6. PROJECT ALTERNATIVES
2. NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE

The No Project Alternative is the circumstance under which the Proposed Project does not proceed. CEQA Guidelines (Section 15126.6(e)) provides that the "no project" analysis shall discuss the existing conditions at the time the Notice of Preparation is published, as well as what can reasonably be expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project is not approved based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services. A Notice of Preparation (NOP) was prepared by the City of Santa Clarita and distributed to the State Clearinghouse, Office of Planning and Research, responsible agencies, and other interested parties on August 5, 2013. 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. 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 proposed road alignments are located on the alluvial flood plain and hillside areas adjacent to Newhall Creek. The Project Site is covered with light to moderate growth of natural grasses and chaparral.

Under the No Project Alternative, the Project Site would remain in its current state, as no roadway extension would occur from Lyons Avenue to Dockweiler Drive and Arch Street. The 13th Street at-grade crossing would remain open.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Aesthetics

The existing visual character of the Project Site would temporarily change from construction-related activities during the duration of the construction period of the Proposed Project. This impact would be considered significant but temporary. Additionally, upon completion of the Proposed Project, the aesthetic character of the Project Site and its immediate surroundings would be permanently altered as the Proposed Project would result in the permanent and irreversible grading and re-contouring of the westernmost segment of the ridgeline. The No Project Alternative would not involve any new construction or demolition associated with the Proposed Project. No improvements or physical modifications would occur and the Project Site would remain in its present form. Therefore, views of the Proposed Project would remain unchanged (for existing views of and from the Project Site refer to Figures 2-2, 12.3, 2.4, 2.7 and 2.8 in Section 2, Project Description, as well as Figures 4.1-2 and 4.1-3 in Section 4.1, Aesthetics). Additionally, the No Project Alternative would not alter any ridgelines in the Project Site vicinity, would not result in the loss of oak trees, and would retain the existing sources of lighting and glare on the Project Site and in the surrounding area. Since the No Project Alternative

includes no physical alterations to the current site, the No Project Alternative would have no impact when compared to the Proposed Project.

Air Quality

Construction

Construction-related emissions and their associated air quality impacts for the Proposed Project would be short-term in nature and limited only to the period when construction activity is actively taking place. The Proposed Project's construction emissions would be below SCAQMD's significance thresholds for all criteria pollutants. The No Project Alternative would not create any construction emissions, as grading, demolition and construction activities would not occur. The No Project Alternative would have no impact when compared to the Proposed Project with respect to air quality during the construction phase.

Operation

No operational air pollutant emissions are generated at the Project Site as the Project Site does not contain any buildings and consist largely of undeveloped land and road surface. Although the Proposed Project would not directly generate any new vehicle trips, the Proposed Project would result in changes to the traffic circulation in the vicinity and would alter the average daily traffic volumes and peak hour traffic volumes at local intersections. The similar utilization of the Project Site as compared to existing conditions would create similar air pollution emissions from mobile sources from existing roadways. The No Project Alternative would not violate any air quality standards. Compared to existing conditions, the No Project Alternative would result in no increased air quality impacts. The No Project Alternative would have reduced air quality impacts when compared to the Proposed Project.

Biological Resources

Construction-related activities, particularly site clearing, grading, and the implementation of the road surface, could have adverse effects on plant and wildlife habitat, and together, would be considered a significant impact. With implementation of mitigation measures, impacts from the Proposed Project would reduce these construction-related impacts to a less than significant level. Portions of the Project Site that are undeveloped and contain plant and wildlife habitat would be left undistributed by the No Project Alternative, as no development would occur. Therefore, no impact would occur with respect to biological resources under the No Project Alternative.

Cultural Resources

Historic Resources

As no cultural or historic habitable structures are located on-site, similar to the Proposed Project, the No Project Alternative would not have the potential to adversely impact any historic or cultural resources.

Archaeological Resources

Construction-related earthwork activities may result in the accidental discovery of prehistoric or historic archaeological resources or Native American burial sites. Implementation of mitigation measures would reduce impacts resulting from the Proposed Project to a less than significant level. As the No Project Alternative would not involve any earthwork or ground disturbing activities no adverse impacts would occur to archaeological resources.

Paleontological Resources

The Proposed Project includes construction-related earthwork activities may result in the accidental discovery of paleontological resources. Implementation of mitigation measures would reduce impacts resulting from the Proposed Project to a less than significant level. The No Project Alternative would not involve any earthwork or ground disturbing activities. As such there would be no potential for any adverse impacts to occur to paleontological resources.

Tribal Cultural Resources

The No Project Alternative would not involve any earthwork or ground disturbing activities. As such there would be no potential for any adverse impacts to occur to tribal cultural resources.

Geology and Soils

Under the No Project Alternative, the Project Site remains in its current condition and no new construction of any infrastructure would occur. As such, the No Project Alternative would not result in any new sources or increased risk of loss, injury, or death involving strong seismic ground shaking, liquefaction, landslides, or ground failure on-site. The No Project Alternative would have no impact to geology and soils. When compared to the Proposed Project, the No Project Alternative would have a reduced impact upon potential geotechnical hazards.

Hydrology And Water Quality

The Proposed Project would be required to prepare and implement a SWPPP prior to earthwork activities that will put best management practices and erosion control measures to prevent pollution in stormwater discharge. Additionally, in accordance with NPDES requirements, the Project Applicant would be required to have a Project-specific SUSMP in place during the operational life of the Project to address the management of runoff from the proposed roadway extension. Therefore, water quality impacts during the Project's construction and operation would be less than significant. The Proposed Project would also span the Newhall Creek. Roadway construction would include a new bridge across Newhall Creek and provide embankment protection to the roadway and creek.

Under the No Project Alternative, the Project Site remains in its current condition and no new construction of any infrastructure would occur. As such, the No Project Alternative would not result in any impacts to water quality or substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or

amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site. When compared to the Proposed Project, the No Project Alternative would have a reduced impact upon water quality and inundation and flooding.

Land Use and Planning

Under the No Project Alternative, the Project Site would experience no changes in land uses or changes to the condition of the Project Site. The Project Site includes four land use categories that guide development on-site defined by the General Plan. Since the No Project Alternative would result in no changes to the current land use and zoning designations or to the physical condition of the Project Site, the No Project Alternative would have no impact to land use and planning. The extension of Dockweiler Drive is identified in the Circulation Element as a major new roadway. The extension would provide a connection from Railroad Avenue to Sierra Highway. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would be inconsistent with the Circulation Element. However, compared to the Proposed Project, the No Project Alternative would result in a reduced impact with regards to land use and planning as no permits or approvals would be required. As compared to the Proposed Project, which would require an Oak Tree Removal Permit for the removal of two oak trees and a Hillside Development Permit, the No Project Alternative would not require any land use approvals or entitlements. As such land use and zoning impacts would be less than significant.

Noise

Construction

Construction of the Proposed Project would require the use of heavy equipment for ground clearing, site grading, and roadway construction. Several pieces of construction equipment operating simultaneously would generate a noise level of approximately 94.6 dBA. The estimated construction noise levels impacting sensitive receptors are expected to exceed the City's daytime noise standards for residential uses (see Table 4.8-3). The construction noise levels would therefore constitute a significant impact. The No Project Alternative would involve no new construction. As such, no construction noise or vibration is anticipated to occur under this alternative. Under the No Project Alternative, impacts with respect to construction noise or vibration would be reduced as compared to the Proposed Project.

Operation

The Proposed Project is anticipated to alter roadway traffic volumes as the Proposed Project would create a new roadway segment connecting Lyons Avenue to Dockweiler Drive. Locations in the vicinity of the Project Site could experience slight changes in noise levels as a result of the change in traffic patterns.

The No Project Alternative would not introduce any new activities to the Project Site with the potential to create operational noise impacts or sensitive receptors with the potential to be impacted by noise impacts. Operation noise on-site would be consistent with existing uses on-site. Under the No Project Alternative, no increased impact would occur with respect to operational noise. Impacts with respect to operational noise would be reduced when compared to the Proposed Project's less than significant impact.

Transportation and Traffic

The Traffic Report analyzed sixteen intersections for existing year conditions (2014), opening year conditions (2019), and future year conditions (2035). Potential Project traffic impacts were found for opening year conditions and future year conditions. With the incorporation of the mitigation measures identified in Section 4.9, Traffic and Transportation, potential traffic impacts associated with the Proposed Project would be reduced to a less than significant level.

Opening Year (2019) Conditions Without Proposed Project

The Santa Clarita Valley Consolidated Traffic Model (SCVCTM) for Interim Year provided traffic volumes for the Project Year 2019 Condition. The model plots provided a No-Build Condition outlining the distribution of future traffic without the Project. The Project Year 2019 No-Build study intersections provided in Figure 4.9-6, the volumes provided in Figure 4.9-7.

The intersections were analyzed using the capacity analysis methodology described in Section 4.9. The analysis was conducted with the existing intersection geometrics illustrated in Figure 4.9-8. The LOS for the study intersections presented in Table 4.9-4 represents the LOS for the critical movement. This is typically the stop controlled left turn from the minor street. As presented in Table 4.9-4 under Year 2019 No-Build Condition, most of the study intersections are anticipated to continue to operate at LOS E or better. There are four intersections that are anticipated to operate at LOS F, they are: Sierra Highway and SR-14 Southbound Ramps, Sierra Highway and Placerita Canyon Road, SR-14 Northbound Ramps and Placerita Canyon Road, and SR-14 Southbound Ramp and Newhall Avenue.

Future (2035) Conditions Without Proposed Project

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. The model plots provided a No-Build Condition outlining the distribution of future traffic without the Project. The analysis of No-Build Condition utilizes the traffic volume projections for the City of Santa Clarita's traffic model together with the existing traffic flow data. It is to be noted that 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 Dockweiler Drive between Railroad Avenue and Valle Del Oro, Magic Mountain Parkway from Railroad Avenue to Via Princessa, Via Princessa between Claibourne Lane and Sheldon Avenue, and Santa Clarita Parkway. This also includes the proposed conceptual development of the North Newhall area (809 dwelling unit plus an approximate 11-acre commercial land use).

The Future Year 2035 No-Build study intersections are provided in Figure 4.9-9 and the volumes are provided in Figure 4.9-10. The intersections were analyzed using the capacity analysis methodology described above. The analysis was conducted with the Future Year 2035 No-Build Condition existing and mitigated study intersection geometrics illustrated in Figure 4.9-11, Future Year 2035 No Build Intersection Configurations. The LOS for the study intersections presented in Table 4.9-5 represents the LOS for the critical movement. This is typically the stop controlled left turn from the minor street. As

presented in Table 4.9-5 under Future Year 2035 No-Build Condition, several intersections are anticipated to operate at LOS F, these intersections are: Sierra Highway and SR-14 Southbound Ramps, Sierra Highway and Placerita Canyon Road, SR-14 Northbound Ramps and Placerita Canyon Road, SR-14 Southbound Ramps and Newhall Avenue, Sierra Highway and Newhall Avenue, Newhall Avenue and Lyons Avenue, and Main Street and Newhall Avenue.

Railroad Crossing Analysis

For a comparison of the No Build scenario and the Proposed Project scenario, Daily and AM and PM Peak hour traffic volumes were compiled for the Year 2019 and 2035 conditions as presented in Table 4.9-9 and Table 4.9-10, respectively. As presented in Table 4.9-9 under Project Year 2019, the total average daily traffic is anticipated to be highest for the No Build Condition. As presented in Table 4.9-10 under Project Year 2035, the total average daily traffic is anticipated to be highest for the Proposed Project. Therefore, when compared to the Proposed Project, the No Project Alternative would have an increased impact to railroad crossings for the 2019 conditions as compared to the Proposed Project.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

The No Project Alternative would be inconsistent with the Santa Clarita Valley's Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities map, which is provided in Figure 4.9-18. As illustrated in Figure 4.9-18, Potential Bike Lane connectors are proposed from Dockweiler Drive to connect to the Proposed Class I Bike Path along Railroad Avenue and the Proposed Class I Bike Path along Railroad Avenue.