

5.0 OTHER CEQA CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 SIGNIFICANT UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS

Section 15126.2(b) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR describe any significant impacts which cannot be avoided, including those effects that can be mitigated but not reduced to a less than significant level. Specifically, Section 15126.2(b) states:

Describe any significant impacts, including those which can be mitigated but not reduced to a level of insignificance. Where there are impacts that cannot be alleviated without imposing an alternative design, their implications and the reasons why the project is being proposed, notwithstanding their effect, should be described.

Based on the analysis contained in Section 3, Environmental Impact Analysis, of this Draft EIR, implementation of the Proposed Project would result in a significant unavoidable environmental impact to Aesthetics, specifically scenic views.

5.2 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

Section 15126.2(c) of the CEQA Guidelines states that the “uses of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project may be irreversible since a large commitment of such resources makes removal or nonuse thereafter unlikely.” Section 15126.2(c) further states that “irretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified.”

The types and level of development associated with the Proposed Project would consume limited, slowly renewable and non-renewable resources. This consumption would occur during construction of the Proposed Project and would continue throughout its operational lifetime. The development of the Proposed Project would require a commitment of resources that would include (1) building materials, (2) fuel and operational materials/resources and (3) the transportation of goods and people to and from the Project site.

Construction of the Proposed Project would require consumption of resources that are not replenishable or which may renew so slowly as to be considered non-renewable. These resources would include certain types of lumber and other forest products, aggregate materials used in concrete and asphalt (e.g., sand, gravel and stone), metals (e.g., steel, copper and lead), petrochemical construction materials (e.g., plastics) and water. Fossil fuels, such as gasoline and oil, also would be consumed in the use of construction vehicles and equipment.

The commitment of resources required for the type and level of proposed development would limit the availability of these resources for future generations for other uses during the operation of the Proposed Project. However, this resource consumption would be consistent with growth in the Southern California region and that expected to occur under the City of Moorpark General Plan.

5.3 GROWTH-INDUCING POTENTIAL

The *California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Statutes and Guidelines* requires that an EIR include a discussion of ways in which a project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment.¹ The discussion should also identify any way in which a proposed project would remove obstacles to population growth, and discuss the characteristics of a project that may encourage and/or facilitate other activities that, either individually or cumulatively, could significantly affect the environment. CEQA emphasizes that growth in an area should not be considered beneficial, detrimental or of little significance. The purpose of this discussion is to evaluate the growth-inducing potential of the Proposed Project.

In general terms, a project may foster growth in a geographic area if it meets any of the criteria identified below:

- The project removes an impediment to growth, such as through the establishment of an essential public service, or the provision of new access to an area that will facilitate additional growth.
- The project results in the urbanization of land in a remote location that will induce the growth of undeveloped areas between the project and existing developed areas, commonly referred to as “Leap-Frog Development.”
- Economic expansion or growth occurs in an area in response to the project, such as by means of a substantial change in revenue base or an expansion of employment.
- The project establishes a precedent-setting action, such as approval of a general plan amendment or change in zoning that will serve as a precedent for other similar projects.

Should a project meet any one of these criteria, it may be considered growth inducing. An evaluation of the proposed Hitch Ranch Specific Plan in relation to these criteria is provided in this section.

¹ California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, *California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines*, Sections 15126 (d) and 15126.2 (d).

Removal of an Impediment to Growth

Growth in an area may result from the removal of physical impediments or restrictions to growth. In this context, physical growth impediments may include nonexistent or inadequate access to an area or the lack or insufficiency of essential public services, such as sewer and water service. The following discussion evaluates the effects of the Proposed Project with respect to this criterion.

The construction of water, sewer, electricity, and natural gas infrastructure is required to support residential and recreational of the uses that would be developed by the Proposed Project.

In the case of water, development of the Proposed Project requires the construction of a system designed to convey and distribute potable water to uses in the project area. The water supply and distribution system designed for the Proposed Project does not provide capacity beyond that required to serve the proposed residential and recreational uses. In addition, the construction of this distribution system would involve the connection to existing water mains located within the surrounding roadway network that serve the existing residential neighborhoods located east, west and north of the project area. No new water mains other than those required to serve the Proposed Project are to be constructed. Therefore, the construction of this water infrastructure would not induce any additional growth in the surrounding area.

The Proposed Project would also involve the extension of wastewater collection lines to serve the proposed residential uses; the existing Hitch Ranch Specific Plan site is undeveloped and as a result, does not include any wastewater collection lines. An in-tract gravity collection system that will generally flow from north to south towards the southwestern corner of the Project site is proposed. The in-tract sewer system will have a 12-inch diameter main line on "A" Street which will serve all onsite Planning Areas and will be sized to accommodate any future flows to the north. Sewer lines will be located along planned streets in order to join the main VCWW trunk line that parallels the Arroyo Simi waterway. The planned capacity will accommodate the planned apartment development on Lot 378 of Tentative Tract 5708 – which is not considered part of the project. Other projects within the area would require extensions and connected to existing wastewater collection infrastructure. As a result, wastewater collection lines constructed for the project would be able to support additional construction to the north but would not provide capacity for additional growth in the area beyond what is already planned, nor are they configured to facilitate extension into the surrounding area.

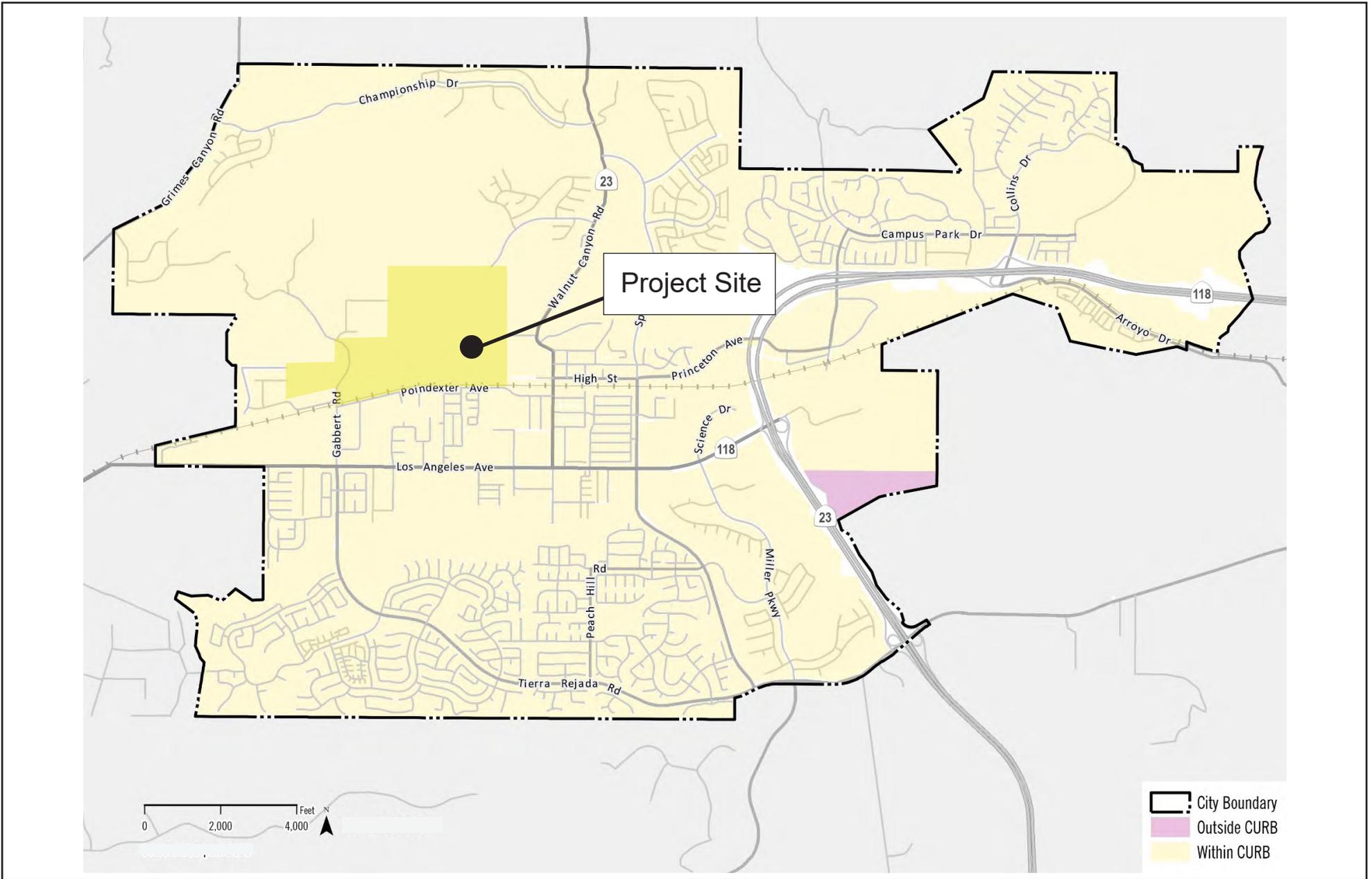
Electricity and natural gas transmission infrastructure presently exists adjacent to the project area. Development of the Proposed Project would necessitate the construction of a distribution system to serve the residential and recreational uses on the site. This system would be designed to accommodate these

uses, and would not extend beyond the requirements or boundary of the Proposed Project site. Given the existence of established energy transmission lines in this area, no growth-inducing impacts are expected with regard to this type of infrastructure.

An established roadway network exists to the north, east, and south of the project area in Moorpark. The Hitch Ranch Specific Plan includes the construction of High Street on the southern edge of the site that will connect the existing Moorpark Avenue to Gabbert Road. Additionally, the Proposed Project would construct internal roadways as well as extend the existing Meridian Hills Drive and Casey Road to the Project site. However, the Proposed Project does not include any new major collector roadways that would provide additional access or traffic capacity that would facilitate development of the surrounding land. These roadways would serve as access to the Proposed Project for residents and emergency responders and would not serve to allow or promote additional growth.

Save Open and Agricultural Resources (SOAR) is a set of laws adopted by the local governments of Ventura County in order to control urban sprawl in the county. In Ventura County's unincorporated lands, SOAR requires the County Board of Supervisors to receive approval from voters all over the county before any up-zoning of the unincorporated lands currently designated for agricultural, open space, or rural land uses can occur. SOAR establishes city-urban restriction boundaries (CURBs) around the perimeters of each incorporated city in Ventura County. If City leadership seeks to expand their CURB beyond its existing limits, they must have the approval of a majority of voters in the city before the expansion can occur. Each community in Ventura County voted in 2016 to extend their participation in SOAR past the original initiative's expiration date of 2020. In Moorpark, SOAR was re-extended by Measure E to continue until 2050.² As shown in **Figure 5.0-1, SOAR-CURB Boundary within Moorpark**, the Project site is well within the SOAR-CURB boundary, and thus would not induce/cause growth outside of an area intended for urban development.

² City of Moorpark, *MOORPARK 2020: An Examination of the City's Existing Conditions*, December 2020.



SOURCE: City of Moorpark, 2020.

FIGURE 5.0-1

SOAR-CURB Boundary within Moorpark

Urbanization of Land in Remote Locations (Leap-Frog Development)

Development can be considered growth inducing when it is not contiguous to existing urban development and “leaps” over open space areas. The proposed residential development is located within the City’s CURB, and located immediately north, south, east, and west of existing residential development in the City. While the project would extend this existing pattern of development, it would not “leap-frog” over undeveloped areas and introduce development that is not continuous with existing development. As the Proposed Project site is adjacent to development on the east, west, north and south, the extension of the existing urban development pattern in the City by the Proposed Project would not result in additional growth.

Economic Growth

The Proposed Project is focused on the development of 755 dwelling units and open space within the next five years. The Proposed Project site is located in a community presently served by existing retail-commercial uses, schools, and other support services and facilities, including public transit. Given the relation of the project to the existing development pattern in the surrounding area, it is not anticipated that the project will foster or promote additional growth of commercial uses in the area, but rather will support existing resources of this nature. Given the size of the Proposed Project and the relatively small resulting increase in population, it is expected that new residents seeking commercial uses in the City could be absorbed by the existing commercial opportunities in the City and nearby communities.

The future residents of the 755 housing units that would be developed may also represent an increase in the local labor force. Given the size of the Proposed Project and the relatively small resulting increase in population, it is expected that new residents seeking employment within the City would be absorbed by existing employment opportunities in the City and nearby communities. The growth in population associated with the Proposed Project is consistent with the adopted growth projections for the City. Therefore, it is not anticipated that the Proposed Project alone would induce growth in commercial, industrial, and office development on presently undeveloped property in the City.

Precedent-Setting Action

As previously mentioned, the Project site is located within the City of Moorpark CURB line. The CURB line sets a boundary for development of the City over a 20-year period through December 31, 2020. The proposed residential uses are located to be consistent with the residential land use designations on the City’s General Plan land use map. Development of the site with residential uses is, therefore, consistent with existing land use plans and policies and is not precedent setting. For an extensive discussion of land

use approvals being sought by the applicant and the land use compatibility of the project with the City's General Plan refer to **Section 3.10, Land Use**.

Conclusion

The Proposed Project would not induce additional growth in the surrounding area.