Table 5.12-12 on page 5.12-39 contains the calculated distances to the 65 dBA Ldn/CNEL contours from future railroad noise. The same methodology that was used to estimate existing railroad noise contours was used for future railroad activity. Though implementation of the proposed Countywide Plan would not directly cause an increase in rail activity, future residential development could be placed in areas that would expose sensitive receptors to noise levels in excess of established standards. Stationary source noise, such as from HVAC units and commercial loading docks, is controlled by the County’s Municipal Code. Policy HZ-2.7, Truck Delivery Areas, would encourage truck delivery areas to be located away from residential properties and require associated noise impacts to be mitigated.

Following industry standard practice, a significant traffic noise impact could occur if the Project would result in an increase of 3 dB or more, which is considered a barely perceptible change in outdoor environments. As shown on Figures 5.12-11 through 5.12-15, on pages 5.12-47, 5.12-49, 5.12-51, 5.12-53, and 5.12-55 of the Draft PEIR, significant traffic noise increases of 3 dBA CNEL or greater would occur along multiple roadway segments throughout unincorporated areas of the County. Incorporated areas would fall under the jurisdiction of their respective cities. Policy HZ-2.6, Coordination with Transportation Authorities, would reduce this impact through coordination with Caltrans, San Bernardino County Transportation Authority, SCAG, neighboring jurisdictions, and other transportation providers in the preparation and maintenance of, and updates to transportation-related plans and projects to minimize noise impacts.

Furthermore, prior to issuance of building permits for projects that include sensitive receptors and are located in ambient noise environments exceeding the “Normally Acceptable” noise and land use compatibility standards shown in Table 5.12-2 on page 5.12-4 of the Draft PEIR, the project applicant shall submit an acoustical study to the County that demonstrates that the proposed residential building design would provide an interior noise level of 45 dBA CNEL or less for residential uses, as required by the California Building Code, or acceptable levels for nonresidential uses per CALGreen standards. Acceptable methods for reducing noise exposure are detailed under RR NOI-1.

Mitigation Measure

Several measures were considered for mitigating or avoiding the traffic noise impacts, including special roadway paving, sound barriers, and sound insulation of existing residences and sensitive receptors. However, these measures did not prove to be feasible or practical mitigation measures to reduce project-generated traffic noise to less than significant levels. No individual measure and no set of feasible or practical mitigation measures is available to reduce project-generated traffic noise to less than significant levels.

Finding

Finding 3: The County finds that there are no mitigation measures that are feasible, taking into consideration specific economic, legal, social, technological or other factors, that would mitigate this impact to a less-than-significant level, and further, that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including considerations for the provision of employment opportunities for

highly trained workers, make infeasible the alternatives identified in the PEIR, as discussed in Section IV of these Findings (Public Resources Code §§ 21081(a)(1), (3); Guidelines §§ 15091(a)(1), (3)). As described in the Statement of Overriding Considerations, the County has determined that this impact is acceptable because specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits, including regionwide or statewide environmental benefits, of the proposed project outweigh its significant effects on the environment.

7. Transportation and Traffic

Impact 5.16-3: Trip generation related to land use development under the projected 2040 buildout of the Countywide Plan would exceed the County's VMT reduction threshold (4 percent reduction in VMT/person (residential) and 4 percent reduction in VMT/employee in comparison to existing VMT/person (or employee)). [Threshold T-2]

To estimate the VMT generated by just the new development (Countywide Plan growth areas), Fehr & Peers looked at the net change in VMT due to new development and compared that to the net change in population or employment. The results are summarized in Table 5.16-2 on page 5.16-56 of the Draft PEIR and are compared back to the significance thresholds (four percent reduction in comparison to existing conditions). The VMT estimates in Table 5.16-2 are directly from the travel demand forecasting model and do not account for additional reductions that would occur from TDM strategies (which could potentially reduce VMT another four percent from the modeled values assuming full implementation and effectiveness of the program).

Note however, that that some TDM measures are already accounted for in the regional forecasting tool utilized to estimate VMT and identify the regional VMT information that projects are benchmarked against. Since these strategies are already reflected, they have not been included in this assessment to avoid "double counting" the effectiveness of the strategy. These strategies are:

- LUT-1 Increase density: 0.4 to 10.75 percent
- LUT-3 Increase diversity of urban developments 0 to 12 percent and suburban developments 0.3 to 4 percent
- LUT-4 Increase destination accessibility 0.5 to 12 percent
- LUT-5 Increase transit accessibility 0 to 7.3 percent

As shown in the table, with the exception of employment VMT/person for the Valley region, without mitigation, projected VMT averages for each subregion exceed the target VMT/person.

Mitigation Measures

T-1 Prior to approval of discretionary projects subject to VMT reduction analysis and located outside the designated growth areas, applicants shall demonstrate compliance with the County's adopted Transportation Impact Study (TIS) Guidelines for CEQA assessment of VMT impacts. For projects with VMT/capita exceeding the County's significance

threshold, a mitigation plan shall be developed and implemented. Mitigation should consist of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures analyzed under a VMT-reduction methodology consistent with Chapter 7 of the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association's *Quantifying Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Measures* (August 2010) and approved by the Traffic Division and Land Use Services Department (if applicable), or the project description should be reviewed and modified to promote reduced VMT.

T-2 Discretionary projects located within the designated growth areas that are subject to VMT reduction analysis shall develop a VMT reduction plan to achieve a minimum of a four percent reduction in VMT/capita in comparison to existing conditions. At a minimum, the VMT reduction plan shall consider the following TDM measures (estimated potential VMT reduction as shown):

- UT-6, Integrate affordable and below market rate housing: 0.04 to 1.20 percent.
- LUT-9, Improve Design of Development: 3.0 to 21.3 percent.
- SDT-1, Provide pedestrian network improvements. Applicable for subdivisions connecting to other development, in areas identified for growth in the Countywide Plan, unincorporated Valley region areas, or unincorporated spheres of influence.
- SDT-2, Provide Traffic Calming Measures: 0.25 to one percent. Applicable for subdivisions connecting to other development, in areas identified for growth in the Countywide Plan, unincorporated Valley region areas, or unincorporated spheres of influence.
- TRT-4, Implement Subsidized or Discounted Transit Passes: 0 to 16 percent. Applicable to development within 1/2 mile of a transit system. As such, it would be applicable in the Valley region but less applicable in other areas.
- TRT-6, Encourage Telecommuting and Alternative Work Schedules: 0.2 to 4.5 percent. Applicable to the County as the County is and will continue to partner with internet providers to increase coverage within the County to facilitate this application.
- TRT-10, Implement a School Pool Program: 7.2 to 15.8 percent reduction in school VMT. Applicable for large developments, i.e., approximately 300 households or more.

Finding

Finding 3: Changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the Countywide Plan that lessen the significant environmental effect identified in the Draft PEIR. These changes take the form of Mitigation Measures T-1 and -2. The County hereby finds that implementation of the mitigation measures is feasible, and the measures are therefore adopted.

However, the County finds that there are no other mitigation measures that are feasible, taking into consideration specific economic, legal, social, technological or other factors, that would mitigate this impact to a less-than-significant level, and further, that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including considerations for the provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the alternatives identified in the PEIR, as discussed in

Section IV of these Findings (Public Resources Code §§ 21081(a)(1) and (3); CEQA Guidelines §§ 15091(a)(1) and (3)). As described in the Statement of Overriding Considerations, the County has determined that this impact is acceptable because specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits, including regionwide or statewide environmental benefits, of the Countywide Plan outweigh its significant effects on the environment.

IV. ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

An EIR must briefly describe the rationale for selection and rejection of alternatives. The lead agency may make an initial determination as to which alternatives are feasible, and therefore, merit in-depth consideration, and which ones are infeasible.

A. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED DURING THE SCOPING/PROJECT PLANNING PROCESS

The following is a discussion of the alternatives considered during the scoping and planning process and the reasons why they were not selected for detailed analysis in the Draft PEIR.

1. No Growth/No Development

The No Growth/No Development Alternative would prohibit all new development, restricting urban growth to its current extent. No alterations to the unincorporated areas would occur (with the exception of previously approved or entitled development). All existing residential, commercial, office, industrial, public facilities, agriculture and open space, along with utilities and roadways, would generally remain in their current condition. Implementation of this alternative would not provide adequate housing to meet the County's fair share of housing and would be inconsistent with SCAG's 2016 RTP/SCS. By limiting development within the County, implementation of this alternative would increase development pressure in surrounding counties, including Los Angeles, Riverside, and Orange counties. It should also be noted that this alternative would not achieve any of the objectives established for the proposed project. As a result, this alternative has been rejected from further consideration.

Finding

The County finds that hindering growth in the county is unrealistic and would add development pressure to surrounding counties. As described in these Findings of Fact, the Countywide Plan would result in many less than significant impacts or impacts that can be mitigated to less than significant. The County has determined that the significant and unavoidable impacts are acceptable because specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits of the Countywide Plan, including regionwide or statewide environmental benefits, outweigh its significant effects on the environment, as described in the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

2. Dispersed Rural Growth

Although the Dispersed Rural Growth alternative was evaluated during the planning process for the proposed project, it does not represent a viable alternative for CEQA purposes. It assumed low density, dispersed rural growth and incorporated very few environmental constraints. As detailed in Section 7.2

of the Draft PEIR, compared to the other growth scenarios studied, the only environmental constraint that was programmed was to exclude development within Alquist-Priolo zones. It did, however, restrict new development to areas that were served by wastewater treatment systems, or where septic systems were allowed and viable. This alternative was rejected for further evaluation because it did not have the potential to reduce or eliminate significant impacts of the proposed project or meet the project objectives.

Finding

The County finds this alternative to be infeasible because it did not have the potential to reduce or eliminate significant impacts of the proposed project or meet the project objectives. As described in these Findings of Fact, the Countywide Plan would result in many less than significant impacts or impacts that can be mitigated to less than significant. The County has determined that the significant and unavoidable impacts are acceptable because specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits of the Countywide Plan, including regionwide or statewide environmental benefits, outweigh its significant effects on the environment, as described in the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

B. ALTERNATIVES SELECTED FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS

The following alternatives were determined to represent a reasonable range of alternatives with the potential to feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project. Table 7-1, *Alternatives Description and Statistical Comparison*, on page 7-10 of the Draft PEIR, summarizes the alternatives selected for evaluation. This table also includes a list by alternative of significant impacts anticipated to be reduced or eliminated in comparison to the proposed project.

Table 7-1 Alternatives Description and Statistical Comparison

| Alternative Description | Growth Potential | | | Net Change in Comparison to Proposed CWP | | | Environmental Reasons Considered |
|--|------------------|---------|--------|--|---------|-------|---|
| | Pop. | Housing | Emp. | Pop. | Housing | Emp. | |
| <p>Proposed CWP (Proposed Project) Population growth projections for the unincorporated areas focus on residential development in two areas: the Bloomington community (Rialto sphere of influence [SOI]) and future master planned communities in the Town of Apple Valley SOI. Employment growth is focused in the unincorporated portions of the Valley region, particularly in the Fontana SOI, East Valley Area Plan, and Bloomington community (Rialto SOI). Little to no growth is projected for other unincorporated areas based on the availability of water and infrastructure systems, presence of natural hazards and topographical constraints, and the desires of residents.</p> | 49,680 | 15,368 | 12,546 | - | - | | Constraints used to define the CWP are defined in Section 7.2 |
| <p>No Project This scenario assumes that the existing General Plan, last updated in 2007, would remain in effect. Unincorporated residential development under this plan, places nearly 85 percent of new development in city spheres of influence (SOIs) and Community Planning Areas (CPAs), with the balance distributed throughout the unincorporated county. The most substantial employment growth is concentrated in the unincorporated portions of the Valley and North Desert regions, but significant employment gains are also projected in the East Desert.</p> | 47,226 | 17,947 | 33,547 | -5% | +17% | +167% | Required by CEQA |
| <p>Limited Suburban Growth Generally, this alternative mirrors the proposed CWP, with limited changes to land use designations in the Apple Valley SOI and Bloomington community. The land use changes reduce potential housing growth relative to the proposed project. Retail and public employment growth in the Apple Valley SOI were reduced to reflect lower levels of housing growth, but employment estimates elsewhere in the unincorporated county remain consistent with the proposed Project.</p> | 31,867 | 9,871 | 12,299 | -36% | -36% | -2% | Potential to reduce significant impacts related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation (VMT) • Noise (traffic-related) • Air quality • Greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) • Biological and cultural resources |

Table 7-1 Alternatives Description and Statistical Comparison

| Alternative Description | Growth Potential | | | Net Change in Comparison to Proposed CWP | | | Environmental Reasons Considered |
|---|------------------|--------|--------|--|------|------|--|
| | | | | | | | |
| <p>Master Planned Development</p> <p>This scenario focuses unincorporated residential growth in new master-planned communities in the North and East Desert regions, where master developers would be responsible for ensuring adequate water supply as well as the development and maintenance of all new infrastructure. No housing growth is projected in the Mountain or Valley regions due to either limited infrastructure or an emphasis on growth occurring only after annexations occur.</p> <p>Like the proposed Project, the majority of employment growth is focused in the unincorporated portions of the Valley region. Some additional jobs (above those of the proposed Project) would be located in the master planned communities.</p> | 59,740 | 17,890 | 16,017 | +20% | +16% | +28% | <p>Potential to reduce significant impacts in comparison to the proposed project related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biological and cultural resources • Wildfire hazards |
| <p>Concentrated Suburban Growth</p> <p>This scenario focuses on intensifying residential development in the already urban areas in the Valley region and preserving the relatively undeveloped Desert and Mountain regions. Higher density housing types are projected along transit lines and near existing walkable communities, and small-lot, single-family homes are projected in existing single-family neighborhoods that are less walkable and further from transit. No residential growth is projected in other unincorporated areas.</p> <p>Employment growth is limited to the unincorporated portions of the Valley region.</p> | 53,428 | 17,639 | 12,817 | +8% | +15% | +2% | <p>Potential to reduce significant impacts in comparison to the proposed project related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation (VMT) • Air quality • GHG emissions • Biological and cultural resources • Wildfire hazards |

Table 7-2, *Environmental Impact Comparison*, starts on page 7-11 of the Draft PEIR and identifies how each of the alternatives selected for further analysis compares to the Countywide Plan. The ability of each alternative to meet the project objectives was analyzed in Section 7.5 starting on page 7-19 of the Draft PEIR.

1. No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative

This scenario assumes that the existing General Plan, last updated in 2007, will remain in effect. Unincorporated residential development under this plan places nearly 85 percent of new development in city spheres of influence and Community Planning Areas (CPA), with the balance distributed throughout the unincorporated county. The most substantial employment growth is concentrated in the unincorporated portions of the Valley and North Desert regions, but significant employment gains are also projected in the East Desert.

Table 7-1, *Alternatives Description and Statistical Comparison*, starting on page 7-9 of the Draft PEIR, summarizes the growth potential at buildout under this alternative and the net change compared with the Countywide Plan. This alternative would reduce population by 5 percent, increase housing by 17 percent, and increase employment by 167 percent.

Impacts of the No Project/Existing General Plan alternative would result in greater environmental impacts to 14 topical areas: aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, GHG emissions, hazards (wildfire), land use and planning, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation and traffic, tribal cultural resources, and utilities and service systems. This includes increasing the severity of significant, unavoidable impacts to air quality, biological resources, GHG emissions, hazards (wildfire), noise, and transportation and traffic. These impacts would be increased due to a more dispersed development throughout the county and a substantial increase in new employment relative to the proposed Countywide Plan. New housing growth would be similar to the CWP. Impacts to agricultural resources would be less than for the CWP, and impact levels would be similar for geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, and mineral resources.

Finding

The No Project/Existing General Plan Alternative could achieve the primary objectives of the Countywide Plan listed in Section II.F. It would be less effective than the CWP, however, in achieving some of the stated goals. For example, the CWP has more comprehensive and detailed policies to ensure:

- Collaboration with other public and private entities.
- Fiscally Sustainable Growth with requirements to require new, outlying development to bear the responsibility of new infrastructure and services.
- Resiliency to ensure services in the face of emergencies, external forces, and unexpected circumstances.
- Stewardship of natural resources.

Furthermore, this alternative would increase the severity of significant, unavoidable impacts to air quality, biological resources, GHG emissions, hazards (wildfire), noise, and transportation and traffic. As a result, specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible this project alternative for the reasons identified in the Final PEIR.

2. Limited Suburban Growth Alternative

This alternative generally mirrors the proposed CWP with respect to growth distribution and environmental constraints. In an effort to minimize environmental impacts in comparison to the CWP, however, it reduces the number of residential units and slightly reduces employment projections. Allowable densities (units/acre) were reduced in two key areas: the Apple Valley SOI annexation area, and the Bloomington CPA. New residential growth in the Apple Valley SOI would be limited to the

Hacienda Fairview Specific Plan area, and residential densities in Bloomington would be reduced. Following is a summary of changes by area:

Apple Valley SOI annexation area. This area would revert to the rural living designation (RL), which would result in very little, if any, additional growth. Apple Valley employment would be reduced to account for the loss of residential development that would be driving the jobs in this area under the CWP.

Net changes in comparison to CWP:

- Dwelling Units: a reduction of 2,492 units (2,349 units compared to 4,841 for the CWP for this area)
- Employment: a reduction of 247 employees (236 employees compared to 483 for the CWP)

Bloomington. Residential densities that were intensified under the CWP reverted to lower densities. Densities were changed from the proposed LDR (low density residential, 2–5 units/acre) or MDR (medium density residential, 5–20 units/acre) to VLDR (very low density residential, 0–2 units / acre). Growth in these areas was projected at the midrange density of approximately 1 unit/acre. Employment in Bloomington would remain unchanged in comparison to the CWP.

Net changes in comparison to the Countywide Plan:

- Dwelling Units: a reduction of 2,993 units (3,176 units in comparison to 6,169 for the proposed Project)

Overall, this alternative would reduce new housing development by 5,497 units and would reduce projected employment by 247 in comparison to the proposed project.

Table 7-1, *Alternatives Description and Statistical Comparison*, starting on page 7-9 of the Draft PEIR, summarizes the growth potential at buildout under this alternative and the net change compared with the Countywide Plan. This alternative would reduce population by 36 percent, decrease housing by 36 percent, and decrease employment by 2 percent.

Because this alternative would reduce both housing and employment growth, it would impact services that are dependent upon the development footprint and population. It would reduce the following impacts determined to be significant and unavoidable under the proposed project: air quality, biological resources, GHG emissions, noise, and transportation and traffic. It would not, however, reduce any of these impacts to less than significant. It would also reduce impacts to aesthetics, agricultural resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, population and housing, public services, tribal cultural resources, and utilities and service systems compared to the Countywide Plan. Overall, it would reduce impacts in 13 environmental categories. It would not increase the severity of any impacts. Similar level impacts would occur for hazards, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, and recreation.

Finding

The Limited Suburban Growth alternative is a reduced version of the CWP, and as such, would achieve the primary objectives of the proposed CWP. Lowering residential density in the Bloomington CPA and avoiding development of the Apple Valley annexation area would reduce housing unit development by approximately 5,500 units. This alternative, therefore, would not be consistent with the project's 2016 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) growth assumptions for housing production, or the estimates anticipated in the 2020 RTP/SCS. This is not stated as a specific objective of the CWP, but the Countywide Plan does anticipate ongoing cooperation with cities through San Bernardino County Transportation Authority and San Bernardino Council of Governments to comply with regional housing and transportation plans. The upcoming Regional Housing Needs Assessment and 2028 RTP will likely require a more concentrated housing growth, consistent with the proposed project.

Furthermore, while this alternative would lessen the project's air quality, biological resources, GHG emissions, noise, and transportation and traffic, it would not reduce any of these impacts to less than significant. As a result, specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible this project alternative for the reasons identified in the Final PEIR.

3. Master Planned Community Alternative

This scenario focuses unincorporated residential growth in new master-planned communities in the North and East Desert regions, where master developers would be responsible for ensuring adequate water supply as well as the development and maintenance of all new infrastructure. Housing growth would be limited to five master planned communities ranging from approximately 2,500 to 5,800 units each. No housing growth is projected in the Mountain or Valley Regions due to either limited infrastructure or an emphasis on growth occurring only after annexations.

Like the Countywide Plan, the majority of employment growth is focused in the unincorporated portions of the Valley Region. Some additional jobs (above those of the CWP) would be in the master planned communities.

Table 7-1, *Alternatives Description and Statistical Comparison*, starting on page 7-9 of the Draft PEIR, summarizes the growth potential at buildout under this alternative and the net change compared with the Countywide Plan. This alternative would increase population by 20 percent, increase housing by 16 percent, and increase employment by 28 percent.

Since this alternative creates large residential communities far away from employment opportunities it would substantially increase VMT for job commuting, resulting in greater impacts to air quality (vehicle emissions), GHG emissions (vehicles), and transportation/traffic impacts. Each of these impacts represents a significant, unavoidable impact of the proposed project. This alternative would also increase aesthetics, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, and utilities and service systems impacts compared to the CWP. Overall, impacts to 7 impact categories would be worse than the CWP.

Concentrating growth in master planned communities in the Desert Regions would be expected to reduce impacts to agricultural resources, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards (wildfire), mineral resources, public services, and recreation. *It would eliminate the significant, unavoidable impact associated with wildfire hazards compared to the Countywide Plan.* Noise impacts would be similar to the proposed project and remain significant and unavoidable. Impacts to population and housing and tribal cultural resources would be similar to the CWP.

Finding

This alternative would provide essentially the same growth opportunities as the CWP for housing and employment. It would not, however, provide opportunities within the Valley or Mountain Regions. Without the policies requiring master developers to be responsible for ensuring adequate water supply and providing and maintaining all new infrastructure, this alternative would not achieve the objective for fiscally sustainable growth. With these requirements, this alternative could achieve the stated project objectives. However, the success of this alternative relies on currently unknown developers developing new infrastructure that would be essential to support the growth model.

Furthermore, this alternative would increase impacts to air quality (vehicle emissions), GHG emissions (vehicles), and transportation/traffic impacts, all of which are significant, unavoidable impacts of the CWP. As a result, specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible this project alternative for the reasons identified in the Final PEIR.

4. Concentrated Suburban Growth Alternative

This alternative focuses on intensifying residential development in the already urban areas in the Valley Region and preserving the relatively undeveloped Desert and Mountain Regions. Higher density housing types are projected along transit lines and near existing walkable communities, and small-lot, single-family homes are projected in existing single-family neighborhoods that are less walkable and further from transit. No residential growth is projected in other unincorporated areas.

Table 7-1, *Alternatives Description and Statistical Comparison*, starting on page 7-9 of the Draft PEIR, summarizes the growth potential at buildout under this alternative and the net change compared with the Countywide Plan. This alternative would increase population by 8 percent, increase housing by 15 percent, and increase employment by 2 percent.

Since new growth would be concentrated, this alternative would reduce development footprints, reducing impacts to biological and mineral resources. It would reduce VMT, resulting in decreases to air quality, GHG emissions, and transportation and traffic impacts. It would also reduce impacts to hazards (wildfire), public services, and utilities and service systems. Overall, it would reduce impacts to 8 environmental categories. *It would eliminate significant, unavoidable impacts of the Countywide Plan related to wildfire, mineral resources, and transportation and traffic.* However, it would increase impacts to aesthetics, agriculture and forestry resources, geology and soils (due to higher seismic activity in the Valley), and land use and planning impacts due to the introduction of residential development in the primarily agricultural community of Mentone. Remaining impacts—cultural resources, hydrology and water

quality, noise, population and housing, recreation, and tribal cultural resources—would be similar to the Countywide Plan.

Finding

The Concentrated Suburban Growth alternative could achieve the project objectives. Because it would place both new housing and employment in areas with existing infrastructure, it would provide logical, cost-effective, fiscally sustainable provision of public services and infrastructure. Extra effort would be required, however, to ensure that higher densities in the Valley Region would not jeopardize the existing character and heritage goal for this region. This alternative could be developed by providing the collaboration, resiliency, security, and stewardship that is provided by the Countywide Plan.

The Concentrated Growth Alternative has been identified as the environmentally superior alternative because it would reduce 8 of the 18 environmental topics in comparison to the CWP and would reduce 3 of the significant, unavoidable impacts to less than significant. The potential wildfire (hazards), mineral resources, and transportation/traffic impacts would be reduced to less than significant under this alternative. This alternative, however, would increase four impacts in comparison to the proposed project—aesthetics, agricultural resources (impact to Mentone existing agricultural uses), geology/soils (related to the more seismically active Valley Region), and land use and planning. These impacts, however, would be mitigated to less than significant under this alternative.

As summarized above, this alternative could achieve the majority of the project objectives. Due to the higher densities in the Valley, however, this alternative could jeopardize the existing character and heritage goal for this region. As a result, specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible this project alternative for the reasons identified in the Final PEIR.

V. STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS

CEQA requires decision makers to balance the benefits of the proposed project against its unavoidable environmental risks when determining whether to approve the project. If the benefits of the project outweigh the unavoidable adverse effects, those effects may be considered “acceptable” (State CEQA Guidelines § 15093[a]). CEQA requires the agency to support, in writing, the specific reasons for considering a project acceptable when significant impacts are infeasible to mitigate. Such reasons must be based on substantial evidence in the FEIR or elsewhere in the administrative record (State CEQA Guidelines § 15093 [b]). The agency’s statement is referred to as a Statement of Overriding Considerations.

The following provides a description of the project’s significant and unavoidable adverse impact and the justification for adopting a statement of overriding considerations.

A. SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS

Although most potential project impacts have been substantially avoided or mitigated, there remain 15 project impacts for which complete mitigation is not feasible. The Draft PEIR identified the following significant unavoidable adverse impacts of the Countywide Plan:

Air Quality

- **Impact 5.3-1.** Growth associated with CWP buildout would not exceed Southern California Association of Governments' forecasts, but emissions generated by the growth have the potential to exceed emission forecasts in the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) and Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD) Air Quality Management Plans. Therefore, despite adherence to Mitigation Measure AQ-1 and AQ-2, Impact 5.3-1 would remain *significant and unavoidable*.
- **Impact 5.3-2.** Buildout of the CWP would generate a net increase of 49,680 people and 12,546 jobs, resulting in an increase in criteria air pollutant emissions from transportation, energy, and area sources that would exceed the SCAQMD and MDAQMD significance thresholds and would contribute to the nonattainment designations of the South Coast Air Basin (SoCAB) and Mojave Desert Air Basin (MDAB). Therefore, despite adherence to Mitigation Measure AQ-1, Impact 5.3-2 as it pertains to the CWP would remain *significant and unavoidable*.
- **Impact 5.3-3.** Implementation of the proposed project would occur over 20 years or longer. Construction activities associated with development allowed under the Countywide Plan could generate short-term emissions that exceed the SCAQMD and MDAQMD significance thresholds during this time and cumulatively contribute to the nonattainment designations of the SoCAB and MDAB. Implementation of Mitigation Measure AQ-2, in addition to applicable regulatory measures and Policy Plan goals and policies related to reducing construction-related emissions, would reduce criteria air pollutant emissions from construction-related activities to the extent feasible and may result in reducing construction-related regional air quality impacts of subsequent individual projects to less than significant. However, due to the programmatic nature of the proposed project, construction time frames and equipment for individual site-specific projects are not available, and there is a potential for multiple developments to be constructed at any one time, resulting in significant construction-related emissions. Therefore, despite adherence to Mitigation Measure AQ-2, Impact 5.3-3 would remain *significant and unavoidable*.
- **Impact 5.3-4.** Development allowed by the Countywide Plan could result in new sources of criteria air pollutant emissions and/or toxic air contaminants (TACs) near existing or planned sensitive receptors. Review of development projects by SCAQMD or MDAQMD for permitted sources of air toxics (e.g., industrial facilities, dry cleaners, and gasoline dispensing facilities) in addition to Countywide Plan Policies would ensure that health risks are minimized. Additionally, Mitigation Measure AQ-3 would ensure mobile sources of TACs not covered under SCAQMD or MDAQMD permits are considered during subsequent project-level environmental review by the County. Individual development projects would be required to achieve the incremental risk thresholds established by SCAQMD or MDAQMD, and TAC project-level impacts would be less than significant. However, implementation of the Countywide Plan would generate TACs that could contribute to elevated levels in the air basins. While individual projects would achieve the project-level risk threshold of 10 per million, they would nonetheless contribute to the higher levels of risk in the SoCAB. Therefore, the Countywide Plan's cumulative contribution to health risk is *significant and unavoidable*.

Biological Resources

- **Impact 5.4-1.** A substantial area of special-status species habitat occurs within proposed development areas. It is unknown at this time the total area of habitat that would be impacted and whether impacts on a project-level could be mitigated to below a level of significance; therefore, after implementation of mitigation measure BIO-1, the potential remains for Impact 5.4-1 to be *significant and unavoidable*.
- **Impact 5.2-2.** A substantial area of special-status vegetation communities occurs within proposed development areas. The total area of these communities that would be impacted is unknown. It is also unknown whether impacts on a project-level could be mitigated to below a level of significance. Therefore, despite adherence to Mitigation Measure BIO-1, Impact 5.2-2 would remain *significant and unavoidable*.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- **Impact 5.7-1.** The County of San Bernardino would experience a decrease in greenhouse gas emissions from existing conditions but would not achieve the GHG reduction targets established under Senate Bill (SB) 32 or Executive Order B-03-05. Therefore, despite adherence to Mitigation Measure GHG-1, Impact 5.7-1 would remain *significant and unavoidable*.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

- **Impact 5.8-6.** Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, unincorporated growth in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones could expose occupants to or exacerbate risks from pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or from the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire. Consequently, Impact 5.8-6 would remain *significant and unavoidable*.
- **Impact 5.8-8.** Unincorporated growth may expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of postfire slope instability. Consequently, Impact 5.8-8 would remain *significant and unavoidable*.

Mineral Resources

- **Impact 5.11-1.** Project implementation would result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource. Therefore, Impact 5.11-1 would remain *significant and unavoidable*.

Noise

- **Impact 5.12-1.** Construction activities would result in temporary noise increases. Therefore, Impact 5.12-1 would remain *significant and unavoidable*.
- **Impact 5.12-2.** Buildout of the CWP would cause a substantial noise increase related to traffic on highways and local roadways and could locate sensitive receptors in areas that exceed established noise standards. Therefore, Impact 5.12-2 would remain *significant and unavoidable*.

Transportation

- **Impact 5.16-3.** Trip generation related to land use development under the projected 2040 buildout of the CWP would exceed the County's vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction threshold (4 percent reduction in VMT/person (residential) and 4 percent reduction in VMT/employee in comparison to existing VMT/person (or employee). Therefore, Impact 5.16-3 would remain *significant and unavoidable*.

B. PROJECT BENEFITS IN SUPPORT OF THE STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS

This section describes the benefits of the proposed project that outweigh the project's unavoidable adverse effects and provides specific reasons for considering the project acceptable even though the Final PEIR has indicated that there will be 15 significant project impacts for which complete mitigation is not feasible. Accordingly, this Statement of Overriding Considerations has been prepared regarding potentially significant adverse environmental impacts resulting from the Countywide Plan. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15093(c), the Statement of Overriding Considerations will be included in the record of the project approval and will also be noted in the Notice of Determination. Each of the identified benefits provides a separate and independent basis for overriding the significant environmental effects of the Countywide Plan.

Having reduced the potential effects of the Countywide Plan through all feasible mitigation measures, and balancing the benefits of the proposed project against its potential and unavoidable adverse impacts to Air Quality, Biological Resources, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Mineral Resources, Noise, and Transportation and Traffic, the County finds that the following legal requirements and benefits of the Countywide Plan individually and collectively outweigh the potentially significant unavoidable adverse impacts.

1. Implements the Objectives Established for the Countywide Plan

The Countywide Plan would provide goals and policies that would facilitate and achieve the project objectives:

- Recognition, preservation, and celebration of the distinct character, history, culture, and heritage of the County and its communities.
- Greater coordination within the County government alongside expanded partnerships with other public and private entities to create a more complete County.
- A pattern of growth and development that facilitates logical, cost-effective, and fiscally sustainable provision of public services and infrastructure.
- Active and engaged people and communities with access to infrastructure and services to support physical, social, and economic health and well-being.
- Diverse opportunities for residents to pursue their desired standard and style of living.

- A County with a system of communities and services that can persevere in the face of emergencies, external forces, or unexpected circumstances.
- A real and perceived sense of safety that allows and encourages people, businesses, and organizations to thrive, build community, and invest.
- Communities that protect the viability of natural resources and open spaces as valuable environmental, aesthetic, and economic assets.

2. Provides an Increase in Housing to Meet the County’s Regional Housing Needs

The CWP would introduce 15,368 housing units in the unincorporated areas of the county. To make meaningful reforms to the housing crisis in California, the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) recently declared that cities and counties in Southern California will have to plan for the construction of 1.3 million new homes in the next decade. The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) will distribute the increased targets to jurisdictions based on factors such as jobs, households, and affordability. For cities and counties that do not perform, the state can withhold state transportation revenue generated from Senate Bill 1 (2017). The CWP includes several policies to support a variety of housing types and densities to accommodate residents in the county. They include:

- **H-1.1** Appropriate range of housing. We encourage the production and location of a range of housing types, densities, and affordability levels in a manner that recognizes the unique characteristics, issues, and opportunities for each community.
- **H-1.2** Concurrent infrastructure. We support the integrated planning and provision of appropriate infrastructure (including water, sewer, and roadways) concurrent with and as a condition of residential development to create more livable communities.
- **H-1.3** Quality multiple-family standards. We enforce multiple-family residential development standards, amenity requirements, and other regulations to ensure the development of quality rental and homeownership opportunities for residents.
- **H-2.6** Critical infrastructure. We ensure the efficient provision of critical infrastructure needed to accompany residential development and the building of complete communities and ensure that the costs are fairly apportioned to the development community.

Additionally, the CWP presents a development pattern that is more affordable for existing and future households, allowing for residential growth on lower-priced land that is still nearby local services in the Mountain/Desert regions.

3. Consistency with the Regional Goals in the RTP/SCS

SCAG’s 2016-2040 RTP/SCS was adopted April 7, 2016. The RTP/SCS identifies that land use strategies that focus on new housing and job growth in areas served by high quality transit and other opportunity areas would be consistent with a land use development pattern that supports and complements the proposed transportation network. The overarching strategy in the 2016-2040

RTP/SCS is to provide for a plan that allows the southern California region to grow in more compact communities in existing urban areas; provide neighborhoods with efficient and plentiful public transit and abundant and safe opportunities to walk, bike, and pursue other forms of active transportation; and preserve more of the region's remaining natural lands.

The Countywide Plan provides goals and policies that would be consistent with the goals of the RTP/SCS. For instance, the CWP would address economic growth by creating a skilled and educated labor force to help businesses compete locally and globally. The plan also fosters the retention and expansion of existing businesses and supports tourism in the county on a regional and national scale. The CWP covers topics such as roadway capacity, new transportation options, support for public transit providers, and ensuring safe truck traffic and airport and land use compatibility. The complete streets issues covered include mobility for users of all ages and abilities in more densely populated core areas, transit service, regional bicycle network, local bicycle and pedestrian networks, safety strategies for all users, funding mechanisms, and guidance to continue collaborating with SBCTA, Caltrans, and other agencies. Furthermore, the CWP's Transportation and Mobility Element establishes policies that improve travel safety such as interjurisdictional roadway consistency, emergency access, atypical intersection controls, context-based features (such as snow plowing lanes), first/last mile connectivity, and bike and pedestrian safety.

4. Preserves Community Identity

The Countywide Plan includes several policies that aim at recognizing and preserving the distinct character of the county and its communities. These policies include:

- **LU-4.1** Context-sensitive design in the Mountain/Desert regions. We require new development to employ site and building design techniques and use building materials that reflect the natural mountain or desert environment and preserve scenic resources.
- **LU-4.5** Community identity. We require that new development be consistent with and reinforce the physical and historical character and identity of our unincorporated communities, as described in Table LU-3, *Community Character*, and in the values section of Community Action Guides. In addition, we consider the aspirations section of Community Action Guides in our review of new development.

Table LU-3 Community Character

| Community Category | Key Characteristics and Features |
|--|--|
| Valley Communities Bloomington, Mentone, Muscoy, San Antonio Heights | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A suburban lifestyle characterized by a mix of lot sizes and/or land uses in proximity to urban services and facilities. • Views of canyons and hills within the community planning area (Mentone and San Antonio Heights). • Economic activity that benefits local residents and/or serves the local economy. |
| Mountain Communities Angelus Oaks, Bear Valley ¹ , Crest Forest ² , Hilltop ³ , Lake Arrowhead ⁴ , Lytle Creek, Mt Baldy, Oak Glen, Wrightwood | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A rural lifestyle characterized by low density neighborhoods oriented around commercial or recreational nodes, and the prevalence of the forest and mountain landscapes and natural resources. • Abundant views of open spaces, natural features, and dark skies. • Scenic, natural, and recreational features that serve as the foundation of the community's local economy and attract tourists. • Small businesses that serve local residents and visitors, compatible with the natural environment and surrounding uses. |
| Rural Desert Communities Baker, El Mirage, Homestead Valley ⁵ , Lucerne Valley, Morongo Valley, Newberry Springs, Oak Hills, Pioneertown ⁶ , Phelan/Pinon Hills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A rural lifestyle characterized by the predominance of large lots, limited commercial development, and the prevalence of the desert landscape and natural resources. • Abundant views of open spaces, natural features, and dark skies. • Scenic, natural, and/or recreational features that serve as the foundation of the community's local economy and attract tourists. • Small businesses that serve local residents and visitors, compatible with the natural environment and surrounding uses. • Mining of mineral resources with minimal negative impacts on local residents. |
| Desert Village Communities Daggett, Helendale, Joshua Tree, Oro Grande, Yermo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A rural context with clusters of housing in proximity to commercial development and public facilities, and larger lots farther from the commercial core. • Abundant views of open spaces, natural features, and dark skies especially outside of clustered development. • Scenic, natural, and/or recreational features that serve as the foundation of the community's local economy and attract tourists. • Small businesses that serve local residents and visitors, compatible with the natural environment and surrounding uses. • Mining of mineral resources with minimal negative impacts on local residents (Oro Grande and Yermo). |

Notes:

¹ Bear Valley includes: Baldwin Lake, Big Bear City, Erwin Lake, Fawnskin/Northshore, Lake Williams, Moonridge, Sugarloaf.

² Crest Forest includes: Cedarpines Park, Crestline, Lake Gregory, Valley of Enchantment.

³ Hilltop includes: Arrowbear, Green Valley Lake, Running Springs.

⁴ Lake Arrowhead includes: Agua Fria, Blue Jay, Cedar Glen, Crest Park, Deer Lodge Park, Lake Arrowhead, Rimforest, Skyforest, Twin Peaks.

⁵ Homestead Valley includes: Flamingo Heights, Johnson Valley, Landers, Yucca Mesa.

⁶ Pioneertown includes: Gamma Gulch, Pioneertown, Pipes Canyon, Rimrock.

- **LU-4.6** Adaptive reuse. We encourage the rehabilitation, adaptive reuse, and revitalization of existing structures to preserve and celebrate the unique sense of place, identity, and history of our communities.

Furthermore, the CWP recognizes the importance of maintaining the current and desired character and identity of its unincorporated Valley Region communities. The CWP focuses concentrated growth into unincorporated Valley Region communities that expressed a desire to grow in a more intense

manner, thus preserving the ability of other unincorporated Valley Region communities to maintain their lower intensity land use patterns and semirural nature.

The CWP also allows for incremental growth in the Mountain/Desert regions in recognition of the existing property rights and limited development interests present across the unincorporated parts of these regions.

5. Promotes the City's Economic Vision

The Countywide Plan supports the County's economic vision by including economic strategies that reflect the changing condition. The economic development element of the CWP aims to:

- Provide direction for County efforts to attract private investment in nonresidential development in unincorporated areas of the county.
- Focuses countywide investments in workforce development on growing occupations and industries.
- Establishes the County's intent to invest in economic development in order to improve the countywide jobs housing ratio.
- Identifies the means through which the County promotes countywide economic development.

6. Other Considerations

There are unavoidable, significant impacts in seven categories—Air Quality, Biological Resources, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Mineral Resources, Noise, and Transportation and Traffic. If the County does not update the existing General Plan, the impacts to all seven categories would be greater. Even without any growth in the county, which is not a realistic scenario, the significant impacts relating to air quality and GHG emissions will occur simply due to regional growth.

C. Conclusion

The San Bernardino Board of Supervisors has balanced the Countywide Plan's benefits against its significant, unavoidable impacts. The Board of Supervisors finds that the Countywide Plan's benefits, which aim to enhance the County of San Bernardino and comply with current legislations, outweigh its significant unavoidable impacts, and these impacts are therefore considered acceptable. The Board of Supervisors finds that each of the benefits described above is an overriding consideration, independent of the other benefits, that warrants approval of the project notwithstanding the project's significant unavoidable impacts.

VI. FINDINGS ON RESPONSES TO COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT PEIR AND REVISIONS TO THE FINAL PEIR

The Final PEIR contains response to comments, revisions, clarifications, and corrections to the Draft PEIR. The focus of the response to comments is on the disposition of significant environmental issues as raised in the comments, as specified by State CEQA Guidelines Section 15088(b). The County provided written responses to each comment made by a public agency, as set forth in Section 2 of the Final PEIR, pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15088(b).

County staff has reviewed this material and determined that none of this material constitutes the type of significant new information that requires recirculation of the Draft PEIR for further public comment under CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5. None of this new material indicates that the project will result in a significant new environmental impact not previously disclosed in the Draft PEIR. Additionally, none of this material indicates that there would be a substantial increase in the severity of a previously identified environmental impact that will not be mitigated, or that there would be any of the other circumstances requiring recirculation described in Section 15088.5 of the CEQA Guidelines.