Section 4.12
# Mineral Resources

## 4.12.1 Overview

This section describes the existing mineral resources present within the project site and the applicable regulations governing mineral resources and analyzes the potential changes to these resources that may result from implementation of the project.

## 4.12.2 Existing Conditions

The term *mineral resources* is used in the mining and conservation fields to describe a concentration or occurrence of natural, solid, inorganic, or fossilized organic material in or on the Earth's crust in such a form and quantity and of such a quality that it has reasonable prospects for economically viable extraction (County of San Diego 2011a). There are three general categories of important mineral resources ~~important to~~in San Diego County:

- **Construction materials:** sand, gravel, and crushed rock. This is economically the most important category of mineral resources.
- **Industrial and chemical mineral materials:** limestone, dolomite, and marble (except where used as construction aggregate); specialty sands, clays, phosphate, borates and gypsum, feldspar, talc, building stone, and dimension stone.
- **Metallic and rare minerals:** precious metals (gold, silver, platinum), iron and other ferro-alloy metals, copper, lead, zinc, gemstones and semi-precious materials, and optical-grade calcite.

No mineral deposits are located within the project site.

### Mineral Resource Zones

In 1975, the California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) required the classification of land into Mineral Resource Zones (MRZs) according to the land's known or inferred mineral resource potential. The primary goal of land classification was to provide local government decision-makers information regarding the mineral potential of land before they make land use decisions that may preclude mining.

The State Mining and Geology Board prioritizes areas to be classified and/or designated. The highest-priority areas are those within the ~~s~~State subject to urban expansion or other irreversible land uses that would preclude mineral extraction. In 1982, western San Diego County was classified into distinct MRZs according to the California Mineral Land Classification System. This area is referred to as the Western San Diego County Production-Consumption (P-C) Zone. The MRZs are described below. The project site is within an area that has been classified as MRZ-3.

### Mineral Resource Zone 1

MRZ-1 designates areas where adequate geologic information indicates no significant mineral deposits are present, or where it is judged there is little likelihood of their presence. This zone is applied by the California Geological Survey to lands where well-developed lines of reasoning, based on economic-geologic principles and adequate data, indicate that the likelihood for occurrence of significant mineral deposits is little to none. MRZ-1 is not present within the project site.

### Mineral Resource Zone 2

MRZ-2 designates areas underlain by mineral deposits where geologic data show that significant measured or indicated resources are present. A typical MRZ-2 area would include an operating mine, or an area where extensive sampling has indicated the presence of a significant mineral deposit. There are no MRZ-2 areas present within the project site.

### Mineral Resource Zone 3

MRZ-3 areas contain known mineral deposits that may qualify as mineral resources. Further exploration work within these areas could result in the reclassification of specific localities into the MRZ-2 category. Most of the rest of the land in the Western San Diego P-C Zone is MRZ-3, except for a few small areas that are MRZ-4. The project site is classified as MRZ-3.

### Mineral Resource Zone 4

MRZ-4 areas are those where geologic information does not rule out either the presence or absence of mineral resources. The distinction between the MRZ-1 and MRZ-4 categories is important for land use considerations. The MRZ-4 classification does not imply there is little likelihood for the presence of mineral resources but rather there is a lack of knowledge regarding mineral occurrence. Further exploration could result in the reclassification of MRZ-4 lands. There are no MRZ-4 areas within the project site.

### Uncategorized Zones

Uncategorized zones are all the lands outside the Western San Diego County P-C Zone. The project does not fall within land classified as ~~P-C~~Uncategorized Zone.

# 4.12.3 Applicable Laws and Regulations

## 4.12.3.1 Federal

There are no federal regulations, authorities, or administering agencies pertaining to mineral resources that would apply to the project.

## 4.12.3.2 State

### Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975

Urban preemption of prime mineral deposits and conflicts between mining and other uses throughout California, as well as the need to adequately reclaim mining sites, led to the passage of

SMARA. The act establishes policies for conservation and development of mineral lands, and contains specific provisions for the classification of mineral lands by the State Geologist. SMARA requires all cities and counties to incorporate into their general plans the mapped designations approved by the lead agency for the operation of the surface mining operation. These designations are to include lands categorized as MRZs. MRZ classifications are set forth in the Guidelines for Classification and Designation of Mineral Lands developed by the State Mining and Geology Board and are used to communicate information concerning the existence of mineral resources.

## 4.12.3.3 Local

### San Diego County Zoning Ordinance, Sections 2820–2835, S82 Extractive Use Regulations

San Diego County Zoning Ordinance Sections 2820 et seq. are known as the S82 Extractive Use Regulations and are intended to identify and create areas within the ~~county~~unincorporated area where mining, quarrying, or oil-extractive uses are permitted. Typically, the S82 Extractive Use Regulations would be applied to areas of mineral deposits to signify the presence of such deposits and notify adjacent or affected properties of the intention to allow extraction of minerals within the zone. The regulations are used to preserve areas with valuable mineral deposits until extraction can take place.

### San Diego County Zoning Ordinance, Sections 6550–6556, Extractive Use Regulations

San Diego County Zoning Ordinance Sections 6550 et seq. are known as the Extractive Use Regulations and provide the means for public review and regulation of mineral extraction and associated onsite processing operations.

### County of San Diego Code of Regulatory Ordinances Section 87.701–87.714, Surface Mining

In 2003, the Board of Supervisors added Sections 87.701 through 87.714, titled *Surface Mining*, to the County of San Diego Code of Regulatory Ordinances to regulate all surface mining operations in the unincorporated area ~~of the county~~ as authorized by the San Diego County Zoning Ordinance and SMARA to ensure that:

a. The continued mining of minerals will be permitted in a manner that will protect the public health and safety and will provide for the protection and subsequent beneficial use of mined and reclaimed land.

b. The possible adverse effects of surface mining operations on the environment, including air pollution, impedance of groundwater movement, water quality degradation, damage to aquatic or wildlife habitat, flooding, erosion, and sedimentation, will be prevented or minimized.

c. The production and conservation of minerals will be encouraged while giving consideration to values relating to recreation, watershed, wildlife, range and forage, and aesthetic enjoyment.

This ordinance is intended to implement the minimum requirements of SMARA as well as to specify local requirements (County of San Diego 2008). County Code Sections 87.701 through 87.714 require that no person conduct surface mining unless a Major Use Permit is obtained, a Reclamation

Plan is approved as provided by the Zoning Ordinance and SMARA, and financial assurances for reclamation have been approved by the County. Grading performed pursuant to a Major Use Permit or Reclamation Plan must be in accordance with a plot plan and conditions approved therewith.

### County of San Diego General Plan ~~Update~~ Policies

The following general plan ~~update~~ policies are applicable to mineral resources.

#### Conservation and Open Space Element

**Policy COS-10.1: Siting of Development.** Encourage the conservation (i.e., protection from incompatible land uses) of areas designated as having substantial potential for mineral extraction. Discourage development that would substantially preclude the future development of mining facilities in these areas. Design development or uses to minimize the potential conflict with existing or potential future mining facilities. For purposes of this policy, incompatible land uses are defined by SMARA Section 3675.

**Policy COS-10.2: Protection of State-Classified or Designated Lands.** Discourage development or the establishment of other incompatible land uses on or adjacent to areas classified or designated by the State of California as having important mineral resources (MRZ-2), as well as potential mineral lands identified by other government agencies. The potential for the extraction of substantial mineral resources from lands classified by the State of California as areas that contain mineral resources (MRZ-3) shall be considered by the County in making land use decisions.

**Policy COS-10.3: Road Access.** Prohibit development from restricting road access to existing mining facilities, areas classified MRZ-2 or MRZ-3 by the State Geologist, or areas identified in the County Zoning Ordinance for potential extractive use in accordance with SMARA section 2764.a.

**Policy COS-10.4: Compatible Land Uses.** Discourage the development of land uses that are not compatible with the retention of mining or recreational access to non-aggregate mineral deposits. See Policy COS-10.1 for a definition of incompatible land uses.

**Policy COS-10.6: Conservation of Construction Aggregate.** Encourage the continued operation of existing mining facilities and streamline the permitting of new mining facilities consistent with the goal to establish permitted aggregate resources that are sufficient to satisfy 50 years of County demand.

**Policy COS-10.8: New Mining Facilities.** Develop specific permit types and procedures for the authorization of new mining facilities that recognize the inherent physical effects of mining operations and the public necessity for available mineral resources adequate to meet local demand, in accordance with PRC Section 2762.

**Policy COS-10.9: Overlay Zones.** Provide zoning overlays for MRZ-2 designated lands and a 1,300-foot-wide buffer area adjacent to such lands. Within these overlay zones, the potential effects of proposed land use actions on potential future extraction of mineral resources shall be considered by the decision-makers.

# 4.12.4 Project Impact Analysis

## 4.12.4.1 Methodology

The project would implement the development of Alpine Park and associated trails as well as the conservation of approximately 70 acres of open space ~~/preserve~~. Section 4.12.4.3 evaluates the effects on existing mineral resources (as described above) should the project be implemented. Based

on the existing conditions, the analysis assesses the direct and indirect impacts related to mineral resources using the thresholds presented below.

## 4.12.4.2 Thresholds of Significance

### Appendix G of the ~~State~~ CEQA Guidelines

Based on guidance provided in Appendix G of the ~~State~~ CEQA Guidelines, the project would result in a significant impact if it would:

1. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the ~~s~~State.
2. Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan.

### County of San Diego Guidelines for Determining Significance

Based on the *County Guidelines for Determining Significance, Mineral Resources* (County of San Diego 2008), implementation of the project would have a significant impact if it would result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the ~~s~~State, such as proposing incompatible development:

- On or in the vicinity of (generally up to 1,300 feet from the site) an area classified as MRZ-2
- On land classified as MRZ-3
- On land underlain by Quaternary alluvium
- On or in the vicinity of areas containing industrial material and gemstone resources

## 4.12.4.3 Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

***Threshold 1: Implementation of the project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the ~~s~~State.***

### County Park and Trails and Open Space~~/Preserve~~

#### Impact Discussion

The project site is on lands classified as MRZ-3 and does not have mineral deposits or active mines present. The project site is surrounded by developed land uses including rural residential, which is incompatible with future extraction of mineral resources on the project site (County of San Diego 2011b). The project site is zoned as A70, *Limited* ~~Agriculture~~*Agricultural Use*, and mining is not a permitted use in this zone.

The development of the project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value because current land uses and zoning preclude mining on the project site.

### Impact Determination

Implementation of the project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the ~~s~~State. Impacts would be less than significant.

### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

### Level of Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be less than significant.

***Threshold 2: Implementation of the project would not result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan.***

## County Park, Trails, and Open Space~~/Preserve~~

### Impact Discussion

As described above, the project site is in an area designated MRZ-3. However, the project would not result in the loss of locally important mineral resources because the project site is within the Alpine Park, for which proposed goals are incompatible with future extraction of mineral resources. The project site is not ~~considered to be~~within an Extractive Use Zone (S82) and does not have an Impact Sensitive Land Use Designation (24) with an Extractive Land Use Overlay (25) (County of San Diego 2011a). The placement of the proposed use on the project site would not result in a loss of mineral resources because future mining at the site is already precluded by existing land use incompatibilities.

Therefore, no loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery (extraction) site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan would result from project implementation.

### Impact Determination

Implementation of the project would not result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan. Impacts would be less than significant.

### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

### Level of Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be less than significant.

## 4.12.5 Summary of Significant Impacts

There would be no significant impacts associated with mineral resources.