

4.20 WILDFIRE

This section provides a discussion of the existing topography and vegetative cover setting and an analysis of the Project site's potential wildfire impacts. In addition, this section addresses potential impacts due to wildland fire impacts resulting from construction and operation of the Specific Plan's proposed land uses on the Project site. This section also summarizes information provided in the *Preliminary Geotechnical Evaluation and Design Recommendations for the Proposed Approximately 580-Acre "Meniffee Valley" Residential Development, City of Meniffee, California (2018)* by LGC Geotechnical, Inc. This report is included as **Appendix G-1** to this Environmental Impact Report (EIR). This section also incorporates data from the City of Meniffee (City) General Plan, a review of existing resources, technical data, applicable laws, regulations, guidelines, and information obtained from the California Department of Forestry and Fire (CAL FIRE) Fire Hazard Severity Zone Mapping data.

4.20.1 Scoping Process

The City received ten comment letters during the public review period of the Notice of Preparation (NOP). For copies of the NOP comment letters, refer to **Appendix A-1** of this EIR. No comment letters were received that addressed wildfire.

4.20.2 Methodology

The Specific Plan uses on the Project site would be consistent with the current editions of the California Building Code (CBC); the California Fire Code (CFC); and the International Fire Code (IFC) as adopted and amended by the Riverside County Fire Department (RCFD). Additionally, the RCFD references Fire Prevention Standards for informational purposes in clarifying and interpreting provisions of the CFC, National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), and California Public Resources Code (PRC).

4.20.3 Existing Environmental Setting

Fire environments are dynamic systems and include many types of environmental factors and Project site characteristics. Fires can occur in any environment where conditions are conducive to ignition and fire movement. Areas of naturally vegetated open space typically comprise conditions that may be favorable to wildfire spread. The three major components of fire environment are topography, climate, and vegetation (fuels). The state of each of these components and their interactions with each other determines the potential characteristics and behavior of a fire at any given moment.

It is important to note that wildland fire may transition to urban fire if structures are receptive to ignition. Structure ignition depends on a variety of factors and can be prevented through a layered system of protective features including fire resistive landscapes adjacent to structure(s), application of known ignition resistive materials and methods, and suitable infrastructure for firefighting purposes. Understanding the existing wildland vegetation and urban fuel conditions on and adjacent to the Project site is necessary to understand the potential for wildland fires within and around the Project site.

The Project site is not located in an area designated by the State of California as a Moderate, High, or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) within a Local Responsibility Area (LRA) or State

Responsibility Area (SRA).¹ However, three Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ) within an LRA are located within 1 mile of the Project site: one northeast, one southeast, and one southwest of the Project site. Additionally, a Very High FHSZ within an SRA is located approximately 150 feet east of the Project site (across Briggs Road). **Figure 4.20-1** shows the location of the Project site in an LRA Non-VHFHSZ pursuant to CAL FIRE mapping.

The RCFD provides fire and emergency services for Menifee. Four RCFD fire stations are located in the city: Sun City Station No. 7 (28349 Bradley Road), Menifee Lakes Station No. 76 (29950 Menifee Road), Menifee Station No. 68 (26020 Wickerd Road), and Quail Valley Station No. 5 (28971 Goetz Road). There are three stations near the Project site, including Homeland Station No. 54 (25730 Sultanas Road) located in Riverside County, approximately 1.4 miles northeast of the site, Sun City Station No. 7 approximately 3.7 miles southwest of the site, and Menifee Lakes Station No. 76 approximately 4.8 miles south of the site.

The following sections discuss the characteristics, local climate, and fire history within and surrounding the Project site. The Project site is similar concerning topography, vegetative cover, available access, and land use to adjacent undeveloped land to the north, east, and south. The following sections discuss the characteristics of the Project site on a regional scale. The intent of evaluating conditions at this macro-scale is to provide a better understanding of the regional fire environment, which is not constrained by property boundary delineations.

4.20.3.1 Topography

Topography influences fire risk by affecting fire spread rates. Typically, steep terrain results in faster fire spread upslope and slower fire spread downslope in the absence of wind. Flat terrain tends to have little effect on fire spread, resulting in fires that are driven by wind.

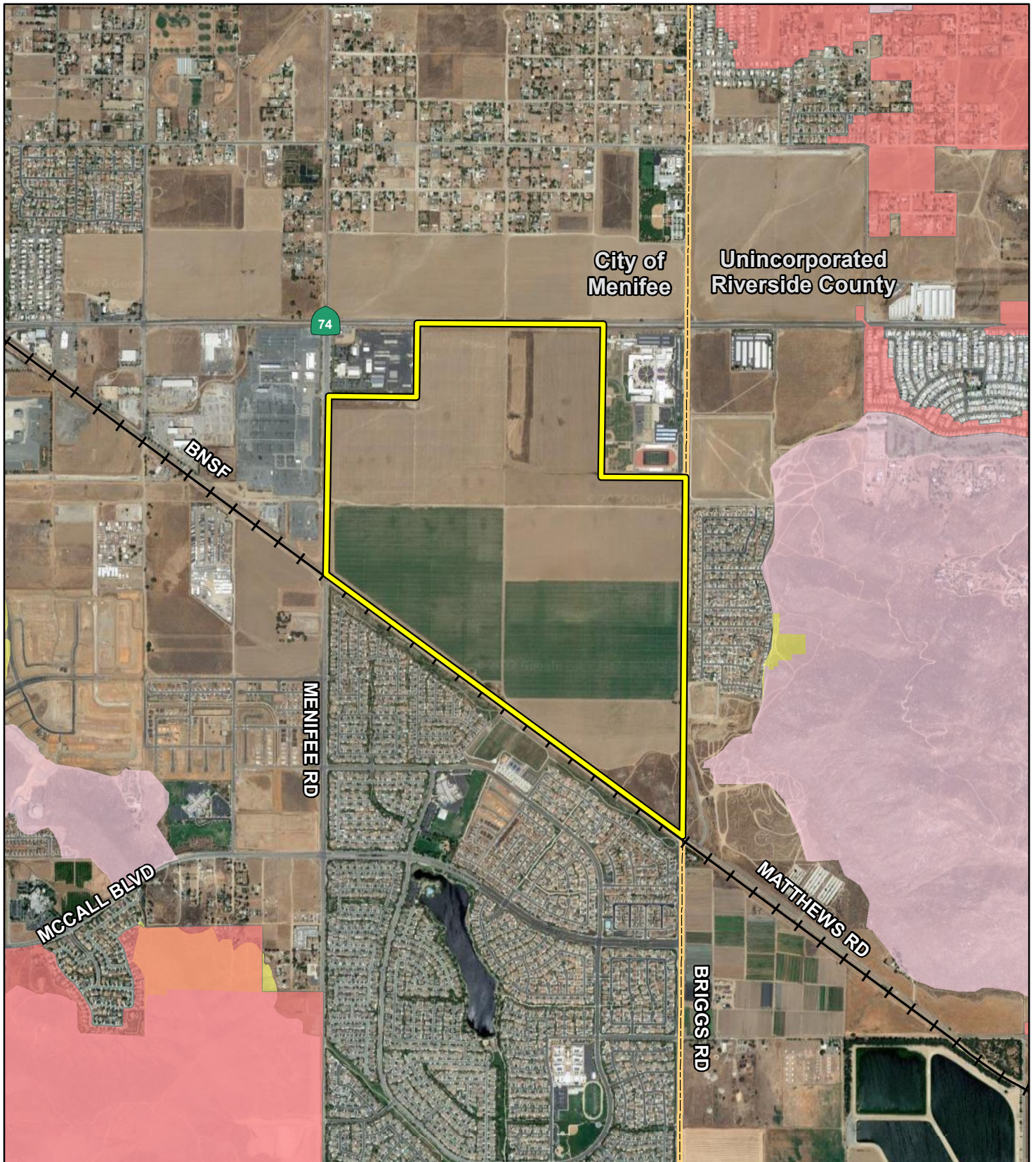
The Project site is on relatively flat undeveloped parcels with a small pond in the southwestern portion of the Project site and a granitic hill measuring 120 feet in height in the southeastern portion of the site. The Project site gently slopes from east to west with elevations ranging from approximately 1,465 feet above mean sea level (amsl) in the southwestern corner to approximately 1,625 feet amsl in the southeastern corner of the site.²

4.20.3.2 Climate



Throughout southern California, and specifically at the Project site, climate has a large influence on fire risk. The climate of Riverside County is typical of a Mediterranean area, with warm, dry summers and cold, wet winters. Annual temperatures in the Project site vicinity range from 65 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) and 92°F. Precipitation averages less than 12 inches and typically occurs between December and March. The prevailing wind is an onshore flow between 7 and 11 miles per hour (mph) from the Pacific Ocean.

¹ California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP). <https://egis.fire.ca.gov/FHSZ/>. Accessed July 25, 2022.

² LGC Geotechnical, Inc. 2018. *Preliminary Geotechnical and Design Recommendations for the Proposed Approximately 580-Acre "Menifee Valley" Residential Development, City of Menifee, California*. Pages 2–3.



LSA

-  Menifee Valley Specific Plan Site
-  City Boundary

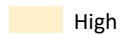
CAL FIRE Hazard Severity Zones

FHSZ in LRA

 Very High

FHSZ in SRA

 Very High

 High

 Moderate

FIGURE 4.20-1



0 1000 2000
Feet

SOURCE: Google Imagery (2021); Cal Fire (2022)

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Menifee Valley Specific Plan EIR
CAL FIRE Hazard Severity Zone

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Fires can be an issue during the summer and fall, before the rainy period, especially during dry Santa Ana wind events. The seasonal Santa Ana winds can be particularly strong in the vicinity of the Project site. Although Santa Ana events can occur at any time of the year, they generally occur during the autumn months, although the last few years have resulted in spring (April–May) and summer events as well. Santa Ana winds may gust up to 75 mph or higher. This phenomenon markedly increases the wildfire danger and intensity in the Project site vicinity by drying out and preheating vegetation (fuel moisture of less than 5 percent for 1-hour fuels is possible) as well as accelerating oxygen supply, and thereby making possible the burning of fuels that otherwise might not burn under cooler, moister conditions.

4.20.3.3 Fuels (Vegetation)

The Project site and vacant areas to the north, east, and south primarily support low lying agricultural vegetation. Developed areas to the east, south, and west reduce the amount of wildfire fuels (vegetation) in the Project vicinity.

4.20.3.4 Fire History

Fire history is an important component in analyzing wildfire susceptibility. Fire history data provide valuable information regarding fire spread, fire frequency, most vulnerable areas, and significant ignition sources, among others. In turn, this understanding of why fires occur in an area and how they typically spread can then be used for pre-planning and designing defensible communities.

Fire history for the Project site and surrounding area was determined by referencing the Fire and Resources Assessment Program (FRAP) database. The FRAP database summarizes fire perimeter data dating to the late 1800s, but it is incomplete due to the fact that it only includes fires over 10 acres and has incomplete perimeter data, especially for the first half of the 20th century.³ However, the database does provide a summary of recorded fires and can be used to show whether large fires have occurred in the Project site vicinity, which indicates whether they may be possible in the future. CAL FIRE has recorded seven fires since 1900 that have burned within 1 mile of the Project site in its FRAP database.⁴ Since 1900, there have been no recorded fires that have burned onto any portion of the Project site.

4.20.4 Regulatory Setting

This section includes applicable federal, State, regional, and City regulations.

4.20.4.1 Federal Regulations

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Code 1710. Code 1710 of the NFPA provides the minimum requirements for the organization and deployment of fire suppression operations, emergency medical operations, and special operations to the public by career fire departments.

³ CAL FIRE. Fire and Resources Assessment Program (FRAP) Projects, Fire Perimeters through 2021. <https://frap.fire.ca.gov/mapping/gis-data/>. Accessed July 26, 2022.

⁴ CAL FIRE. Fire and Resources Assessment Program (FRAP) Projects, Fire Perimeters through 2021. <https://calfire-forestry.maps.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?layers=e3802d2abf8741a187e73a9db49d68fe>. Accessed July 26, 2022.

National Incident Management System (NIMS). The NIMS provides a systematic, proactive approach to guide government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector to work together to prevent, report, recover from, and mitigate the effects of fire incidents, regardless of cause, size, location, or complexity, to reduce the loss of life and property harm to the environment. The City participates in NIMS, which improves its ability to prepare for and respond to potential incidents and hazard scenarios.

4.20.4.2 State Regulations

CAL FIRE and Resources Assessment Program. CAL FIRE publishes maps that predict the threat of fire for each county within the State. LRAs, SRAs, and Federal Responsibility Areas (FRAs) are classified as either VHFHSZ or Non-VHFHSZ based on factors including fuel availability, topography, fire history, and climate. The 2018 Strategic Fire Plan for California was generated by CAL FIRE to provide guidelines and objectives to account for associated fire impacts.

California Fire Code (CFC). Chapter 8.20.010 of the City of Menifee Municipal Code adopts the CFC, which is updated every 3 years. The CFC includes regulations for emergency planning, fire service features, fire protection systems, hazardous materials, fire flow requirements, and fire hydrant locations, distribution, and spacing. Several fire safety requirements include installation of sprinklers in all high-rise buildings; the establishment of fire resistance standards for fire doors, building materials, and particular types of construction; and the clearance of debris and vegetation within a prescribed distance from occupied structures in wildfire hazard areas.

California Strategic Fire Plan. This statewide plan is a strategic document that guides fire policy for much of California. The plan is aimed at reducing wildfire risk through pre-fire mitigation efforts tailored to local areas through assessments of fuels, hazards, and risks.

California State Hazard Mitigation Plan. The purpose of the State Hazard Mitigation Plan (SHMP) is to significantly reduce deaths, injuries, and other losses attributed to natural and human-caused hazards in California. The SHMP provides guidance for hazard mitigation activities emphasizing partnerships among local, State, and federal agencies as well as the private sector.

California Government Code. California Government Code §51175 defines VHFHSZ and designates lands considered by the State to be a very high fire hazard. California Government Code §51189 directs the Office of the State Fire Marshal to create building standards for wildland fire resistance. The code includes measures that increase the likelihood of a structure withstanding intrusion by fire (e.g., building design and construction requirements that use fire-resistant building materials) and provides protection of structure projections (e.g., porches, decks, balconies, and eaves) and structure openings (e.g., attics, eave vents, and windows).

California Public Resources Code (PRC). The State's Fire Safe Regulations are set forth in PRC §4290, which require local fire prevention authorities and CAL FIRE to identify FHSZ in LRAs and SRAs. Standards related to fuel breaks, greenbelts, and ridgelines within FHSZ are also established. PRC §4291 sets forth defensible space requirements, which are applicable to anyone that "... owns, leases, controls, operates, or maintains a building or structure in, upon, or adjoining a mountainous

area, forest-covered lands, brush covered lands, grass-covered lands, or land that is covered with flammable material” (§4291(a)).

California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 8 (Industrial Relations). In accordance with CCR Title 8 §1270 and §6773 (Fire Prevention, and Fire Protection and Fire Equipment), the California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Cal/OSHA) establishes fire suppression service standards. The standards range from fire hose size requirements to the design of emergency access roads.

CCR Title 14 (Natural Resources). Division 1.5 (Department of Forestry and Fire Protection), Title 14 of the CCR establishes a variety of wildfire preparedness, prevention, and response regulations.

CCR Title 19 (Public Safety). Title 19 of the CCR establishes a variety of emergency fire response, fire prevention, and construction and construction materials standards.

CCR Title 24 (California Building Standards Code). The CFC is set forth in Part 9 of the Building Standards Code. The CFC, which is pre-assembled with the IFC by the International Code Council (ICC), contains fire-safety building standards referenced in other parts of Title 24.

California Health and Safety Code §13000 et seq. and California Building Code (CBC). State fire regulations are set forth in §13000 et seq. of the California Health and Safety Code, which is divided into “Fires and Fire Protection” and “Buildings Used by the Public.” The regulations provide for the enforcement of the CBC and mandate the abatement of fire hazards. The California Health and Safety Code establishes broadly applicable regulations, such as standards for buildings and fire protection devices, in addition to regulations for specific land uses, such as childcare facilities and high-rise structures.

California Health and Safety Code Division 11 (Explosives). Division 11 of the California Health and Safety Code establishes regulations related to a variety of explosive substances and devices, including high explosives and fireworks. Section 12000 et seq. establishes regulations related to explosives and explosive devices, including permitting, handling, storage, and transport (in quantities greater than 1,000 pounds).

California Health and Safety Code Division 12.5 (Buildings Used by the Public). Division 12.5 establishes requirements for buildings used by the public, including essential services buildings, earthquake hazard mitigation technologies, school buildings, and post-secondary buildings.

California Residential Code §R337. Section R337 establishes minimum standards for the protection of life and property by increasing the ability of a building located in any FHSZ within an SRA or any WUI Fire Area to resist the intrusion of flame or burning embers projected by a vegetation fire and contributes to a systematic reduction in conflagration losses. This section regulates materials and construction methods for exteriors susceptible to wildfire exposure.

California Building Code (CBC), Chapter 7A. Chapter 7A applies to building materials, systems, and/or assemblies used in the exterior design and construction of new buildings located within a WUI Fire Area. This section of the CBC establishes minimum standards for features such as fire

retardant-treated wood and wood shingles, surface treatment protection, ignition-resistant construction, roof coverings and gutters, vents, exterior walls and coverings, exterior porch ceilings, underfloor protection, exterior windows, skylights, and doors, decking, and accessory structures.

Executive Order N-04-19. On January 9, 2019, Governor Newsom announced Executive Order (EO) N-04-19, which requires State agencies to identify innovative and sustainable solutions to address the State's wildfire crisis, such as upgraded fire detection technology.

Executive Order N-05-19. On January 9, 2019, Governor Newsom also announced EO N-05-19, which requires CAL FIRE and other State agencies to compile policy and regulatory recommendations concerning wildfire mitigation, emphasizing environmental sustainability and public health. EO N-05-19 requires the incorporation of socioeconomic analysis when conducting risk management of wildfires and mandates that agencies identify geographic areas with populations that are more vulnerable to the impacts of wildfires.

4.20.4.3 Regional Regulations

Riverside County Emergency Management Department Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. The plan aims to reduce the impact of a disaster by identifying hazards and developing ways to decrease their impact. Risk assessments rate hazards with the greatest potential impact to the community. In addition, long-term prevention or protection steps are developed to lessen the impact of the hazard. This plan creates awareness of hazards, threats, and vulnerabilities within the community and paves a path forward for jurisdictions to prepare for local and regional disasters. The 2018 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan is the most current, and the County is updating the plan for compliance with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000.⁵

4.20.4.4 Local Regulations

City of Menifee General Plan Safety Element. The Safety Element of the Menifee General Plan addresses potential natural and man-made hazards, including wildland fire hazards, within the community through discussion, analysis, and setting forth goals, policies, and programs. The foremost goal of this Element is to protect the general health, safety, and welfare of Menifee from potential hazards. The following goals and policies related to wildfires would be applicable to the build out of the Project site:

- **Goal S-4:** A community that has effective fire mitigation and response measures in place, and as a result is minimally impacted by wildland and structure fires.
 - **Policy S-4.1:** Require fire-resistant building construction materials, the use of vegetation control methods, and other construction and fire prevention features to reduce the hazard of wildland fire. Ensure all new development and/or redevelopment in the LRA and VHFHSZ will comply with the California Fire Code (CFD) and California Building Code (CBC). All new

⁵ Riverside County Emergency Management Department. Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. Website: <https://rivcoemd.org/LHMP> (accessed July 25, 2022).

development within the LRA Very High Fire zone will comply with Chapter 49 of the California Fire Code and Chapter 7A of the California Building Code.

- **Policy S-4.2:** Ensure, to the maximum extent possible, that fire services, such as firefighting equipment and personnel, infrastructure, and response times, are adequate for all sections of the City. The City will continue to coordinate with the Riverside County Fire Department, for interagency coordination, to respond to emergency calls in Menifee and to provide training and ongoing programs for public education.
- **Policy S-4.4:** Review development proposals for impacts to fire facilities and compatibility with fire areas or mitigate.
- **Policy S-4.8:** When feasible locate new essential public facilities outside of high fire risk areas, including, but not limited to, hospitals and health care facilities, emergency shelters, emergency command centers, and emergency communications facilities, or identifying construction methods or other methods to minimize damage if these facilities are located in a state responsibility area or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone.
- **Policy S-4.10:** Ensure all new residential development as well as new development and redevelopment within the LRA and VHFHSZ will comply with the most current version of the California Building Codes and California Fire Code.
- **Policy S-4.14:** All new parcel maps and tentative maps in the LRA, SRA, and VHFHSZ shall provide two points of access to the project in conformance with the California Building Code and California Fire Code and CA GC 65302 (g)(5). Approval of parcel maps and tentative maps in LRAs, SRAs or VHFHSZs is conditional based on meeting the SRA Fire Safe Regulations and the Fire Hazard Reduction Around Buildings and Structures Regulations, particularly those regarding road standards for ingress, egress, and fire equipment access. (See Gov Code, 66474.02.).
- **Policy S-4.17:** The City should ensure that all new development has adequate water, sewer, and fire protection consistent with the most current California Building Code and California Fire Code and will comply with the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection Fire Safe Regulations.

City of Menifee Municipal Code, Chapter 1.10. Establishes the Emergency Organization of the City.

- **Section 1.10.010:** Defines “emergency” as the actual or threatened existence of conditions of disaster that are caused by conditions such as air pollution, fire, flood, storm, epidemic, riot, or earthquake or other conditions resulting from war or imminent threat of war.
- **Section 1.10.070:** Requires that the established Disaster Council develop the city’s emergency plan, and provide for the organization, powers, duties, services, and staff of the emergency organization.

City of Menifée Municipal Code, Chapter 8.20. Includes the adoption and application of the California Fire Code by reference.

- **Section 8.20.010:** Adopts certain sections and chapters of the 2022 California Fire Code and makes amendments to the Code.⁶

City of Menifée Emergency Operations Plan. The City of Menifée Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) addresses the planned response to extraordinary emergency situations associated with natural disasters, technological incidents, and national security emergencies in or affecting Menifée. The EOP is designed to establish the framework for implementation of the California Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) for Menifée, which is located within the Riverside County Operational Area (OA) and Mutual Aid Region VI as defined by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES). By extension, the OES also implements the NIMS, which is being integrated into SEMS at the Governor's directive (EO S-2-05). The OES is intended to facilitate multiagency and multijurisdictional coordination, particularly between the City of Menifée and County of Riverside, special districts, and State agencies, in emergency operations. The OES is operational in design.⁷

4.20.5 Thresholds of Significance

The thresholds for wildfire impacts used in this analysis are consistent with Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*. If the Project site would be located in or near SRAs or lands classified as VHFHSZ, the Project site may be deemed to have a significant impact with respect to wildfires if it would:

- Threshold 4.20-1:** Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.
- Threshold 4.20-2:** Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire.
- Threshold 4.20-3:** Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment.
- Threshold 4.20-4:** Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes.

4.20.6 Impact Analysis

The Project site and the 59-acre off-site improvement areas are not located in an area statutorily designated as a Moderate, High, or Very High FHSZ within an LRA or SRA. The Project site is designated as an LRA Non-VHFHSZ. However, as discussed in **Section 4.20.3**, the Project site is located near

⁶ Refer to Municipal Code Chapter 8.20 for amendments to the California Fire Code.

⁷ City of Menifée. 2021. City of Menifée Emergency Operations Plan. Website: <https://www.cityofmenifee.us/DocumentCenter/View/12396/Emergency-Operations-Plan-EOP?bidId=> (accessed July 25, 2022).

several FHSZ designated areas, including a Very High FHSZ located approximately 150 feet east of the Project site. Given the site's proximity to fire prone areas, the Project may have a significant impact on wildfire risks. A discussion and analysis for the Project's impacts on wildfire risks is provided below.

4.20.6.1 Impair an Emergency Plan

Threshold 4.20-1: Would the project substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Police protection services within the city are provided by the Menifee Police Department, and fire protection services are provided through a contractual agreement with the RCFD, which in turn contracts with CAL FIRE. Exhibit S-9 of the Menifee General Plan Safety Element identifies the City's established evacuation route network to be used in the case of an emergency. According to Exhibit S-9, depending on the location and extent of an emergency, State Route 74 (SR-74) and Menifee Road would be utilized to route traffic from the Project vicinity onto Interstate 215 to exit the region.⁸ The City adopted the *Emergency Operations Plan* in 2021, which provides guidance for residents, city emergency responders, and businesses in the event a man-made or natural emergency occurs within the city or threatens the city.

On-Site Improvements.

Construction. The Project site is in an LRA Non-VHFHSZ designated area. All large construction vehicles entering and exiting the Project site would be guided by personnel using signs and flags to direct traffic pursuant to **RCM TRA-1**. The Project site does not include any characteristics that would physically impair or otherwise interfere with emergency response or evacuation in its vicinity. Construction of the Specific Plan uses on the Project site may require temporary lane closures/road closures on SR-74, Menifee Road, and Briggs Road to allow for utility connections and improvements to the surrounding circulation system. These temporary lane closures/road closures would be implemented with the recommendation of the *California Temporary Traffic Control Handbook*, which, among other things, recommends early coordination with affected agencies to ensure that emergency vehicle access is maintained (see **RCM TRA-1**). In this manner, officials can plan and respond appropriately to direct the public away from SR-74, Menifee Road, and Briggs Road, as appropriate, in the event of an emergency requiring evacuation. Therefore, build out of the Specific Plan on the Project site would not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan during construction activities. Impacts would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation measures are required.

Operation. The 590.3-acre Project site would be developed under a Specific Plan with up to 1,718 single-family and multifamily dwelling units on approximately 202.3 acres of the Project site in Planning Areas 1 through 6, 44.5 acres of Open Space-Recreation/Conservation use in Planning Areas 7A through 8B, 6,190,000 square feet of Commercial, Business Park, Public Facility, and Commercial Business Park uses on 311.1 acres in Planning Areas 9 through 13, and 32.4 acres of internal street dedication/circulation. The City of Menifee General Plan, as

⁸ Menifee, City of. 2013. City of Menifee General Plan, Safety Element. Exhibit S-9, Evacuation Routes. Website: <https://www.cityofmenifee.us/DocumentCenter/View/14711/Evacuation-Routes> (accessed July 26, 2022).

indicated above, has an established evacuation route network within the city. For the Project site, the main corridors utilized would be SR-74 and Menifee Road.

The Specific Plan, at build out, would provide general and emergency access via SR-74 and Menifee Road. SR-74 provides access for the Project site via Malaga Road, and Menifee Road provides access for the Project site via McLaughlin Road. Access to the commercial, business park, and commercial business park uses in Planning Areas 10 through 13 would be provided by Malaga Road and McLaughlin Road, which connect to SR-74 and Menifee Road, respectively. Direct access to residential uses in Planning Areas 1 through 6 would be provided by Residential Collector Streets connecting to Briggs Road.

All roadways and structures within the Project site would be developed in accordance with City and RCFD emergency access standards. Uses and structures within the Project site would also be required to comply with all applicable codes and ordinances for emergency vehicle access, which would ensure adequate access to, from, and on the site for emergency vehicles.

Therefore, operation of the Project would not physically interfere with or impair an adopted emergency response or emergency evacuation plan. Impacts would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation measures are required.

Off-Site Improvements.

Construction. Implementation of the Project would result in physical disturbance to up to 59.0 acres for the installation of off-site improvements including roadway improvements to existing roadways (e.g. Menifee Road, SR-74, and Briggs Road), utility connections (e.g. water, sewer, stormwater, electricity, internet, and natural gas), landscaping, and construction of a non-vehicular bridge to connect the Specific Plan site to the Heritage Lake community to the south. The widening of these existing roadways would be in conformance with the City's General Plan Circulation Element. Construction of these roadway improvements may require temporary lane closures/road closures on SR-74, Menifee Road, and Briggs Road. These temporary lane closures/road closures would be implemented with the recommendation of the *California Temporary Traffic Control Handbook*, which, among other things, recommends early coordination with affected agencies to ensure that emergency vehicle access is maintained (refer to **RCM TRA-1**). In this manner, officials can plan and respond appropriately to direct the public away from SR-74, Menifee Road, and Briggs Road, as appropriate, in the event of an emergency requiring evacuation. Therefore, construction of off-site improvements would not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan during construction activities. Impacts would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation would be required.

Operation. The City of Menifee General Plan identifies SR-74 and Menifee Road as main evacuation corridors in the City's evacuation route network. The widening of SR-74 and Menifee Road would be in conformance with the City's General Plan Circulation Element and would be developed in accordance with City and RCFD emergency access standards. Therefore, operation of the off-site improvements would not physically interfere with or impair an adopted

emergency response or emergency evacuation plan. Impacts would be *less than significant*, and no mitigation measures are required.

Off-Site Roadway Improvements. Implementation of the Project would also result in off-site roadway improvements along Matthews Road (Case Road), McCall Boulevard, and McLaughlin Road to address traffic impacts in conflict with the General Plan Circulation Element policies that strive to maintain desired LOS.

Construction. Construction of these roadway improvements may require temporary lane closures/road closures on Matthews Road (Case Road), McCall Boulevard, and east of McLaughlin Road. These temporary lane closures/road closures would be implemented with the recommendation of the *California Temporary Traffic Control Handbook*, which, among other things, recommends early coordination with affected agencies to ensure that emergency vehicle access is maintained (refer to **RCM TRA-1**). In this manner, officials can plan and respond appropriately to direct the public away from Matthews Road (Case Road), McCall Boulevard, and McLaughlin Road, as appropriate, in the event of an emergency requiring evacuation. Therefore, construction of off-site improvements would not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan during construction activities. Impacts would be *less than significant*, and no mitigation would be required.

Operation. The roadway improvements would be in conformance with the City's General Plan Circulation Element and the General Plan Circulation Element EIR, and would be developed in accordance with City and RCFD emergency access standards. Therefore, operation of the off-site improvements would not physically interfere with or impair an adopted emergency response or emergency evacuation plan. Impacts would be *less than significant*, and no mitigation measures are required.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact.

Regulatory Compliance Measures and Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required. The following Regulatory Compliance Measures would be implemented as part of the proposed Project:

RCM TRA-1 Construction Traffic Management Plan. Prior to commencement of grading activities, the construction contractor shall prepare a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) to the satisfaction of the City of Menifee and shall ensure that the plan is implemented during construction with the goal of maintaining safety and adequate traffic operations to roadways affected by construction traffic. The CTMP shall be consistent with the *California Temporary Traffic Control Handbook* (CATTCH) (previously known as the California Joint Utility Traffic Control Manual). At a minimum, the CTMP shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Provisions for temporary traffic control to improve traffic flow on public roadways and ensure the safe access into and out of the site (e.g., warning signs, lights and devices, and flag personnel);

- Prohibiting construction-related vehicles from parking on public streets;
- Providing safety precautions for pedestrians, equestrians, and bicyclists through such measures as alternate routing and protection barriers;
- Obtaining the required permits for truck haul routes from the City of Menefee and/or the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans);
- Maintaining unobstructed emergency access to the project site and adjacent areas during all phases of construction. Flag personnel shall be trained to assist in emergency response by restricting or controlling the movement of traffic that could interfere with emergency vehicle access.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact.

4.20.6.2 Exacerbate Wildfire Risks Due to Slope, Prevailing Winds, and Other Factors

Threshold 4.20-2: **Would the project, due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?**

On-Site Improvements. Topography influences fire risk by affecting fire spread rates. Typically, steep terrain results in faster fire spread upslope and slower fire spread downslope in the absence of wind. The Project site is on relatively flat undeveloped parcels with a small pond in the southwestern portion of the Project site and a granitic hill measuring 120 feet above surrounding grade in the southeastern portion of the site. The granitic hill would remain as natural open space. The Project site gently slopes from east to west with elevations ranging from approximately 1,465 feet amsl in the southwestern corner to approximately 1,625 feet amsl in the southeastern corner of the site. Fires can be a significant issue in the city and county during the summer and fall, before the rainy period, especially during dry Santa Ana wind events. The seasonal Santa Ana winds can be particularly strong in the Project site area. Santa Ana winds may gust up to 75 mph or higher, thereby drying out and preheating vegetation as well as accelerating oxygen supply, and thereby making possible the burning of fuels that otherwise might not burn under cooler, moister conditions.

Wildfires may potentially occur in open space areas adjacent to the Project site. As previously discussed, a Very High FHSZ is located across Briggs Road, approximately 150 feet east of the Project site. Consequently, there are wildfire risks from the uncontrolled spread of fire from off-site areas, such as the Very High FHSZ to the east. However, portions of this Very High FHSZ are developed with residential uses and the undeveloped portions of the Very High FHSZ are planned for residential development, rendering the area less prone to wildfire risk once fully developed. Additionally, existing and planned development within the Very High FHSZ would have been/will be developed in accordance with applicable CBC, California Fire Code, and City Municipal Code regulations to reduce the risk of wildfires in the Project vicinity.

Under existing conditions, the Project site includes numerous potential fire hazards, including unmaintained, fire-prone vegetation. The types of potential ignition sources that currently exist in

the surrounding area include vehicles and residential neighborhoods. Implementation of the Specific Plan would include conversion of approximately 97.5 percent of the Project site to maintained urban development with designated, drought-tolerant landscaping. Two and a half percent of the Project site would remain as open space, with Granite Hill remaining as natural open space. The site topography would not be substantially altered and no significant slopes would be created. The build out of the Specific Plan on the Project site would introduce new potential ignition sources in the form of building materials (e.g., wood and stucco), vegetation for landscaping, vehicles, and small machinery (e.g., for typical commercial and landscape maintenance), but it would also result in a large area separating ignition sources from native fuels as well as the conversion of existing ignitable fuels to maintained landscapes. Therefore, the Project site would function as a fuel reduction area by helping create context-sensitive development and a new first-fuel break line of defensible space. Additionally, residential development occurs to the south, across the railroad tracks, which provides additional separation between uses on the Project site and undeveloped fire-prone areas within the Project vicinity.

The Project would be developed in accordance with applicable CBC, California Fire Code, and City Municipal Code regulations, including ignition-resistant materials and incorporation of fire sprinklers, to reduce the risk of wildfires in the Project vicinity and minimize the occurrence or spread of wildfire during construction and operation of the Proposed Project. The Project also would provide improved access throughout the Project site, which improves firefighters' access for wildland firefighting efforts. Finally, the Specific Plan would potentially accommodate a fire station in Planning Area 9 and would be developed in accordance with applicable City and Riverside County Fire Department development standards. Development of a fire station within the Project site would decrease firefighters' response time to wildfires that may occur within the Project vicinity, minimizing uncontrolled spread of wildfires and reducing project occupants' exposure to pollutant concentrations from wildfire.

For the reasons stated above, the proposed Project would not substantially alter localized topography on the Project site, would not create new significant slopes, affect prevailing winds, or otherwise exacerbate wildfire risks. Therefore, with adherence to the regulatory standards, impacts related to exacerbating wildfire risks due to slope, prevailing winds, or other factors would be ***less than significant***. No mitigation measures are required.

Off-Site Improvements. Implementation of the Project would result in physical disturbance to up to 59.0 acres for the installation of off-site improvements including roadway improvements to existing roadways (e.g. Menifee Road, SR-74, and Briggs Road), utility connections (e.g. water, sewer, stormwater, electricity, internet, and natural gas), landscaping, and construction of a non-vehicular bridge to connect the Specific Plan site to the Heritage Lake community to the south. These off-site improvements would not significantly alter the topography or create new significant terrain slopes. Off-site improvements would convert undeveloped land (fuel) within the rights-of-way of SR-74, Menifee Road, and Briggs Road to paved roadways. Therefore, operation of off-site improvements to these roadways would function as a fuel reduction area and provide improved emergency access. Therefore, off-site improvements would not exacerbate wildfire risks due to slope, prevailing winds, or other factors. Impacts would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation would be required.

Off-Site Roadway Improvements. Implementation of the Project would also result in off-site roadway improvements along Matthews Road (Case Road), McCall Boulevard, and McLaughlin Road to address traffic impacts in conflict with the General Plan Circulation Element policies that strive to maintain desired LOS. These off-site roadway improvements would not significantly alter the topography or create new significant terrain slopes. Off-site improvements could convert undeveloped land (fuel) within the future rights-of-way of the roadways to paved roadways. Therefore, operation of off-site improvements to these roadways would function as a fuel reduction area and provide improved emergency access. Therefore, off-site improvements would not exacerbate wildfire risks due to slope, prevailing winds, or other factors. Impacts would be *less than significant*, and no mitigation would be required.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact.

Regulatory Compliance Measures and Mitigation Measures: No Regulatory Compliance Measures or Mitigation Measures are required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact.

4.20.6.3 Exacerbate Wildfire Risks Due to the Installation or Maintenance of Infrastructure

Threshold 4.20-3: **Would the project require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?**

On-Site Improvements. Utility and infrastructure improvements included as part of the Specific Plan on the Project site are described in **Chapter 3.0** and analyzed in **Section 4.19** of this EIR. Potable water, reclaimed water, and wastewater infrastructure would be installed on the Project site, and improvements to existing infrastructure in surrounding roads would occur. There are existing overhead power lines along the Project site's southern boundary along Matthews Road and northern boundary along SR-74. Additionally, overhead power lines transverse the center of the Project site along McLaughlin Road from east to west. Overhead power lines on the Project frontage along SR-74 would be relocated underground. All other existing power lines would be preserved upon development of the Specific Plan; however, development of the Project site in accordance with applicable CBC, California Fire Code, and City Municipal Code regulations would reduce fire risk in the Project vicinity, which would protect power lines and infrastructure.

The Project site would include a new internal circulation system and would also include improvements to surrounding roads. None of these features would exacerbate fire risk or result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment. Although utilities, including water facilities, sewer facilities, and storm drain lines, would be modified and/or extended throughout the Project site, these improvements would be underground and would not exacerbate fire risk. Design and implementation of utility improvements in the Specific Plan would be reviewed and approved by the City's Public Works Department as part of the Project site approval process to ensure the uses developed in the Specific Plan are compliant with all applicable fire codes, design standards, and regulations.

The Project site is located in an LRA Non-VHFHSZ; however, a Very High FHSZ within an SRA is located approximately 150 feet east of the Project site. As discussed in **Section 4.20.2**, the Very High FHSZ adjacent to the Project site is developed/planned to be developed with residential uses, rendering the area less prone to wildfire risk. Additionally, existing and planned development within the Very High FHSZ would have been/will be developed in accordance with applicable CBC, California Fire Code, and City Municipal Code regulations to reduce the risk of wildfires in the Project vicinity. Finally, design and construction of the Project in accordance with the CBC and California Fire Code, including design features such as ignition-resistant materials and incorporation of fire sprinklers, would minimize risk of exposure of persons or property to wildland fires. Therefore, the installation of on-site utilities, on-site circulation system, and off-site road improvements would not exacerbate fire risk due to existing and planned development compliance with applicable CBC, California Fire Code, and City Municipal Code regulations. Furthermore, the improved connectivity of water lines would aid in fire suppression compared to existing conditions on the Project site in the unlikely event of a wildfire. Therefore, the Project site would not require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (e.g., roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines, or other utilities) that would exacerbate fire risk or result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment. Wildfire risks due to the installation or maintenance of utilities would have a **less than significant** impact, and no mitigation would be required.

Off-Site Improvements. Implementation of the Project would result in physical disturbance to up to 59.0 acres for the installation of off-site improvements including roadway improvements to existing roadways (e.g. Menifee Road, SR-74, and Briggs Road), utility connections (e.g. water, sewer, stormwater, electricity, internet, and natural gas), landscaping, and construction of a non-vehicular bridge to connect the Specific Plan site to the Heritage Lake community to the south.

The installation of off-site utilities and road improvements would not exacerbate fire risk due to compliance with applicable CBC, California Fire Code, and City Municipal Code regulations. Furthermore, the improved connectivity of water lines would aid in fire suppression compared to existing conditions on the Project site in the unlikely event of a wildfire. Therefore, the Project site would not require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (e.g., roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines, or other utilities) that would exacerbate fire risk or result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment. Wildfire risks due to the installation or maintenance of utilities would have a **less than significant** impact, and no mitigation would be required.

Off-Site Roadway Improvements. Implementation of the Project would also result in off-site roadway improvements along Matthews Road (Case Road), McCall Boulevard, and McLaughlin Road to address traffic impacts in conflict with the General Plan Circulation Element policies that strive to maintain desired LOS. Installation of off-site road improvements would not exacerbate fire risk due to compliance with applicable CBC, California Fire Code, and City Municipal Code regulations. Therefore, wildfire risks due to the installation or maintenance of utilities related to the off-site roadways would have a **less than significant** impact, and no mitigation would be required.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact.

Regulatory Compliance Measures and Mitigation Measures: No Regulatory Compliance Measures or Mitigation Measures are required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact.

4.20.6.4 Expose People or Structures to Significant Post-Fire Risks

Threshold 4.20.4: **Would the project expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?**

On-Site Improvements. After a wildfire passes through an area, post-fire hazards can occur based on conditions of the topography and susceptibility to flooding. Post-fire landslide hazards include fast-moving, highly destructive debris flows that can occur in the years immediately after wildfires in response to high intensity rainfall events, and those flows that are generated over longer time periods accompanied by root decay and loss of soil strength.⁹ Post-fire debris flows are specifically hazardous because they can occur with little warning, can exert great impulsive loads on objects in their paths, can strip vegetation, can block drainage ways, can damage structures, and can endanger human life.¹⁰ Wildfires also have the potential to destabilize preexisting deep-seated landslides over long time periods.¹¹

Landslides. The Project site is situated on a relatively flat undeveloped area with a small pond in the southwestern portion of the Project site and a granitic hill measuring 120 feet in height in the southeastern portion of the site. The Project site gently slopes from east to west with elevations ranging from approximately 1,465 feet amsl in the southwestern corner to approximately 1,625 feet amsl in the southeastern corner of the site. The topography surrounding the Project site is also relatively flat, except for the Double Butte Mountain approximately 0.25 mile east of the site. Menefee Mountain and Lakeview Mountain are also near the Project area, approximately 1.13 miles southwest and 1.3 miles northeast of the site, respectively. According to the California Department of Conservation, no landslides have been inventoried on or adjacent to the Project site.¹² The *Preliminary Geotechnical and Design Recommendations* prepared for the Project site provides measures that would be implemented by the uses on the Specific Plan that would provide slope stability and reduce vulnerability of post-fire landslide conditions if a wildfire were to infiltrate into the Project site. As described above, the uses built in the Specific Plan on the Project site would be required to adhere with applicable CBC, California Fire Code, and City Municipal Code regulations.

⁹ United States Geological Survey. Natural Hazards. "What Should I Know about Wildfires and Debris Flows?" Website: https://www.usgs.gov/faqs/what-should-i-know-about-wildfires-and-debris-flows?qt-news_science_products=0#qt-news_science_products (accessed July 26, 2022).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² California Department of Conservation. Landslide Inventory. Website: <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/lsi/app/> (accessed July 26, 2022).

In the extremely unlikely event that a wildfire should spread to the Project site, it would not expose any on-site slopes to erosion and potential failure because, as discussed above, the Project site does not contain any steep slopes that are prone to landslides. The uses that would be developed as part of the Specific Plan would not expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes. There would be a **less than significant impact** to Project site occupants or nearby residents or workers related to post-wildfire landslide risks, and no mitigation would be required.

Flooding and Drainage. According to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) No. 06065C2060H (effective August 18, 2014), portions of the northeastern, central, and southwestern areas of the Project site are located in Flood Hazard Zone X (shaded). Flood Zone X (shaded) is defined as 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard, or areas of 1% annual chance flood with average depth less than 1 foot or with drainage areas of less than 1 square mile. Small portions in the center of the Project site are within Flood Hazard Zone A. Flood Zone A includes areas subject to inundation by the 1-percent-annual-chance flood event (refer to **Figure 4.10-4**).¹³ The Project site has Flood Zone A designations based on the existing drainages that cross the Project site. Under existing conditions, a fire north of the Project site could trigger increased downstream sediment movement, which could raise the elevation of potential flooding along the drainages in the Project site. The Specific Plan would develop uses on the Project site in accordance with standards and Best Management Practices (BMPs) that would reduce flooding and post-fire flows and prescribes a system of on-site surface and underground storm detention facilities to accommodate projected storm water volumes.

In addition, according to the *Preliminary Hydrology Analysis*, the Project site itself would not exceed the existing peak discharge for 2-year, 10-year, or 100-year frequency storm events and would reduce the potential for flooding conditions in downstream storm drain facilities and on private property as compared to existing conditions.

In the unlikely event that a wildfire should spread to the Project site, it is not expected that the build out of the Specific Plan would contribute any additional runoff or sedimentation to the on-site drainage facilities or other downstream drainages. This is due to the lack of steep slopes prone to landslide or erosion on the Project site and the fact that the drainage improvements would remain intact after a major wildfire, allowing them to continue to reduce the potential for flooding conditions in downstream storm drain facilities. Therefore, downslope, or downstream flooding as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes are unlikely to expose occupants or structures in the Specific Plan on the Project site to significant risks. Impacts to on-site occupants related to post-wildfire flooding risks would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation is required.

Off-Site Improvements. Implementation of the Project would result in physical disturbance to up to 59.0 acres for the installation of off-site improvements including roadway improvements to existing

¹³ Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA). Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), Panel 06065C2060H, <https://msc.fema.gov/portal/search?AddressQuery=menifee#searchresultsanchor>. Accessed July 27, 2022.

roadways (e.g. Menifee Road, SR-74, and Briggs Road), utility connections (e.g. water, sewer, stormwater, electricity, internet, and natural gas), landscaping, and construction of a non-vehicular bridge to connect the Specific Plan site to the Heritage Lake community to the south. As mentioned in the analysis above, no landslides have been inventoried on or adjacent to the Project site, which includes the off-site improvement areas. Additionally, off-site improvement areas do not include steep slopes prone to landslide, erosion, or downstream flooding. Therefore, downslope landslides or downstream flooding as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes are unlikely to expose construction workers in the off-site improvement areas to significant risks. Impacts to off-site construction workers related to post-wildfire landslide and flooding risks would be *less than significant*, and no mitigation is required.

The off-site improvement areas do not include any steep slopes that are prone to landslides. Additionally, roadway improvements would include drainage facilities that would remain intact after a wildfire, allowing these drainage facilities to continue to reduce the potential for flooding conditions in downstream storm drain facilities. Therefore, operation of roadway improvements would not expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope landslides or downstream flooding, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes. Impacts to people utilizing these roadways would be *less than significant*, and no mitigation is required.

Off-Site Roadway Improvements. Implementation of the Project would also result in off-site roadway improvements along Matthews Road (Case Road), McCall Boulevard, and McLaughlin Road to address traffic impacts in conflict with the General Plan Circulation Element policies that strive to maintain desired LOS. Off-site roadway improvement areas do not include steep slopes prone to landslide, erosion, or downstream flooding. Therefore, downslope landslides or downstream flooding as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes are unlikely to expose construction workers in the off-site improvement areas to significant risks. Impacts to off-site construction workers related to post-wildfire landslide and flooding risks would be *less than significant*, and no mitigation is required.

The off-site roadway improvement areas do not include any steep slopes that are prone to landslides. Additionally, roadway improvements would include drainage facilities that would remain intact after a wildfire, allowing these drainage facilities to continue to reduce the potential for flooding conditions in downstream storm drain facilities. Therefore, operation of roadway improvements would not expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope landslides or downstream flooding, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes. Impacts to people utilizing these roadways would be *less than significant*, and no mitigation is required.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact.

Regulatory Compliance Measures and Mitigation Measures: No Regulatory Compliance Measures or Mitigation Measures are required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact.

4.20.7 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are the incremental effects of an individual project when viewed in connection with the effects of past, current, and probable future projects within the cumulative impact area for wildfire. The cumulative impact area for wildfire is the city which has authority for implementing Municipal Code regulations related to wildfire.

Implementation of the Project in combination with the related projects in the city would increase the city's population and building structures and has the potential to result in cumulative wildfire impacts. However, as discussed in **Sections 4.20.6.1 through 4.20.6.4**, development of Specific Plan uses would reduce fuels (vegetation) in the Project vicinity and would be developed in accordance with applicable CBC, California Fire Code, and City Municipal Code regulations to reduce wildfire impacts.

Similar to the proposed Project, other cumulative projects in the city would be required to demonstrate their level of impact on wildfire and comply with applicable CBC, California Fire Code, and City Municipal Code regulations to reduce wildfire impacts. Therefore, when considered in conjunction with past, present, and future projects, the Project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact related to wildfire.

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