3. OVERVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section provides an overview of the Project Site's regional and local setting and describes the basis for the discussion of cumulative impacts addressed in Section 4, Environmental Impact Analysis. More detailed information on the environmental setting as it relates to each of the environmental issues analyzed in the scope of this EIR are included in Sections 4.1 through 4.9, respectively.

3.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Regional Setting

The Project Site is located in Los Angeles County within the City of Santa Clarita. Regional access to the Project Site is provided by State Route 14 Freeway (SR-14), located east of the Project Site, and Golden State/Santa Ana Freeway (I-5), located west of the Project Site.

Local Setting

The Project Site is located at the intersection of Lyons Avenue and Railroad Avenue and extends eastward towards the General Plan alignment for Dockweiler Drive at The Master's University, and northwest towards the intersection of Arch Street and 12th Street. The Project Site also includes the closure of an at-grade crossing at the intersection of Railroad Avenue and 13th Street. The limits for the Lyons Avenue/Dockweiler Drive extension are from Railroad Avenue on the west to the future Master's University Master Plan Dockweiler extension to the east.

Surrounding Land Uses

The Project Site is located immediately southwest of the Placerita Canyon community and east of the Old Town Newhall community. The portion of the Project Site to the east of the intersection of Railroad Avenue and Lyons Avenue is bounded by commercial and industrial uses to the north, a landscape nursery to the south east, the Newhall Metrolink Station to the south and the Old Town Newhall Library and commercial uses to the west, across Railroad Avenue. The portion of the Project Site to the east of the intersection of Railroad Avenue is bounded by undeveloped land to the north, commercial and industrial uses to the east, Newhall Creek to the south and one-story commercial buildings to the west, across Railroad Avenue.

Project Site

The existing Project Site consists of improved segments of Railroad Avenue and Lyons Avenue roadways and undeveloped land to the east extending towards Dockweiler Drive. The west end of the Project Site encompasses portions of Newhall Creek. The portion of the Project Site that includes the intersection of Railroad Avenue and 13th Street is developed with existing road surface and an at-grade crossing. The

Union Pacific/Metrolink Railroad line crosses the Project Site at the intersection of Railroad Avenue and Lyons Avenue at the intersection of Railroad Avenue and 13th Street.

Aesthetics/Views

Views within the vicinity of the Project Site are characterized by the natural and built environment surrounding the area. The existing viewsheds in the project area are defined primarily by commercial land uses in Old Town Newhall, to the west across Railroad Avenue, and views of the Santa Susana Mountains to the south and west, the San Gabriel Mountains to the southeast and Sierra Pelona Mountains to the north. Viewsheds from the Project Site of the Placerita Canyon residential community and The Master's University are largely blocked by steep undeveloped terrain and a ridgeline to the east and southeast. Viewsheds to the north of the Project Site include relatively flat undeveloped open space followed by smaller hills and ridgelines in the background.

Portions of the Project Site are visible from the Old Town Newhall area from Lyons Avenue and along Railroad Avenue and from several residential properties within Placerita Canyon near Aden Avenue. The Project Site is visible from The Master's University, the Metrolink Station and recreation trails, located south and southeast of the Project Site. The Project site is also visible from portions of Market Street, south of the Project Site.

Air Quality

The Project Site is located within the South Coast Air Basin (Basin). The Basin includes all of Orange County and the non-desert portions of Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and Riverside Counties. The regional climate within the Basin is considered semi-arid and is characterized by warm summers, mild winters, infrequent seasonal rainfall, moderate daytime onshore breezes, and moderate humidity. The air quality within the Basin is primarily influenced by a wide range of emissions sources (e.g., dense population centers, heavy vehicular traffic, and industries) and meteorology.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) is the agency principally responsible for comprehensive air pollution control in the Basin. The SCAQMD divides the Basin into 38 source receptor areas (SRAs) in which 38 monitoring stations track the various concentrations of air pollutants in the region. The Project Site is located within SRA 13, which covers the Santa Clarita Valley. SCAQMD air quality monitoring Station No. 090 is located at 22224 Placerita Canyon Road and is located within the boundaries of the Project Site's northern alignment of Dockweiler Drive extending to Arch Street. This station currently monitors emission levels of CO, NO_2, O_3, PM_{10}, $PM_{2\,5}$, and VOC. The Basin in in attainment for CO. From 2010 to 2013, the ambient air quality levels within SRA 13 exceeded the state standard for O_3 by a total of 124 days; measured NO_2 concentrations were within the state standards for all four years; and PM_{10} emissions exceeded the state standard only one day in the four year reporting history.

Biological Resources

The analysis presented in the Biological Resources section is based on the Biological Resources Assessment, Jurisdictional Delineation and Impact Assessment, Dockweiler Road Extension Project,

Santa Clarita, California, prepared by Impact Sciences, Inc., dated April 2015 ("Biological Assessment"). The Biological Assessment is provided in Appendix D of this Draft EIR.

Vegetation Communities

Eight vegetation communities occur on the Project Site, which includes: California Sagebrush-California Buckwheat Scrub, Disturbed California Sagebrush- California Buckwheat Scrub, Scale Broom–Mulefat scrub, Scalebroom Scrub, Active Channel, Exotic Trees, Developed/ Ornamental Landscaping, and Cleared. Site grading plans indicate that within the Project Site 2.32 acres of vegetation would be removed (100 percent of the vegetation resources present). Of the vegetation communities impacted Disturbed California Sagebrush-California Buckwheat Scrub is the dominant plant community present by area and approximately 0.63 acre of this habitat would be lost through site grading and project implementation.

Wildlife

Wildlife diversity on the Project Site is relatively low. The only reptile observed on site was the side-blotched lizard (*Uta stansburiana*). Tracks, scat, burrows, and other signs observed indicate the presence of California ground squirrel (*Spermophilus beecheyi*) and Botta's pocket gopher (*Thomomys bottae*). Common bird species recorded during the field surveys included mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*), American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), California towhee (*Melozone crissalis*), house finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*), and Say's phoebe (*Sayornis saya*). All of these species are relatively tolerant of human encroachment. Several additional avian species are expected to occur on site seasonally. Small rodents including Botta's pocket gopher (*Thomomys bottae*) and deer mouse (*Peromyscus maniculatus*) are likely present and evidence of California ground squirrel (*Otospermophilus beecheyi*) and evidence of coyote (*Canis latrans*) were observed.

Wildlife Movement

Newhall Creek does provide, a connection between the Santa Clara River and the Angeles National Forest to the southeast. Although, much of the length of the creek occurs adjacent to dense development and wildlife activity is expected to be somewhat limited, Newhall Creek is considered part of a wildlife movement or migration corridor that connects larger areas of natural open space.

Special-Status Plant and Animal Resources

The only special-status plants observed during the field investigations were two coast live oaks. No other special-status plants are considered to have a high potential for occurrence within the Project Site. Native oak trees are protected under City of Santa Clarita Oak Tree Ordinance (Ordinance No. 89-10, passed by the City Council on April 25, 1989). A permit is required for encroachment into the Protected Zone, defined as 5 feet outside the dripline and further defined as extending no less than 15 feet outward from the trunk of an oak tree.

No special-status wildlife species were directly observed during field investigations conducted on the Project Site or area. Although Newhall Creek traverses the Project Site, it is considered a seasonal

drainage, and it is apparent within the Project Site, when flows do occur, they are rapid enough to scour the channel. The Silvery legless lizard (*Anniella pulchra pulchra*), is a small lizard is often mistaken for a snake or worm since, as it has no limbs. This special-status reptile is considered to have a moderate potential to occur on site. The Silvery legless lizard spends most of its life below surface soils. It is most commonly found in and around the roots of trees and shrubs, often beneath leaf litter where its prey is most abundant. This species is rarely observed unless one actively seeks it out. Though apparently very dry at the surface, some of areas within the Project Site may have sub-surface soils with the moisture content necessary to support this species. Therefore the Silvery legless lizard is considered to have a moderate potential for occurrence on the proposed Project Site.

Jurisdictional Waters, Streambed, and Riparian Resources

Based on field investigations, a small area of narrow-leaf willow thicket (300 square feet or 0.007 acre) is present. According to the wetland definition at the State level, narrow-leaf willow thicket present on-site would not meet the criteria of wetland as defined by the State of California. While narrow-leaf willow is a hydrophyte, there is no evidence of continuous or recurrent saturation of the upper substrate and no evidence of anaerobic conditions are present.

Two jurisdictional features do occur within the Project Site and area. Newhall Creek and a small ephemeral drainage that is a tributary to Newhall Creek occur on the Project Site and fall under the jurisdiction of the CDFW. Although these jurisdictional features do not support riparian vegetation or sensitive wetland resources, Newhall Creek does support features that lie within the jurisdiction of CDFW.

Cultural Resources

Although portions of the Project Site are improved with roadways, the Project will include earthwork activities in areas that are currently undeveloped. As such, it is likely that the Proposed Project's earthwork activities may result in the accidental discovery of prehistoric or historic archaeological resources that may be located within the Project limits. The Cultural Resources section addresses the Proposed Project's potential to result in significant impacts upon cultural resources, including archaeological, paleontological and historic resources. On September 20, 2013, the South Central Coastal Information Center and the Vertebrate Paleontology Department at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County were contacted to provide expertise on cultural, archeological, and paleontological resources within the Project Site. With respect to cultural, archaeological, and paleontological resources, the analysis is based on feedback from the South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC), dated October 2, 2013, and from The Vertebrate Paleontology Department at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, dated October 18, 2013 (See Appendix E of this Draft EIR).

Geology and Soils

The majority of the Geotechnical analysis is based on the *Geologic and Geotechnical Report EIR-Level Review Of Road Alignments For Dockweiler Road and Lyons Avenue (The "Geotechnical Report")* prepared by Allan E. Seward Engineering Geology, Inc., dated October 17, 2014 (See Appendix F of this

Draft EIR). As discussed in the Geotechnical Report and Section 4.5 of the Draft EIR, the proposed road alignments are located on the alluvial flood plain and hillside areas adjacent to Newhall Creek. The majority of the proposed road alignment for Lyons Avenue traverses undeveloped land, except for areas where artificial fill and railroad ballast have been placed to elevate and support the existing railroad double tracks. Dumped fill with abundant blocks of asphalt and concrete and other miscellaneous debris has been placed on the southwest bank of Newhall Creek, just northeast of the proposed at-grade railroad crossing. The proposed road alignment of Dockweiler Drive also traverses undeveloped land and a storage yard utilized by Los Angeles County Department of Public Works. The Project Site is covered with light to moderate growth of natural grasses and chaparral. Elevations at the site range from approximately 1255 to 1370 feet above mean sea level.

Regional Geologic Conditions

The Project Site is located within the central part of the Transverse Ranges geomorphic province of southern California, in the eastern portion of the Ventura Basin. The Ventura Basin has been tectonically down-warped in the geologic past to produce a large-scale synclinal structure in which a thick sequence of Cenozoic sediments has accumulated. In the vicinity of the proposed road alignments, much of the hillside area along the northeastern margin of Newhall Creek consists of bedrock of the Quaternary-age Pacoima Formation (Qp). The relatively flat flood plain southwest of Newhall Creek is underlain by sub-horizontal alluvium deposited (Qal). The Pacoima Formation and alluvial deposits are underlain by bedrock of the Plio-Pleistocene, nonmarine Saugus Formation (TQs). No faults or folds have been identified at the Project Site on the referenced published geologic map of the area.

Seismic Considerations

The Project Site lies within the seismically active southern California region. Earthquake-related hazards typically include ground rupture, ground shaking, and ground failure. Review of the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone Map for the Newhall Quadrangle, the Seismic Safety Element of the L.A. County General Plan, and the published Geologic Maps indicates that no active or potentially active faults traverse the Project Site. Review of the site topography and the aerial photographs did not reveal any lineaments or other indicators suggestive of faulting at the site. The nearest known active fault is the San Gabriel Fault, which is 3.7 km from the Project Site at its nearest point. Based on these distances, the probability of fault-related ground rupture at the Project Site is considered to be very low.

Ground Failure

Review of the referenced published geologic maps indicates that no landslides have been mapped at or adjacent to the Project Site. Review of aerial photographs lack geomorphic features that would indicate prior landslide movement. The majority of the Project Site is underlain by bedrock materials that are not susceptible to liquefaction. The alluvial soils present at the Project Site are not designated on the State of California Seismic Hazard Zone Map for the Newhall Quadrangle as a zone in which investigation of potentially liquefiable materials is required. The depth to historic high ground water at the site is greater than 50 feet. Based on the preceding factors, the potential for liquefaction and associated seismic settlements and lateral spreading is therefore considered very low.

Hydrology/Water Quality

The Hydrology and Water Quality section is heavily based on the findings and conclusions as presented in the following technical report, *Hydraulic and Scour Analysis Newhall Creek at Proposed Dockweiler Road Bridge, Newhall, California*, prepared by Rivertech, Inc., dated February 2015 ("Hydraulic Report"), which is provided in Appendix G of this Draft EIR. The existing Project Site is generally pervious. The Project Site consists of improved segments of Railroad Avenue and Lyons Avenue roadways and undeveloped land to the east extending towards The Master's University and Arch Street. The west end of the Project Site encompasses portions of Newhall Creek and traverses a storage yard utilized by Los Angeles County Department of Public Works.

Groundwater

Review of historic ground water data from the Seismic Hazard Map for the Newhall Quadrangle, Water-Resources Investigation using Analog Model Techniques in the Saugus-Newhall Area, and LACFCD water well records indicates that historic high ground water levels are between 75 and 100 feet below the existing surface at the Project Site. In addition, ground water was not encountered in subsurface explorations to a depth of 50 feet in the alluvium for the adjacent Old Town Newhall Library. However, temporary perched ground water conditions may exist below Newhall Creek following periods of significant rainfall and runoff. A low potential exists for temporary, perched ground water conditions to develop within the bedrock of the Pacoima formation. Perched ground water can contribute to slope instability in natural slopes and cut slopes. To prevent build-up of water, subdrains are typically recommended in canyon areas in which fill will be placed and back drains for slopes that are to be constructed as Stability Fills or Buttress Fills. Due to the historic high ground water elevations and the elevated nature of portions of the road alignment, ground water is not expected to significantly affect the Proposed Project, provided the proposed grading is evaluated from a geotechnical standpoint during the design stage and the geotechnical recommendations are implemented during construction. [1]

Inundation and Flooding

The western portion of the roadway extension that crosses Newhall Creek, is located in a "Zone A", as indicated in the National Flood Insurance Rate Map for Los Angeles County, which indicates a special flood hazard area that is subject to inundation by the 1% annual chance flood (100-year flood).[2] As concluded in the Hydraulic Report, the existing Newhall Creek Channel does not have the capacity to convey the FIS 100-year and the Capital Flood flow rates. As a result, the 100-year model results show that a significant percentage of the flow spill out the main channel and flood the railroad, entering the Railroad Avenue.

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[1] *Geologic and Geotechnical Report EIR-Level Review Of Road Alignments For Dockweiler Road and Lyons Avenue, prepared by Allan E. Seward Engineering Geology, Inc., dated October 17, 2014. See Appendix E of this Draft EIR.*

[2] *Federal Emergency Management Agency, National Flood Insurance Program, Flood Insurance Rate Mao, Los Angeles County, California and Incorporated Areas, Map Number 06037C0820F, September 26, 2008.*

Land Use and Planning

The existing Project Site consists of improved segments of Railroad Avenue and Lyons Avenue roadways and undeveloped land to the east extending towards Dockweiler Drive. The west end of the Project Site encompasses portions of Newhall Creek. The portion of the Project Site that includes the intersection of Railroad Avenue and 13th Street is developed with existing road surface and an at grade crossing. The UP/Metrolink Railroad line crosses the Project Site east of the intersection of Railroad Avenue and Lyons Avenue Railroad and at the intersection of Railroad Avenue and 13th Street.

The portion of the Project Site to the east of the intersection of Railroad Avenue and Lyons Avenue is bounded by an industrial and commercial uses to the north, a landscape nursery to the south east, the Newhall Metrolink Station to the south and the Old Town Newhall Library and commercial uses to the west, across Railroad Avenue. The portion of the Project Site to the east of the intersection of Railroad Avenue is bounded by undeveloped land to the north, industrial and commercial uses to the east, Newhall Creek to the south and one-story commercial buildings to the west, across Railroad Avenue. Properties to the north of the Project Site are zoned MXN. Properties to the south of the Project Site are zoned Specific Plan (SP). Properties to the east of the Project Site are zoned Urban Residential 1 (UR1), Urban Residential 3 (UR3) and Public Institutional (PI). Properties to the west, across Railroad Avenue are zoned SP.

The General Plan land use designation of the Project Site is Mixed Use Neighborhood (MXN). The General Plan states that areas with a MXN designation should be developed to create neighborhoods that combine residential uses with complementary commercial services, including retail and office uses. MXN zoned areas should be located in close proximity to public transit and provide roadway and trail linkages to adjacent development. The Project Site is located adjacent to the Old Town Newhall Specific Plan area, the Placerita Canyon Special Standards District (PCSSD), and is part of the North Newhall Area (NNA), which includes a Mixed-Use Overlay Zone. In addition, the Project Site is located in the City's Compass Blueprint Concept Plan (Concept Plan) area, which is a conceptual land use and circulation plan that guides development in the Newhall community north of Old Town Newhall and east of Railroad Avenue. Regional plans to which development must conform include the Southern California Association of Government's (SCAG) Regional Comprehensive Plan Guide (RCPG) and the South Coast Air Quality Management District's (SCAQMD) Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP).

The City has identified the extension of Lyons Avenue to Dockweiler Drive, across the existing Metrolink line, as one of five key transportation projects. The extension of Dockweiler Drive is identified in the Circulation Element as a major new roadway. The alignment is part of the City's current General Plan and consistent with the goals of the Specific Plan, Santa Clarita Valley Consolidated Traffic Model (SCVCTM), and the Concept Plan. The extension would provide a connection from Railroad Avenue to Sierra Highway. Construction of the extension would include a new four-lane highway, connecting Dockweiler Drive from Railroad Avenue to Leonard Tree Lane.

Noise

Ambient noise levels within the Project Area range from 56.6 dBA Leq at the residential roadway on Aden Avenue to 72.3 to 76.3 dBA along Railroad Avenue at 13th Street and Lyons Avenue. Noise measurements recorded at Aden Avenue represent typical residential area noise volumes and were influenced by residential activities such as a residential construction remodel, barking dogs, a delivery truck and an airplane flying overhead. Noise levels along Railroad Avenue were slightly higher (72.3 to 76.3 dBA L_{eq}), and were attributable to the roadway volumes.

Existing roadway noise levels for selected roadway segments in the vicinity of the Project Site were modeled based on average daily traffic volumes and the roadway noise prediction modeling methodology of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Highway Noise Prediction Model (FHWA-RD-77-108). The modeling data is provided in Appendix I to this Draft EIR. The traffic volumes for each roadway segment are provided in the project Traffic Study (see Appendix I to this Draft EIR). The estimated average 24-hour hour community noise equivalent noise levels (CNEL) for the selected roadway segments are within a range of 64.5 to 75.3 dBA under existing roadway conditions.

Transportation and Circulation

The traffic analysis is based on the Traffic Study titled, *Traffic Impact Analysis: Dockweiler Drive Alignment Project, Santa Clarita, CA*, prepared by David Evans & Associates, Inc. dated May 2, 2016. The scope and methodology of this analysis was determined in conjunction with the City of Santa Clarita. The complete Traffic Study is included in Appendix H to this Draft EIR. The extension of Lyons Avenue to Dockweiler Drive across the existing Metrolink line has been identified by the City as one of five key transportation projects. The alignment is part of the City's General Plan and consistent with the goals of the Old Town Newhall Specific Plan, Santa Clarita Valley Consolidated Traffic Model (SCVCTM), and the Compass Blueprint Plan.

Regional Access

Sierra Highway and the SR-14 (Antelope Valley) Freeway provide a boundary for the study area along the eastern side. Through traffic access on Placerita Canyon Road is restricted with a gate entrance west of Sierra Highway. Placerita Canyon Road currently is the primary connection to the Master's University and residents to the north. Newhall Avenue on the southern boundary of the study area provides a direct connection for cross valley traffic and connects Sierra Highway and Railroad Avenue. The UP/Metrolink Railroad line restricts access to the west with three existing at-grade railroad crossings located at 13th Street, Market Street, and Newhall Avenue.

Existing Street System

Dockweiler Drive is designated as an east-west Secondary Highway from Sierra Highway to Railroad Avenue on the City of Santa Clarita Circulation Map Joint Highway Plan. The existing portion of Dockweiler Drive consists of one and two lanes in each direction with a landscaped median and limited parking throughout the study area. Dockweiler Drive is used as the primary access to single- and multi-family residences.

State Route 14 Freeway (SR 14) provides regional access within the study area. The freeway is a four-lane (two in each direction) facility with interchange access at Placerita Canyon Road and Newhall Avenue.

Lyons Avenue is designated as an east-west major highway east of Railroad Avenue and Secondary Highway west of Railroad Avenue on the City of Santa Clarita Circulation Map Joint Highway Plan. Three lanes in each direction are provided with traffic signals and left turn channelization at major intersections.

Newhall Avenue is designated as a north-south secondary highway from Lyons Avenue to Railroad Avenue with one lane in each direction. From Railroad Avenue to SR-14, Newhall Avenue is designated as a major highway with three northbound lanes and three southbound lanes south of Railroad Avenue. Newhall Avenue roadway designation is identified on the City of Santa Clarita Circulation Map Joint Highway Plan.

Railroad Avenue (formerly San Fernando Road) is a north-south major highway from Magic Mountain Parkway to Lyons Avenue and a secondary highway from Lyons Avenue to Newhall Avenue. This roadway provides two lanes in each direction and limited parking throughout the study area. Railroad Avenue roadway designation is identified on the City of Santa Clarita Circulation Map Joint Highway Plan.

Sierra Highway is an old alignment of SR-14 from Los Angeles to Mojave. It is designated as a north-south major highway on the City of Santa Clarita Map Joint Highway Plan. It is a four lane (two in each direction) with traffic signals and left turn channelization at major intersections.

Placerita Canyon Road is an east-west local roadway. This roadway provides a gate at the eastern entrance. The gate provides restrictive access to residents of the Placenta Canyon neighborhood.

13th Street is an east-west unimproved local roadway. This roadway provides access to The Master's University and the Placenta Canyon neighborhood via its intersection with Railroad Avenue. One lane is provided in each direction.

Existing Transit Service

The Santa Clarita Valley's circulation system is a comprehensive transportation network of roadways, multi-use trails, bicycle paths, bus transit, and commuter rail. This network provides mobility options to Santa Clarita Valley residents and businesses. A major component in the development of the Santa Clarita Valley is the inclusion of alternative travel modes and support facilities. These facilities include efficiency and capacity of existing systems, by promoting mixed-use development near transit facilities. Bicycle lanes and accessibility of bike paths are a fundamental component to a comprehensive transportation network.

Existing Peak Hour Levels of Service

The level-of-service (LOS) is based on the average delay of vehicles at the intersections. Table 4.9-2, of Section 4.9, Transportation and Traffic, provides the LOS thresholds for roundabout intersections per the

HCM 2010 methodology. The City of Santa Clarita preferred maximum acceptable level of service on arterial roads is LOS E. The City of Santa Clarita desired maximum acceptable level of service on residential neighborhood roads is LOS C or better. Under existing conditions, most intersections are operating at LOS E or better. There are two intersections that are currently operating at LOS F, they are: Sierra Highway and SR-14 Southbound Ramps and SR-14 Southbound Ramps and Newhall Avenue.

3.3 CUMULATIVE PROJECTS

CEQA requires that Environmental Impact Reports analyze "cumulative impacts," defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15355 as "two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts." In addition, CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 indicates that the analysis of cumulative impacts need not be as in-depth as what is performed relative to the proposed project, but instead is to "be guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness." The cumulative impacts analysis considers the anticipated impacts of the Proposed Project along with reasonably foreseeable growth. According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b)(1), reasonably foreseeable growth may be based on:[3]

- A list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts; and/or

- A summary of projections contained in an adopted general plan or related planning document, or in a prior environmental planning document which has been adopted or certified, which described or evaluated regional or area-wide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact.

Cumulative study areas are defined based on an analysis of the geographical scope relevant to each particular environmental issue. Therefore, the cumulative study area and the applicable related projects for each individual environmental impact may vary. For example, a cumulative visual impact generally could only affect the area within the view of a project site, while a cumulative air quality impact could affect the entire South Coast Air Basin.

City of Santa Clarita - Projections for Population and Households

For purposes of the cumulative impact analysis, this Draft EIR references the City of Santa Clarita General Plan "One Valley One Vision," which provides a summary of growth projections for the Santa Clarita Valley. The Future Year 2035 traffic volumes were provided by the City of Santa Clarita using the Santa Clarita Valley Consolidated Traffic Model (SCVCTM) for the Buildout Year. Other Area Projects anticipated to be constructed by Year 2035 have been incorporated into the SCVCTM, and account for expected growth. The buildout includes construction of future roadways including Magic Mountain Parkway from Railroad Avenue to Via Princessa, and Via Princessa between Claibourne Lane and Sheldon Avenue, and Santa Clarita Parkway. The future buildout SCVTM model also includes the proposed conceptual development of the North Newhall Area.

[3] *Clarification based on Communities for a Better Environment v. California Resources Agency, 2002.*

With respect to growth projections for the Santa Clarita Valley, the Land Use elements notes that the projections generated from the traffic analysis zone (TAZ) analysis represent staff's best efforts to achieve a realistic vision of actual build-out potential for the planning area. In preparing the One Valley One Vision land use projections, staff acknowledged that portions of the planning area are already largely developed, and that the City's General Plan and the County's Area Plan are not based on a "clean slate" of vacant, undeveloped land. Existing uses and development patterns must be recognized in planning for projects and development of new uses. The methodology used by staff to develop these detailed demographic projections is discussed in further detail in the City's General Plan Land Use Element.