



COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

City of Lancaster Initial Study

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| 1. Project Title and File Number: | 15 th Street West Affordable Housing Project
Conditional Use Permit No. 25-005 |
| 2. Lead Agency Name and Address: | City of Lancaster
Community Development Department
Planning Division
44933 Fern Avenue
Lancaster, California 93534 |
| 3. Contact Person and Phone Number: | Shannon Edwin, AICP Planner
Community Development Department
(661) 723-6048 |
| Prepared by | Raney Planning and Management
1501 Sports Drive, Suite A
Sacramento CA, 95834
(916) 372-6100 |
| 4. Project Location: | East side of 15 th Street West and north of Avenue
K-8
Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 3125-009-908 |
| 5. Applicant Name and Address: | AMG Associates, LLC
PO Box 260770
Encino, CA 91316
(310) 968-3196 |
| 6. General Plan Designation: | Commercial (C) |
| 7. Zoning Designation: | Commercial Planned Development (CPD) |
| 8. Description of Project: | |

Project Location and Setting

The project site is located northeast of the intersection of 15th Street West and Avenue K-8 in the City of Lancaster, California (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). The approximately 10.85-acre project site, identified by Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 3125-009-908, is currently undeveloped. The project site is designated as Commercial (C) by the City of Lancaster 2030 General Plan and is zoned Commercial Planned Development (CPD).

Figure 1. Regional Project Location



Figure 2. Project Location Map



Project Components

The 15th Street West Affordable Housing Project (proposed project) would include the construction of a 228-unit apartment complex with 11 three-story residential buildings, one single-story community building, and three standalone laundry facilities within the project site (see Figure 3).

The apartment complex would consist of 24 one-bedroom units at 572 square feet (sf), 72 two-bedroom Type One units at 824 sf, 48 two-bedroom Type Two units at 760 sf, and 84 three-bedroom units at 1,048 sf. The 11 three-story residential buildings would consist of two different building types. Eight of the 11 buildings would be Building Type A. Building Type A would each have a 9,800 sf footprint, consisting of three one-bedroom units, 15 two-bedroom units, and six three-bedroom units. The three remaining buildings would be Building Type B, which would each have a 5,767 sf footprint, and would each consist of 12 three-bedroom units. The proposed project would target families earning between 30 percent and 60 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI) for Los Angeles County.

The proposed 4,094 sf community building would be one story and located on the western edge of the project site. The proposed project would include three laundry buildings spread throughout the project site.

The proposed buildings would be oriented throughout the site with the intent to create a community concept, with several community amenities available throughout the site, including a pool, fenced dog park, two tot lots, a shaded picnic area featuring tables, seating areas, and barbeques, and a half-basketball court. Many of the amenities, including the pool, half-basketball court, one of the tot lots, and the shaded picnic area, would be located surrounding the community center on the center of the western edge of the project site. The other tot lot would be located on the southwest side of the project site, and the fenced dog park would be located on the southeast side of the project site.

Vehicle access to the project site would be provided by three driveways off 15th Street West. Internal drive aisles would connect to the driveways in order to allow internal circulation throughout the project site. The proposed project would provide a total of 433 parking spaces throughout the site, including 268 covered and 165 uncovered parking spaces. Of the 433 total spaces, 173 spaces would be electric vehicle (EV) ready low power receptacles, 45 would be EV charging spaces, and 56 would be Americans with Disability Act (ADA) spaces.

Landscaping, including trees and shrubs, would be provided throughout the project site, surrounding the proposed buildings and parking areas (see Figure 4). Street trees would also be planted along the project site's 15th Street West frontage. A combination of tree species and shrubs would be spread throughout the project site and in between the apartment buildings.

Local sewage collection for the proposed project would be provided by the City of Lancaster. Local sewer lines would connect to trunk sanitary sewer lines maintained by Los Angeles County Sanitation District #14. Water service for the proposed project would be provided by the Los Angeles County Waterworks District #40 and would be provided by way of a new connection to an existing water main within 15th Street West.

New storm drainage infrastructure would be installed as part of the proposed project. The new storm drain infrastructure would be designed to convey flows collected from new impervious surfaces within the developed project site into an underground on-site stormwater treatment and storage catch basin system.

If the capacity of the catch basin is exceeded, excess flows would be directed from the catch basin to an existing concrete flood control channel located northwest of the project site, near 15th Street West. In addition, landscaping located throughout the site would help collect stormwater, which would percolate into on-site soils.

Figure 3. Conceptual Site Plan

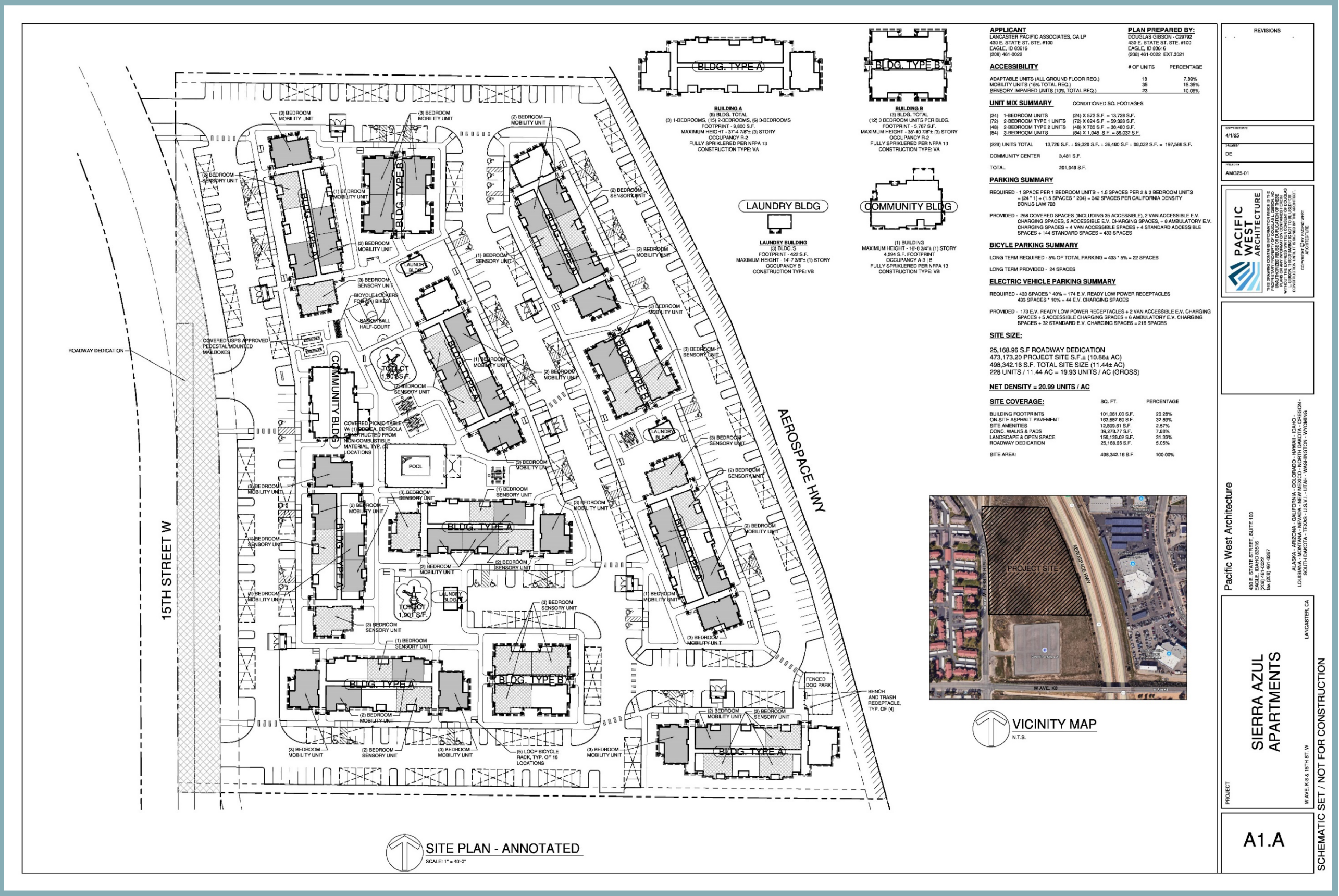


Figure 4. Landscape Site Plan



The project site is designated as C by the City of Lancaster 2030 General Plan and zoned CPD. Pursuant to Chapter 17.12.080 of the City of Lancaster Code of Ordinances, multi-family residential projects are a permitted use within the CPD zone with the approval of a Conditional Use Permit.

9. Surrounding land uses and setting:

Land uses surrounding the project site include undeveloped land and a flood control channel with associated dirt access road to the north; the Lancaster Auto Mall and commercial uses to the east, across California State Route (SR) 14; an multi-family residential development to the west, across 15th Street West; and a paved parking lot and undeveloped land to the south (see Figure 2). South of Avenue K-8 is vacant land followed by the Kaiser Permanente Medical facility. Southwest of the project site are additional multi-family residential developments. Additionally, the Sgt Steve Owen Memorial Park and the Antelope Valley Transit Authority (AVTA) Transfer Center are located southeast of the project site on the east side of the freeway. Table 1 provides a summary of the surrounding land uses and zoning near the project site.

Table 1
Zoning/Land Use Information

Direction	Zoning	Land Use
North	CPD	Undeveloped Land; Flood Control Channel
East	CPD	Automobile Sales; Retail Sales Establishments
South	High Density Residential (HDR)	Undeveloped Land
West	Moderate Density Residential (MDR)	Multi-family Apartment Complex

10. Other public agencies whose approval is required (e.g. permits, financing approval, or participation agreement) for the proposed project include, but are not limited to, the following:

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District
- Los Angeles County Sanitation District #14
- Los Angeles County Waterworks District #40
- Los Angeles County Fire Department

11. Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1? If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.?

Assembly Bill (AB) 52 (Public Resources Code 21080.3.1) requires lead agencies to provide notice to tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of a proposed project early in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process if they have requested notice of projects proposed within that area.

In accordance with AB 52 requirements, the City of Lancaster distributed project notification letters to the Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians, Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians – KizhNation, and Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation on April 9, 2025 via certified mail. The Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation (YSMN) confirmed its desire to consult in a letter to the City on April 23, 2025. The Tribe requested

mitigation measures to be included to address previously unknown resources should they be found during construction. These mitigation measures have been incorporated into the Cultural Resources section of this Initial Study. No other responses were received.

Table 2
Tribal Notification

Tribe	Person/Title	Date Received
Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians (FTBMI)	To whom it may concern (prior contact no longer at FTBMI so was addressed generally)	April 14, 2025
Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians – KizhNation	Andrew Salas, Chairman	April 14, 2025
Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation (YSMN)	Alexandra McCleary, Ph.D.	April 14, 2025

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

☐	Aesthetics	☐	Agriculture and Forestry Resources	☐	Air Quality
☐	Biological Resources	☐	Cultural Resources	☐	Energy
☐	Geology/Soils	☐	Greenhouse Gas Emissions	☐	Hazards & Hazardous Materials
☐	Hydrology/Water Quality	☐	Land Use/Planning	☐	Mineral Resources
☐	Noise	☐	Population/Housing	☐	Public Services
☐	Recreation	☐	Transportation	☐	Tribal Cultural Resources
☐	Utilities/Service Systems	☐	Wildfire	☐	Mandatory Findings of Significance

DETERMINATION: On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- ☐ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- ☒ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- ☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- ☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only effects that remain to be addressed.
- ☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Shannon Edwin, AICP, Planner

Date

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

- 1) A brief explanation is required for all answers except “No Impact” answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A “No Impact” answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A “No Impact” answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
- 2) All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
- 3) Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. “Potentially Significant Impact” is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more “Potentially Significant Impact” entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
- 4) “Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated” applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from “Potentially Significant Impact” to a “Less Than Significant Impact.” The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from “Earlier Analyses,” as described in (5) below, may be cross-referenced).
- 5) Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. CEQA Guidelines Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
 - a. Earlier Analysis Use. Identify and state where they are available for review.
 - b. Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
 - c. Mitigation Measures. For effects that are “Less Than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated,” describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
- 6) Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
- 7) Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.

- 8) This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
- 9) The explanation of each issue should identify:
 - a. The significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
 - b. The mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
I. <u>AESTHETICS</u> . Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?			✗	
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings with a state scenic highway?				✗
c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality or public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?			✗	
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views of the area?			✗	

- a. Examples of typical scenic vistas include mountain ranges, ridgelines, or bodies of water as viewed from a highway, public space, or other area designated for the express purpose of viewing and sightseeing. The City of Lancaster Master Environmental Assessment (MEA) identifies five scenic resources within the City limits and immediately surrounding areas which provide views of scenic vistas (MEA Figure 12.0-1). The closest scenic resource is Quartz Hill, located approximately 2.98 miles to the southwest of the project site. According to the MEA, the Quartz Hill landform rises over 200 feet above the nearby community of Quartz Hill. Large areas surrounding the Quartz Hill community have been developed, primarily with residential subdivisions and custom homes. The proposed project would construct a 228-unit apartment complex with 11 three-story residential buildings, which would be consistent with the residential areas surrounding Quartz Hill. In addition, the proposed project would be similar in appearance to other residential developments in the vicinity of the project, particularly the apartment complex directly to the west of the project site, and other residential developments between the proposed project and Quartz Hill. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not substantially alter views around the project site. The proposed project would not have a substantial effect on a scenic vista, and a less-than-significant impact would occur.
- b. Officially designated scenic routes or highways are not located within the City of Lancaster. According to the California Scenic Highway Mapping System, portions of SR 2 are listed as Officially Designated State Scenic Highways, while portions of SR 58 and SR 5 are listed as “Eligible” for designation.¹ The project site

¹ California Department of Transportation. *California Scenic Highway Mapping System*. Available at: <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aaca>. Accessed May 2025.

is located approximately 27 miles north of the portion of SR 2 that is an Officially Designated State Scenic Highway. The project site is also located approximately 24 miles southwest of SR 58 and 31 miles northeast of SR 5, which are listed as Eligible for designation. Although the City of Lancaster MEA identifies five local scenic routes (see Item a), none of them are Officially Designated State Scenic Highways. Based on the above, the proposed project is not located along any designated State Scenic Highways. Therefore, no impact would occur.

- c. The project site is currently undeveloped. Surrounding land uses to the proposed project include a mix of undeveloped land, commercial, and residential uses. The proposed project is within an urbanized area of the City; therefore, pursuant to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the relevant threshold is whether the proposed project would conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.

While the proposed project would alter the visual character of the site, the project site is currently zoned CPD. Pursuant to Chapter 17.12.080 of the Lancaster Municipal Code (LMC), multi-family residential uses are a permitted within the CPD zone with City approval of a Conditional Use Permit subject to the requirements of the High Density Residential (HDR zone). The proposed project would be subject to compliance with the general property development regulations and design requirements included in Section 17.08.060 through 17.08.140 of the LMC. Such requirements include those established for lot dimensions, height regulations, landscaping, access, building design, parking, and other applicable standards. Additionally, the proposed project would be required to follow the City of Lancaster Design Guidelines, which provide the basis to achieve quality design for all development within the City of Lancaster by offering implementation methods in site planning, building architecture, and building placement.²

Based on the above, the proposed project would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality, and a less-than-significant impact would occur.

- d. The project site is currently undeveloped. As such, existing sources of light and glare associated with the project site do not exist. Existing sources of light and glare in the vicinity of the project site include the apartment complexes to the west and southwest, the Lancaster Auto Mall and commercial uses to the east, Sgt Steve Owen Memorial Park and AVTA transfer station to the southeast, and Kaiser Permanente to the south. Light and glare are also generated by vehicles traveling on 15th Street West and SR 14 in the project vicinity.

Development of the proposed project would involve new sources of light and glare associated with lighting fixtures within the proposed buildings and parking areas. Headlights from vehicles driving within the project site would also result in sources of light and glare. However, LMC Section 17.08.140 provides several requirements for residential development in order to ensure that the development properly illuminates the site without producing an adverse impact on neighboring property. For example, the proposed project would be required to direct lighting away from adjacent properties and to design and locate lighting in a manner that prevents glare. Additionally, pursuant to LMC Section 17.41.086, lighting regulations are established to provide for an environmentally sensitive and energy efficient nighttime environment that includes the ability to view the stars against a dark sky from residential areas, and to ensure ambient nighttime light levels do not adversely impact adjacent properties. Compliance with the City's standards would ensure that project effects on the daytime and nighttime lighting environments are minimized.

² City of Lancaster Architectural and Design Commission. *City of Lancaster Design Guidelines*. March 2010.

Based on the above, implementation of the proposed project would result in a less-than-significant impact related to creating a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
II. <u>AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES.</u> In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?				✗
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?				✗
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?				✗
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				✗
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				✗

- a,e. The project site is currently undeveloped and is not used for agricultural purposes. According to the California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, the project site is designated as Other Land.³ Other Land is defined as “Land not included in any other mapping category. Common examples include low density rural developments; brush, timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing; confined livestock, poultry or aquaculture facilities; strip mines, borrow pits; and water bodies smaller than forty acres. Vacant and nonagricultural land surrounded on all sides by urban development and greater than 40 acres is mapped as Other Land.”

The project site is not designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance and is not currently developed for agricultural purposes. Therefore, the proposed project would not convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide importance to a non-agricultural use, or otherwise result in the loss of Farmland to non-agricultural use, and no impact would occur.

- b. As noted above, the project site is zoned CPD. The CPD zoning designation does not allow for agricultural uses. In addition, the project site is not under a Williamson Act contract. Because agricultural uses are not permitted on the project site and the project site is not currently used for agricultural purposes, the proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract, and no impact would occur.
- c,d. According to the City of Lancaster’s General Plan, forests or timberlands are not located within the City. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in the rezoning of forest or timberland and would not cause the loss of forest land or the conversion of forest land to non-forest land. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.
- e. See responses to Items II a-d.

³ California Department of Conservation. *California Important Farmland Finder*. Available at: <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/ciff/>. Accessed May 2025.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
III. <u>AIR QUALITY</u> . Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?			✗	
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?			✗	
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?		✗		
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?			✗	

- a,b. The City of Lancaster is located in the Mojave Desert Air Basin (MDAB), which is under the jurisdiction of the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District (AVAQMD). Under the federal criteria, the AVAQMD is currently designated as nonattainment for 8-hour ozone. The AVAQMD is an attainment/unclassified area under the national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), and lead. The AVAQMD is unclassified for suspended particulate matter 2.5 and 10 microns in diameter (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀) under the NAAQS. Under the State criteria, the AVAQMD is currently designated as nonattainment for ozone (classified as extreme nonattainment) and PM₁₀. The AVAQMD is an attainment/unclassified area for State PM_{2.5}, CO, NO₂, SO₂, and lead standards. The AVAQMD is an unclassified area for the state hydrogen sulfide standard, visibility-reducing particle standard, and particulate sulfate standard.

In compliance with regulations, due to the nonattainment designations of the area, the AVAQMD periodically prepares and updates air quality plans that provide emission reduction strategies to achieve attainment of the AAQS, including control strategies to reduce air pollutant emissions through regulations, incentive programs, public education, and partnerships with other agencies. To bring the AVAQMD into attainment, the AVAQMD adopted the Federal 70 parts per billion (ppb) Ozone Attainment Plan (Western Mojave Desert Nonattainment Area) in 2023.

The aforementioned air quality plan contains mobile source controls, stationary source controls, and transportation control measures to be implemented in the region to attain the State and federal AAQS within the MDAB. Adopted AVAQMD rules and regulations, as well as the thresholds of significance, have

been developed with the intent to ensure continued attainment of AAQS, or to work towards attainment of AAQS for which the area is currently designated nonattainment, consistent with applicable air quality plans. The AVAQMD's established significance thresholds associated with development projects for emissions of the ozone precursors reactive organic gases (ROG) and oxides of nitrogen (NO_x), as well as for PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}, expressed in pounds per day (lbs/day) and tons per year (tons/yr), are listed in Table 3. Thus, by exceeding the AVAQMD's mass emission thresholds for construction or operational emissions of CO, NO_x, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), oxides of sulfur (SO_x), PM₁₀, or PM_{2.5}, a project would be considered to conflict with or obstruct implementation of the AVAQMD's air quality planning efforts.

Table 3
AVAQMD Air Quality Thresholds

Criteria Pollutant	Daily Threshold (Pounds)	Annual Threshold (Tons)
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	548	100
Oxides of Nitrogen (NO _x)	137	25
Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC)	137	25
Oxides of Sulfur (SO _x)	137	25
Particulate Matter (PM ₁₀)	82	15
Particulate Matter (PM _{2.5})	65	15
Hydrogen Sulfide (H ₂ S)	54	10
Lead (Pb)	3	0.6

Source: Antelope Valley AQMD, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Federal Conformity Guidelines, August 2016.

The proposed project's construction and operational emissions were quantified using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) web-based Version 2022.1.1.29 – a statewide model designed to provide a uniform platform for government agencies, land use planners, and environmental professionals to quantify air quality emissions, including greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, from land use projects. The model applies inherent default values for various land uses, including construction data, trip generation rates, vehicle mix, trip length, average speed, compliance with the current California Building Standards Code (CBSC), etc. Where project-specific information is available, such information should be applied in the model. Accordingly, the proposed project's modeling assumes the following inherent site design features and project-specific information:

- Construction would begin in December 2025 and occur over approximately 13 months;
- A total of 3,585 cubic yards (CY) of soil would be exported during the grading phase;
- The project would include a 100 percent affordable housing complex; and
- None of the proposed units would include fireplaces.

The proposed project's estimated emissions associated with construction and operations and the project's contribution to cumulative air quality conditions are provided below. All CalEEMod results are included as Appendix A.

Construction Emissions

According to the CalEEMod results, the proposed project would result in maximum unmitigated construction criteria air pollutant emissions as shown in Table 4. As shown in the table, the proposed project's construction emissions would be below the applicable thresholds of significance for CO, NO_x, VOCs, SO_x, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5}.

Table 4
Estimated Construction Emissions

	Daily Emissions (lbs/day)						Annual Emissions (tons/year)					
	NO _x	VOC	CO	PM ₁₀	PM _{2.5}	SO _x	NO _x	VOC	CO	PM ₁₀	PM _{2.5}	SO _x
Project Total	31.7	11.1	32.7	21.3	11.4	0.07	1.78	1.16	3.38	0.58	0.24	0.005
Significance Threshold	137	137	548	82	65	137	25	25	100	15	12	25
Exceeds Threshold?	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
<i>Source: CalEEMod, 2025.</i>												

All projects under the jurisdiction of AVAQMD are required to comply with Rule 403, which requires implementation of dust suppression techniques, including applying water to the site and covering storage piles, to prevent fugitive dust from creating a nuisance off site. Compliance with Rule 403, and other AVAQMD Rules and Regulations, would be included as a condition of approval for the proposed project.

As shown in Table 4, construction of the proposed project would result in emissions of criteria air pollutants below AVAQMD's thresholds of significance. Consequently, the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plans during project construction.

Operational Emissions

According to the CalEEMod results, the proposed project would result in maximum unmitigated operational criteria air pollutant emissions as shown in Table 5.

Table 5
Estimated Operational Emissions

	Daily Emissions (lbs/day)						Annual Emissions (tons/year)					
	NO _x	VOC	CO	PM ₁₀	PM _{2.5}	SO _x	NO _x	VOC	CO	PM ₁₀	PM _{2.5}	SO _x
Project Total	3.39	10.7	39.5	4.33	1.17	0.05	0.63	1.72	5.20	0.74	0.20	0.01
Significance Threshold	137	137	548	82	65	137	25	25	100	15	12	25
Exceeds Threshold?	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
<i>Source: CalEEMod, 2025.</i>												

The proposed project's operational emissions would be below the applicable thresholds of significance. Consequently, the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plans during project operation.

Cumulative Emissions

Past, present, and future development projects contribute to the region's adverse air quality impacts on a cumulative basis. By nature, air pollution is largely a cumulative impact. A single project is not sufficient in size to, by itself, result in nonattainment of AAQS. Instead, a project's individual emissions contribute to existing cumulatively significant adverse air quality impacts. If a project's contribution to the cumulative impact is considerable, then the project's impact on air quality would be considered significant.

In developing thresholds of significance for air pollutants, AVAQMD considered the emission levels for which a project's individual emissions would be cumulatively considerable. The thresholds of significance presented in Table 3 represent the levels at which a project's individual emissions of criteria air pollutants or precursors would result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to the AVAQMD's existing air quality conditions. If a project exceeds the significance thresholds presented in Table 3, that project's emissions would be cumulatively considerable, resulting in significant adverse cumulative air quality impacts to the region's existing air quality conditions. As presented above, the proposed project would be

below all applicable thresholds for criteria pollutants during construction and operation. Thus, the project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to the region's existing air quality conditions.

Conclusion

Because the proposed project would not result in construction-related or operational emissions of criteria air pollutants in excess of AVAQMD's thresholds of significance, conflicts with or obstruction of implementation of the applicable regional air quality plans would not occur. In addition, the project would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or State AAQS. Thus, a less-than-significant impact would result.

- c. Some land uses are considered more sensitive to air pollution than others, due to the types of population groups or activities involved. Heightened sensitivity may be caused by health problems, proximity to the emissions source, and/or duration of exposure to air pollutants. Children, pregnant women, the elderly, and those with existing health problems are especially vulnerable to the effects of air pollution. Sensitive receptors are typically defined as facilities where sensitive receptor population groups (i.e., children, the elderly, the acutely ill, and the chronically ill) are likely to be located. Accordingly, land uses that are typically considered to be sensitive receptors include residences, schools, playgrounds, childcare centers, retirement homes, convalescent homes, hospitals, and medical clinics. The nearest existing sensitive receptors in the project vicinity are the low-rise apartments to the west and southwest of the site as well as the Kaiser Permanente medical offices to the south.

The major pollutant concentrations of concern are localized CO emissions and toxic air contaminants (TAC) emissions, which are addressed in further detail below.

Localized CO Emissions

Localized concentrations of CO are related to the levels of traffic and congestion along streets and at intersections. High levels of localized CO concentrations are only expected where background levels are high, and traffic volumes and congestion levels are high. Emissions of CO are of potential concern, as the pollutant is a toxic gas that results from the incomplete combustion of carbon-containing fuels such as gasoline or wood.

Construction and operation of the proposed project would not result in exceedances of the applicable AVAQMD thresholds for CO emissions. In addition, the proposed project would not contribute to high levels of traffic congestion that could result in long-term generation of CO. Due to advances in vehicle emissions technologies, the likelihood that any single project would create a CO hotspot is minimal. As such, the proposed project would result in a less-than-significant impact related to localized CO emissions concentrations and would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial concentrations of localized CO.

TAC Emissions

Another category of environmental concern is TACs. The CARB's *Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Health Perspective* (Handbook) provides recommended setback distances for sensitive land uses from major sources of TACs, including, but not limited to, freeways and high traffic roads, distribution centers, and rail yards. The CARB has identified diesel particulate matter (DPM) from diesel-fueled engines as a TAC; thus, high volume freeways, stationary diesel engines, and facilities attracting heavy and constant diesel vehicle traffic are identified as having the highest associated health risks from DPM. Health risks associated with TACs are a function of both the concentration of emissions and the duration of exposure, where the higher the concentration and/or the longer the period of time that a sensitive receptor is exposed to pollutant concentrations would correlate to a higher health risk.

The proposed residential development would not involve any land uses or operations that would be considered major sources of TACs, including DPM.⁴ As such, the project would not generate any substantial pollutant concentrations during operations. However, short-term, construction-related activities could result in the generation of TACs, specifically DPM, from on-road haul trucks and off-road equipment exhaust emissions. Construction is temporary and occurs over a relatively short duration in comparison to the operational lifetime of the proposed project. Health risks are typically associated with exposure to high concentrations of TACs over extended periods of time (e.g., 30 years or greater), whereas the construction period associated with the proposed project would likely be limited to approximately one year.

All construction equipment and operation thereof would be regulated per the CARB In-Use Off-Road Diesel Vehicle Regulation, which is intended to help reduce emissions associated with off-road diesel vehicles and equipment, including DPM. Project construction would also be required to comply with all applicable AVAQMD rules and regulations, particularly associated with permitting of air pollutant sources. In addition, construction equipment would operate intermittently throughout the day and only on portions of the site at a time.

Because construction equipment on-site would not operate for long periods of time and would be used at varying locations within the site, associated emissions of DPM would not occur at the same location (or be evenly spread throughout the entire project site) for long periods of time. Due to the temporary nature of construction and the relatively short duration of potential exposure to associated emissions, the potential for any one sensitive receptor in the area to be exposed to concentrations of pollutants for a substantially extended period of time would be low. Therefore, construction of the proposed project would not be expected to expose any sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.

However, since the construction of the proposed project would result in the disturbance of the soil, it is possible individuals could be exposed to Valley Fever. Valley Fever or coccidioidomycosis, is primarily a disease of the lungs caused by the spores of the *Coccidioides immitis* fungus. The spores are found in soils, become airborne when the soil is disturbed, and are subsequently inhaled into the lungs. After the fungal spores have settled in the lungs, they change into a multicellular structure called a spherule. Fungal growth in the lungs occurs as the spherule grows and bursts, releasing endospores, which then develop into more spherules.

Valley Fever is not contagious, and therefore, cannot be passed on from person to person. Most of those who are infected would recover without treatment within six months and would have a life-long immunity to the fungal spores. In severe cases, especially in those patients with rapid and extensive primary illness, those who are at risk for dissemination of disease, and those who have disseminated disease, antifungal drug therapy is used.

Nearby sensitive receptors as well as workers at the project site could be exposed to Valley Fever from fugitive dust generated during construction. There is the potential that cocci spores would be stirred up during excavation, grading, and earth-moving activities, exposing construction workers and nearby sensitive receptors to these spores and thereby to the potential of contracting Valley Fever. However, implementation of dust control measures in compliance with AVAQMD Rule 403, and implementation of the Mitigation Measures below, which would provide personal protective respiratory equipment to

⁴ Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District. *California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Federal Conformity Guidelines* [pg. 6]. August 2016.

construction workers and provide information to all construction personnel and visitors about Valley Fever, the risk of exposure to Valley Fever would be minimized to a less-than-significant level.

Conclusion

Based on the above, the proposed project would not expose any sensitive receptors to substantial concentrations of localized CO or TACs during construction or operation. However, Mitigation Measure 1 would be required to ensure impacts related to Valley Fever would not occur. With implementation of the below listed mitigation measure, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

- 1(a). Prior to ground disturbance activities, the project operator shall provide evidence to the Development Services Director that the project operator and/or construction manager has developed a "Valley Fever Training Handout", training, and schedule of sessions for education to be provided to all construction personnel. All evidence of the training session materials, handout(s) and schedule shall be submitted to the Development Services Director within 24 hours of the first training session. Multiple training sessions may be conducted if different work crews will come to the site for different stages of construction; however, all construction personnel shall be provided training prior to beginning work. The evidence submitted to the Development Services Director regarding the "Valley Fever Training Handout" and Session(s) shall include the following:
1. A sign-in sheet (to include the printed employee names, signature, and date) for all employees who attended the training session.
 2. Distribution of a written flier or brochure that includes educational information regarding the health effects of exposure to criteria pollutant emissions and Valley Fever.
 3. Training on methods that may help prevent Valley Fever infection.
 4. A demonstration to employees on how to use personal protective equipment, such as respiratory equipment (masks), to reduce exposure to pollutants and facilitate recognition of symptoms and earlier treatment of Valley Fever. Where respirators are required, the equipment shall be readily available and shall be provided to employees for use during work. Proof that the demonstration is included in the training shall be submitted to the county. This proof can be via printed training materials/agenda, DVD, digital media files, or photographs.
- (b). The project operator also shall consult with the Los Angeles County Public Health to develop a Valley Fever Dust Management Plan that addresses the potential presence of the *Coccidioides* spore and mitigates for the potential for *Coccidioidomycosis* (Valley Fever). Prior to issuance of permits, the project operator shall submit the Plan to the Los Angeles County Public Health for review and comment. The Plan shall include a program to evaluate the potential for exposure to Valley Fever from construction activities and to identify appropriate safety procedures that shall be implemented, as needed, to minimize personnel and public exposure to potential *Coccidioides* spores. Measures in the Plan shall include the following:
1. Provide HEP filters for heavy equipment equipped with factory-enclosed cabs capable of accepting the filters. Cause contractors utilizing applicable heavy equipment to furnish proof of worker training on proper use of applicable heavy equipment cabs, such as turning on air conditioning prior to using the equipment.
 2. Provide communication methods, such as two-way radios, for use in enclosed cabs.

3. Require National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)-approved half-face respirators equipped with minimum N-95 protection factor for use during worker collocation with surface disturbance activities, as required per the hazard assessment process.
 4. Cause employees to be medically evaluated, fit-tested, and properly trained on the use of the respirators, and implement a full respiratory protection program in accordance with the applicable Cal/OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard (8 CCR 5144).
 5. Provide separate, clean eating areas with hand-washing facilities.
 6. Install equipment inspection stations at each construction equipment access/egress point. Examine construction vehicles and equipment for excess soil material and clean, as necessary, before equipment is moved off-site.
 7. Train workers to recognize the symptoms of Valley Fever, and to promptly report suspected symptoms of work-related Valley Fever to a supervisor.
 8. Work with a medical professional to develop a protocol to medically evaluate employees who develop symptoms of Valley Fever.
- (c). Work with a medical professional, in consultation with the Los Angeles County Public Health, to develop an educational handout for on-site workers and surrounding residents within three miles of the project site, and include the following information on Valley Fever: what are the potential sources/causes, what are the common symptoms, what are the options or remedies available should someone be experiencing these symptoms, and where testing for exposure is available. Prior to construction permit issuance, this handout shall have been created by the project operator and reviewed by the project operator and reviewed by the Development Services Director. No less than 30 days prior to any work commencing, this handout shall be mailed to all existing residences within a specified radius of the project boundaries as determined by the Development Services Director. The radius shall not exceed three miles and is dependent upon the location of the project site.
1. When possible, position workers upwind or crosswind when digging a trench or performing other soil-disturbing tasks.
 2. Prohibit smoking at the worksite outside of designated smoking areas; designated smoking areas will be equipped with handwashing facilities.
 3. Post warnings on-site and consider limiting access to visitors, especially those without adequate training and respiratory protection.
 4. Audit and enforce compliance with relevant Cal OSHA health and safety standards on the job site.
- d. Emissions of concern include those leading to odors, emission of dust, or emissions considered to constitute air pollutants. Air pollutants have been discussed in sections “a” through “c” above. Therefore, the following discussion focuses on emissions of odors.

While offensive odors rarely cause physical harm, they can be unpleasant, leading to considerable annoyance and distress among the public and can generate citizen complaints to local governments and air districts. Due to the subjective nature of odor impacts, the number of variables that can influence the potential for an odor impact, and the variety of odor sources, quantitative or formulaic methodologies to determine the presence of a significant odor impact are difficult. Typical odor-generating land uses

include, but are not limited to, wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs), landfills, confined animal facilities, composting stations, food manufacturing plants, refineries, and chemical plants. Because the proposed uses are not typically associated with odors, the proposed project would not introduce any odor-heavy land uses and is not located in the vicinity of any such existing or planned land uses.

Construction activities often include diesel-fueled equipment and heavy-duty trucks, which could create odors associated with diesel fumes that may be considered objectionable. However, construction activities would be temporary, and hours of operation for construction equipment would be restricted per LMC Section 8.24.040. Project construction would also be required to comply with all applicable AVAQMD rules and regulations, particularly associated with permitting of air pollutant sources. The aforementioned regulations would help to minimize emissions, including emissions leading to odors. Accordingly, substantial objectionable odors would not be expected to occur during construction activities.

For the aforementioned reasons, construction and operation of the proposed project would not result in emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people, and a less-than-significant impact would result.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
IV. <u>BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES</u> . Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?		✗		
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?			✗	
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on State or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?				✗
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?			✗	
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?				✗
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?				✗

- a. The following discussion is based primarily on the findings of a Biological Resources Assessment (BRA) prepared for the project by Endemic Environmental Services (Endemic) (see Appendix B).⁵

⁵ Endemic Environmental Services. *Biological Resources Assessment*. April 2025.

Currently, the project site is undeveloped and does not contain any trees. Surrounding existing uses include undeveloped land and a flood control channel with associated dirt access road to the north; the Lancaster Auto Mall and commercial uses to the east, across SR 14; and an apartment complex to the west, across 15th Street West.

Several species of plants and animals within the State of California have low populations, limited distributions, or both. Such species may be considered “rare” and are vulnerable to extirpation as the State’s human population grows and the habitats the species occupy are converted to agricultural and urban uses. State and federal laws have provided the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) with a mechanism for conserving and protecting the diversity of plant and animal species native to the state. A sizable number of native plants and animals have been formally designated as threatened or endangered under State and federal endangered species legislation. Others have been designated as “candidates” for such listing. Still others have been designated as “species of special concern” by CDFW. The California Native Plant Society (CNPS) has developed its own set of lists of native plants considered rare, threatened, or endangered. Collectively, these plants and animals are referred to as “special-status species.” Although CDFW Species of Special Concern generally do not have special legal status, they are given special consideration under CEQA. Special-status species include the following:

- Plant and wildlife species that have been formally listed as threatened or endangered, or are candidates for such listing by the CDFW or National Marine Fisheries (NMFS);
- Plant and wildlife species that have been listed as threatened or endangered or are candidates for such listing by the CDFW;
- CDFW Species of Special Concern, which are species that face extirpation in California if current population and habitat trends continue;
- CDFW Fully Protected Species; and
- Species on CNPS Lists 1 and 2, which are considered to be rare, threatened, or endangered in California by the CNPS and CDFW.

In addition to regulations for special-status species, most birds in the U.S., including non-status species, are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918. Under the MBTA, destroying active nests, eggs, and young is illegal. In addition, plant species on CNPS Lists 1 and 2 are considered special-status plant species and are protected under CEQA.

Endemic conducted a literature review and database search in order to identify potential biological resource constraints and assess the suitability of habitats on the project site to potentially support State and federally protected species. The literature review included a review of the following literature:

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Water Program “My Waters” data layers;
- Google Earth Pro historic aerial imagery (1985-2024);
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS);
- USFWS Critical Habitat designations for Threatened and Endangered Species; and
- USFWS National Wetlands Inventory (NWI).

The database search conducted by Endemic included the following databases:

- CDFW California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) Rarefind 5;
- CNPS Electronic Inventory of Rare and Endangered Vascular Plants of California;
- Calflora Database; and

- Special-status species published by CDFW and USFWS species listings.

The literature review conducted by Endemic provided a baseline from which to inventory the biological resources potentially occurring on the project site. The CNDDDB database was then used, in conjunction with ArcGIS software, to locate the nearest recorded occurrences of special-status species and determine the distance from the project.

In addition, a field investigation of the project site was conducted on March 20, 2025 by Endemic to identify on-site habitats which could potentially support special-status species, and to determine the likelihood of any occurrences of special-status species.

According to the BRA, adjacent land uses to the project site are dominated by existing development, with limited undeveloped spaces present. Due to historic land use and current partially disturbed conditions, undisturbed natural plant communities are not present within or adjacent to the project site. The site supports one plant community: degraded Mojavean desert shrub. In addition, the site supports one land cover type that would be classified as disturbed land, where historic land uses and ongoing disturbance prevent the establishment of a plant community. Within the identified plant community and land cover type, several plant species were observed, as detailed in Table 6 below.

Table 6
Observed Plant Species

Rubber rabbitbrush (<i>Ericamerica nauseosa</i>)	Hoary saltbush (<i>Atriplex canescens</i>)	Big sagebrush (<i>Artemisia tridentata</i>)
Shortpod mustard (<i>Hirschfeldia incana</i>)	Red brome (<i>Bromus rubens</i>)	Cheatgrass (<i>Bromus tectorum</i>)
Arabian schismus (<i>Schismus arabicus</i>)	Russian thistle (<i>Salsola sp.</i>)	Red-stemmed filaree (<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>)
Hairy-leaved sunflower (<i>Helianthus annuus</i>)	Peach thorn (<i>Lycium cooperi</i>)	

Special-status plants generally occur in relatively undisturbed areas within vegetation communities, including, but not limited to, vernal pools, marshes and swamps, seasonal wetlands, riparian scrub, chaparral, dunes, and areas with unusual soil characteristics.

The CNDDDB query conducted as part of the BRA identified 12 special-status plant species within the Lancaster West quadrangle. However, special-status species typically occur in unusual habitat types. As previously discussed, although the project site is undeveloped, the nature of the site's historic land use and current partially disturbed conditions limits the site's ability to contain habitat necessary for accommodating special-status plant species. In addition, special-status plants or potentially suitable habitats were not observed during the field survey conducted for the BRA. Western Joshua trees were not observed within or adjacent to the site during the field investigation. Therefore, special-status plant species are not anticipated to occur within the project site, and, as a result, implementation of the proposed project would not result in adverse effects to special-status plant species.

During the field investigation of the project site, several wildlife species were observed on-site. A summary of the observed wildlife species is presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7
Observed Animal Species

Common raven (<i>Corvus corax</i>)	American crow (<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>)	House finch (<i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>)
White-crowned sparrow (<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>)	Song sparrow (<i>Melospiza melodia</i>)	Western meadowlark (<i>Sturnella neglecta</i>)
Red-tailed hawk (<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>)	Cooper's hawk (<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>)	Eurasian starling (<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>)
Pocket gophers (<i>Thomomys bottae</i>)	Kangaroo rats (<i>Dipodomys spp</i>)	Coyote (<i>Canis latrans</i>)

According to the CNDDDB query, occurrences of 18 special-status wildlife species have been recorded within the Lancaster West quadrangle. However, only one special-status wildlife species was observed in the surrounding area of the project during the field investigation: Cooper's hawk. In addition, based on habitat requirements for specific species and the availability and quality of on-site habitats, Endemic determined that the project site has a low potential to support California horned lark, which is listed on the CDFW Watch List. Endemic concluded that the site does not have the potential to support the remainder of special-status wildlife species known to occur in the area, and all are presumed to be absent. Nonetheless, due to regional significance and listing status, the potential occurrence of burrowing owl was considered in the BRA and is discussed below.

Suitable nest locations for migratory birds and raptors include, but are not limited to, trees, shrubs, herbaceous vegetation and bare ground. Active avian nests or birds exhibiting nesting behavior were not observed within or immediately adjacent to the project site during the field investigation, which was conducted during the nesting bird breeding season. While highly disturbed, the project site and surrounding area provides limited nesting opportunities for local avian species that are adapted to routine anthropogenic disturbance and disturbed/developed conditions, such as Cooper's hawk and California horned lark. Project activities such as clearing, grading, and other ground-disturbing activities during the avian nesting season (February 1 through August 31) could result in injury or mortality of eggs and chicks directly through destruction or indirectly through forced nest abandonment due to noise and other disturbance. As such, in the absence of mitigation, implementation of the proposed project could result in adverse effects to Cooper's hawk and California horned lark, as well as other nesting migratory birds and raptors that are protected under the MBTA.

Burrowing owl was designated as a candidate for listing under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). As a candidate, the species is afforded the same protections as a state-listed endangered or threatened species. Burrowing owl generally occurs in a variety of open, arid habitats; typically grasslands, desert scrub, agricultural fields, washes, and disturbed areas such as golf courses or vacant lots. Burrows, perch sites, and friable soil are vital habitat components for the species, and habitats with low-lying, sparse vegetation are preferred. Ground squirrel burrows and other mammal burrows are typically used for nesting and as year-round refuge sites. The species may also utilize culverts, abandoned pipes, rubble piles, and other manmade structures if burrows are absent.

The project site is vegetated with a variety of low-growing plant species that allows line-of-sight observation favored by burrowing owl. However, suitable burrows were not observed on-site or within adjacent areas during the field investigation. Further, the site is surrounded by tall light poles that provide suitable perching opportunities for large raptors such as red-tailed hawk, which was observed on-site, that prey on burrowing owls. In addition, the project site regularly supports foot traffic associated with unhoused encampments in adjacent areas, and routine human presence generally discourages burrowing

owls from establishing. Therefore, burrowing owl is presumed absent from the site and is not expected to occur. However, out of an abundance of caution, mitigation would be implemented in order to avoid any impacts to burrowing owl.

Based on the above, ground-disturbing activities associated with construction of the proposed project would modify existing habitat and, therefore, could result in indirect adverse effects to Cooper's hawk, California horned lark, burrowing owl, and other nesting migratory birds and raptors protected by the MBTA. As such, the Project could result in an adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on species identified as special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the CDFW or the USFWS.. Mitigation measures for both nesting birds and burrowing owls have been listed below. With incorporation of the mitigation measures, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

- IV-1. A pre-construction survey burrowing owl clearance survey shall be conducted no more than 14 days prior to any vegetation removal or ground disturbing activities to avoid impacts to burrowing owls and/or occupied burrows. The pre-construction survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist and in accordance with the methods outlined in the CDFW 2012 Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation. Documentation of the surveys and findings shall be submitted to the City of Lancaster for review and file. If no burrowing owls or occupied burrows are detected, project activities may begin, and no additional avoidance and minimization measures shall be required.

If an occupied burrow is found outside, but within 500 feet, of the development footprint, the qualified biologist shall establish a "no-disturbance" buffer around the burrow location(s). The size of the "no-disturbance" buffer shall be determined in consultation with CDFW and be based on the species status (i.e., breeding, non-breeding) and proposed level of disturbance. If an occupied burrow is found within the development footprint, the qualified biologist shall prepare an Impact Assessment and Burrowing Owl Mitigation Plan in accordance with CDFW's Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation. The project proponent shall contact CDFW to develop appropriate mitigation and management procedures and a final Burrowing Owl Mitigation Plan shall be submitted to the City and CDFW for review and approval prior to project activities.

If burrowing owl presence is confirmed, the Project proponent shall offset impacts by acquiring CDFW-approved mitigation lands for the species. The potential mitigation land shall have the following: 1) have presence of burrowing owl; 2) replace the impacted burrowing owl habitat area at a minimum of 2:1 ratio to ensure no net loss of habitat; and 3) be of equivalent or greater habitat value than that of the project site. Prior to acquisition of potential mitigation land, the project proponent shall provide CDFW with the appropriate documentation for property eligibility. Requested documentation may include, but is not limited to, a biological report, preliminary title report, mineral risk assessment report, and Phase I Environmental Site Assessment report. Following CDFW written approval of potential mitigation land, the project proponent shall protect the land in perpetuity under a conservation easement dedicated to a local land conservancy or other appropriate entity that has been approved to hold and manage mitigation lands pursuant to Assembly Bill 1094. Recordation of the conservation easement shall occur prior to commencement of project activities. An appropriate endowment, to be determined by CDFW, shall also be provided for the long-term monitoring and management of mitigation lands.

IV-2. A pre-construction clearance survey for nesting birds should be conducted within seven days of the start of any vegetation removal or ground disturbing activities to ensure that no nesting birds will be disturbed during construction. The biologist conducting the clearance survey should document a negative survey with a brief letter report indicating that no impacts to active avian nests will occur. If an active avian nest is discovered during the pre-construction clearance survey, construction activities should stay outside of a no-disturbance buffer and the City of Lancaster Development Services Director must be notified. The size of the no-disturbance buffer will be determined by the wildlife biologist and will depend on the level of noise and/or surrounding anthropogenic disturbances, line of sight between the nest and the construction activity, type and duration of construction activity, ambient noise, species habituation, and topographical barriers. These factors will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis when developing buffer distances. Limits of construction to avoid an active nest will be established in the field with flagging, fencing, or other appropriate barriers; and construction personnel will be instructed on the sensitivity of nest areas. A biological monitor should be present to delineate the boundaries of the buffer area and to monitor the active nest to ensure that nesting behavior is not adversely affected by the construction activity. Once the young have fledged and left the nest, or the nest otherwise becomes inactive under natural conditions, construction activities within the buffer area can occur.

b,c. Waters of the U.S., including wetlands, are defined under 33 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 328 to include navigable waterways, their tributaries, and adjacent wetlands. Wetlands are vegetated areas that meet specific vegetation, soil, and hydrologic criteria defined the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Natural drainage channels and adjacent wetlands throughout the State may be considered waters of the U.S. or jurisdictional waters subject to the jurisdiction of USACE. Adjacent wetlands must have a continuous surface connection with a jurisdictional water of the U.S. such that the wetland is indistinguishable from the adjacent water. Geographically and hydrologically isolated wetlands are outside federal jurisdiction, but are regulated by Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB).

According to the BRA, one riverine resource was mapped as traversing the western portion of the site, roughly parallel to the western boundary. During the field investigation, a flood-control channel was observed off-site to the south, directing surface flows northward towards the southern boundary of the project site. Flows enter the site along a braided channel and generally infiltrate on-site or in adjacent areas. On-site portions of the drainage are ephemeral in nature and only convey flows during and briefly after rain events. Riparian vegetation or hydrological indicators suggesting an Ordinary High Water Mark were not present.

Because the feature is not considered a relatively permanent, standing, or continuously flowing body of water, Endemic determined that the riverine resource does not qualify as Waters of the United States under the regulatory authority of the USACE. Further, due to flows primarily being contained to the site and adjacent areas until infiltration, the feature is not expected to qualify as Waters of the State. Additionally, riparian vegetation or hydrological indicators suggesting an Ordinary High Water Mark were not present on site. Therefore, riparian habitat was not observed on-site.

Based on the above, the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on riparian habitat or another sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the CDFW or USFWS, or on State- and federally protected wetlands, as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.). Thus, a less-than-significant impact would occur.

- d. Wildlife movement corridors are routes that animals regularly use and follow during seasonal migration, dispersal from native ranges, daily travel within home ranges, and inter-population movements. Movement corridors in California are typically associated with valleys, ridgelines, and rivers and creeks supporting riparian vegetation. According to the BRA, the project site has not been identified as occurring in a recognized wildlife corridor or linkage. The proposed project would be confined to existing areas that have been heavily disturbed or developed and are isolated from regional wildlife corridors and linkages. In addition, riparian corridors, creeks, or useful patches of steppingstone habitat (natural areas) within or connecting the site to a recognized wildlife corridor or linkage do not exist.

Based on the above, the proposed project would not interfere substantially with the movement of any resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of wildlife nursery sites, and a less-than-significant impact would occur.

- e. The proposed project would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances, such as a tree preservation policy, protecting biological resources. The proposed project would be subject to the requirements of Ordinance No. 848 (LMC Chapter 15.66), Biological Impact Fee, which requires the payment of \$770/acre to offset the cumulative loss of biological resources in the Antelope Valley as a result of development. This fee is required of all projects occurring on previously undeveloped land regardless of the biological resources present and is utilized to enhance biological resources through education programs and the acquisition of property for conservation. Therefore, no impact would occur.
- f. There are no Habitat Conservation Plans, Natural Community Conservation Plans, or other approved local, regional, or State habitat conservation plans which are applicable to the project site. The West Mojave Coordinated Habitat Conservation Plan only applies to federal land, specifically land owned by the Bureau of Land Management. In conjunction with the Coordinated Management Plan, a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) was proposed which would have applied to all private properties within the Plan Area. However, this HCP was never approved by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife nor was it adopted by the local agencies (counties and cities) within the Plan Area. As such, there is no HCP that is applicable to the project site and no impacts would occur.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
V. <u>CULTURAL RESOURCES</u> . Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5?		✗		
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resources pursuant to §15064.5?		✗		
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?		✗		

- a-c. Historical resources are features that are associated with the lives of historically-important persons and/or historically-significant events, that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction, or that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important to the pre-history or history of the local area, California, or the nation. Examples of typical historical resources include, but are not limited to, buildings, farmsteads, rail lines, bridges, and trash scatters containing objects such as colored glass and ceramics.

A Historical/Archaeological Resources Survey Report conducted for the project site by CRM TECH (see Appendix C) consisted of archival research to identify any previously recorded cultural resources and a field survey, conducted on March 10, 2025.⁶ On March 4, 2025, the South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC) performed a records search of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) for historical/archaeological resources site records. The SCCIC concluded that previous cultural resources studies covering the project area with systematic surveys do not exist. However, a 2015 study for a nearby freeway interchange improvement project on SR 14 evidently included at least a part of the project site, although the report for that study is not yet available at the SCCIC. As a result of that study, an archaeological site from the historic period was recorded as lying partially within the current project boundaries and was subsequently designated Site 19-004789 in the California Historical Resources Inventory. According to the Historical/Archaeological Resources Survey Report, Site 19-004789 consists of a post-WWII refuse scatter over an area measuring approximately 85 meters by 56 meters, with the southern portion of the resource extending into the project site. Artifacts observed at Site 19-004789 included sanitary, beverage, fruit, and meat cans of various sizes and shapes, as well as fragmented bottle glass. At the time of the initial recordation, the resource was noted to be in poor condition and lacked historic integrity, and that continued disturbances were evident in the form of on-going modern refuse dumping.

The field survey conducted by CRM Tech as part of the Historical/Archaeological Resources Survey Study confirmed the continued presence of the southern portion of Site 19-004789 within the project site, but did not encounter other potential cultural resources within or adjacent to the project area. In order to determine whether the refuse scatter is significant, Site 19-004789 was evaluated using the National

⁶ CRM Tech. *Historical/Archaeological Resources Survey Report*. April 2025.

Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR) eligibility criteria. The NRHP and CRHR eligibility criteria include the following:

- (1) The resource is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the U.S.;
- (2) The resource is associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history;
- (3) The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values; or
- (4) The resource has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.

In addition, the resources must retain integrity. Integrity is evaluated with regard to the retention of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

According to the Historical/Archaeological Resources Survey Report, surface scatters of common domestic refuse from the late historic period, such as Site 19-004789, constitute the most proliferate type of archaeological sites in the southern California desert region. Surface scatters of common domestic refuse typically do not have any documented association, let alone a close association, with any person or event of recognized significance in national, state, or local history. In the absence of an exceptional quantity or quality of the artifacts, these sites do not hold the potential for any important archaeological data, and what little data potential they may possess is largely exhausted through initial recordation into the California Historical Resources Inventory. Site 19-004789 fits the profile for such minor refuse deposit sites. As such, Site 19-004789 does not appear to meet any of the criteria for listing in the CRHR and therefore does not qualify as a “historical resource.” Because other potential “historical resources” were not encountered throughout the course of the study, CRM TECH concluded that recorded historical resources do not exist within or adjacent to the project area. In addition, CRM TECH concluded that human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries, have not been found on the project site.

On March 11, 2025, CRM Tech submitted a written request to the State of California Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) for a records search in the commission’s Sacred Lands File. The NAHC reported that the Sacred Lands File did not identify any Native American cultural resources in the project vicinity. The sacred lands file search conducted by CRM TECH concluded that development of the project site would not result in impacts to a historical resource and did not identify any Native American cultural resources in the project vicinity.

While known resources do not exist on-site, previously unknown historical or archaeological resources may exist in the project area. Such resources have the potential to be uncovered during ground-disturbing activities at the project site, and the proposed project could cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a unique archaeological resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 and/or disturb human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries, during construction. With implementation of the mitigation measures below, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

- V-1. In the event that cultural resources are discovered during project activities, all work in the immediate vicinity of the find (within a 60-foot buffer) shall cease and a qualified archaeologist meeting Secretary of Interior standards shall be hired to assess the find. Work on the other portions of the project outside of the buffered area may continue during this assessment period. Additionally, the Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation Cultural Resources Department (YSMN) shall be contacted, as detailed within V-4, regarding any pre-contact finds and be provided information after the archaeologist makes his/her initial assessment of the nature of the find, so as to provide Tribal input with regards to significance and treatment.
- V-2. If significant pre-contact cultural resources, as defined by CEQA (as amended, 2015), are discovered and avoidance cannot be ensured, the archaeologist shall develop a Monitoring and Treatment Plan, the drafts of which shall be provided to YSMN for review and comment, as detailed within V-4. The archaeologist shall monitor the remainder of the project and implement the Plan accordingly.
- V-3 If human remains or funerary objects are encountered during any activities associated with the project, work in the immediate vicinity (within a 100-foot buffer of the find) shall cease and the County Coroner shall be contacted pursuant to State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and that code enforced for the duration of the project.
- V-4 The YSMN shall be contacted, as detailed in V-1, of any pre-contact cultural resources discovered during project implementation, and be provided information regarding the nature of the find, so as to provide Tribal input with regards to significance and treatment. Should the find be deemed significant, as defined by CEQA (as amended, 2015), a Cultural Resources Monitoring and Treatment Plan shall be created by the archaeologist, in coordination with YSMN, and all subsequent finds shall be subject to the Plan. The Plan shall allow for a monitor to be present that represents YSMN for the remainder of the project, should YSMN elect to place a monitor on-site.
- V-5 Any and all archaeological/cultural documents created as a part of the project (isolate records, site records, survey reports, testing reports, etc.) shall be supplied to the applicant and Lead Agency for dissemination to YSMN. The Lead Agency and/or applicant shall, in good faith, consult with YSMN throughout the life of the project.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VI. <u>ENERGY</u> . Would the project:				
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?			✘	
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficient?			✘	

- a,b. The main forms of available energy supply are electricity, natural gas, and oil. A description of the 2022 California Green Building Standards Code and the Building Energy Efficiency Standards, with which the proposed project would be required to comply, as well as discussions regarding the project's potential effects related to energy demand during construction and operations are provided below.

California Green Building Standards Code

The 2022 California Green Building Standards Code, otherwise known as the CALGreen Code (CCR Title 24, Part 11), is a portion of the CBSC, which became effective with the rest of the CBSC on January 1, 2023.⁷ The purpose of the CALGreen Code is to improve public health, safety, and general welfare by enhancing the design and construction of buildings through the use of building concepts having a reduced negative impact or positive environmental impact and encouraging sustainable construction practices. The provisions of the code apply to the planning, design, operation, construction, use, and occupancy of every newly constructed building or structure throughout California. Requirements of the CALGreen Code include, but are not limited to, the following measures:

- Compliance with relevant regulations related to future installation of EV charging infrastructure in residential and non-residential structures;
- Indoor water use consumption is reduced through the establishment of maximum fixture water use rates;
- Outdoor landscaping must comply with the California Department of Water Resources' Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELO), or a local ordinance, whichever is more stringent, to reduce outdoor water use;
- Diversion of 65 percent of construction and demolition waste from landfills;
- Incentives for installation of electric heat pumps, which use less energy than traditional heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems and water heaters;

⁷ California Energy Codes and Standards. *California Green Building Code*. Available at: <https://calgreeninfo.com/>. Accessed May 2025.

- Required solar photovoltaic (PV) system and battery storage standards for certain buildings; and
- Mandatory use of low-pollutant emitting interior finish materials such as paints, carpet, vinyl flooring, and particle board.

Building Energy Efficiency Standards

The 2022 Building Energy Efficiency Standards is a portion of the CBSC, which expands upon energy-efficiency measures from the 2019 Building Energy Efficiency Standards, went into effect starting January 1, 2023. The 2022 standards provide for additional efficiency improvements beyond the 2019 standards. The proposed project would be subject to all relevant provisions of the most recent update of the CBSC, including the Building Energy Efficiency Standards. Adherence to the most recent CALGreen Code and Building Energy Efficiency Standards would ensure that the proposed structures would consume energy efficiently. Additionally, the 2025 standards are anticipated to go into effect on January 2026.

Construction Energy Use

Construction of the proposed project would involve increased energy demand and consumption related to use of oil in the form of gasoline and diesel fuel for construction worker vehicle trips, hauling and materials delivery truck trips, and operation of off-road construction equipment. In addition, diesel-fueled portable generators may be necessary to provide additional electricity demands for temporary lighting, welding, and for supplying energy to areas of the site where energy supply cannot be met via a hookup to the existing electricity grid.

Even during the most intense period of construction, due to the different types of construction activities (e.g., site preparation, grading, building construction), only portions of the project site would be disturbed at a time, with operation of construction equipment occurring at different locations on the project site, rather than a single location. In addition, all construction equipment and operation thereof would be regulated per the California Air Resources Board (CARB) In-Use Off-Road Diesel Vehicle Regulation, which is intended to reduce emissions from in-use, off-road, heavy-duty diesel vehicles in California by imposing limits on idling, requiring all vehicles to be reported to CARB, restricting the addition of older vehicles into fleets, and requiring fleets to reduce emissions by retiring, replacing, or repowering older engines, or installing exhaust retrofits. The In-Use Off-Road Diesel Vehicle Regulation would subsequently help to improve fuel efficiency and reduce GHG emissions. Technological innovations and more stringent standards are being researched, such as multi-function equipment, hybrid equipment, or other design changes, which could help to reduce demand on oil and emissions associated with construction.

Based on the above, the temporary increase in energy use occurring during construction of the proposed project would not result in a significant increase in peak or base demands or require additional capacity from local or regional energy supplies. In addition, the proposed project would be required to comply with all applicable regulations related to energy conservation and fuel efficiency, which would help to reduce the temporary increase in demand.

Operational Energy Use

Energy use associated with operation of the proposed project would be typical of residential uses, requiring electricity and natural gas for interior and exterior building lighting, HVAC, electronic equipment, machinery, refrigeration, appliances, security systems, and more. Maintenance activities during operations, such as landscape maintenance, would involve the use of electric or gas-powered equipment.

In addition to on-site energy use, the proposed project would result in transportation energy use associated with vehicle trips generated by the proposed residential development.

The proposed project would be subject to all relevant provisions of the CBSC, including the Building Energy Efficiency Standards and CALGreen Code. Adherence to the CALGreen Code and the Building Energy Efficiency Standards would ensure that the proposed structures would consume energy efficiently. Required compliance with the CBSC would ensure that the building energy use associated with the proposed project would not be wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary. In addition, electricity supplied to the project site would comply with the State's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS), which requires investor-owned utilities, electric service providers, and community choice aggregators to increase procurement from eligible renewable energy sources to 60 percent of total procurement by 2030.

With regard to transportation energy use, the proposed project would comply with all applicable regulations associated with vehicle efficiency and fuel economy. Further discussion of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) associated with the proposed project is provided in Section XVII, Transportation, of this IS/MND. Additionally, the City of Lancaster and surrounding areas provides residents with numerous public transportation options. Transit options include local bus stops and the commuter rail service MetroLink. Transit would provide access to several grocery stores, restaurants, and businesses within close proximity to the project site. The site's access to public transit and proximity to pedestrian facilities, such as existing sidewalks along 15th Street West and Avenue K-8, would reduce VMT and, consequently, fuel consumption associated with the proposed residences.

Conclusion

Based on the above, construction and operation of the proposed project would not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources or conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. Thus, a less-than-significant impact would occur.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VII. <u>GEOLOGY AND SOILS</u> . Would the project:				
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.				✗
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?			✗	
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?			✗	
iv) Landslides?			✗	
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?			✗	
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?			✗	
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?		✗		
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?				✗
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?		✗		

- ai-ii. The City of Lancaster General Plan 2030 MEA identifies the City as being located in the Antelope Valley Region within Southern California, a region that is seismically active and commonly experiences strong ground shaking resulting from earthquakes along active faults. According to the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake

Fault Zoning Map, the nearest active fault to the study area is the San Andreas Fault, which lies approximately six miles from the project site.⁸ In addition to the San Andreas Fault, principal faults that could produce damaging earthquakes in the study area are the Sierra Madre-San Fernando, Garlock, Sierra Nevada (Owens Valley), and White Wolf Faults, which lie even further away from the project site. Thus, the potential for fault rupture risk at the project site is relatively low.

Although the project site is not located in the vicinity of any active or potentially active faults, an earthquake of moderate to high magnitude generated by the San Andreas Fault could cause considerable ground shaking at the project site. However, the proposed buildings would be properly engineered in accordance with the CBSC, which includes engineering standards appropriate for the seismic area in which the project site is located. Projects designed in accordance with the CBSC should be able to: 1) resist minor earthquakes without damage, 2) resist moderate earthquakes without structural damage but with some nonstructural damage, and 3) resist major earthquakes without collapse but with some structural as well as nonstructural damage.

Based on the above, a less-than-significant impact would occur related to seismic surface rupture and strong seismic ground shaking.

- a.iii, a.iv, The proposed project's potential effects related to liquefaction, landslides, lateral spreading, and c. subsidence/settlement are discussed in detail below.

Liquefaction

Liquefaction is the temporary transformation of loose, saturated granular sediments from a solid state to a liquefied state as a result of seismic ground shaking. In the process, the soil undergoes transient loss of strength, which commonly causes ground displacement or ground failure to occur. Because saturated soils are a necessary condition for liquefaction, soil layers in areas where the groundwater table is near the surface have higher liquefaction potential than those in which the water table is located at greater depths. Additionally, loose unsaturated sandy soils have the potential to settle during strong seismic shaking. Liquefaction can often result in subsidence or settlement.

The greatest danger from liquefaction occurs in areas where the groundwater table is within 30 feet of ground level, and the soil is poorly consolidated or relatively uncompacted. Liquefaction is characterized by the sudden loss of shearing resistance due to ground shaking combined with an increase in pore water pressure. Subsequently, liquefaction will often result in the collapse or displacement of building foundations. The water table in the City of Lancaster, which is lower than historic levels, is approximately 60 feet from the surface. Therefore, in most areas of Lancaster, the water table rarely comes within 30 feet of the surface.

Identification of liquefaction zones is based primarily on the occurrence of groundwater in major alluvial deposits. According to the Department of Conservation (DOC) California Geological Survey (CGS), the project site is not located in a liquefaction zone.⁹ The nearest liquefaction zone is located approximately 0.25-mile to the north of the project site. Due to the distance to the nearest liquefaction zone, the risk of

⁸ California Department of Conservation: Open Data and Maps CNRA. *CGS Seismic Hazards Program: Alquist-Priolo Fault Hazard Zones*. Available at: <https://maps-cnra-cadoc.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/cadoc::cgs-seismic-hazards-program-alquist-priolo-fault-hazard-zones/explore?location=37.034250%2C-119.787888%2C6.31>. Accessed May 2025.

⁹ California Department of Conservation. *California Geological Survey, Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation*. Available at: <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/informationwarehouse/eqzapp/>. Accessed June 2025.

liquefaction occurring on the project site is low. Therefore, the proposed project is unlikely to be subject to liquefaction hazards.

Landslides

Seismically-induced landslides are triggered by earthquake ground shaking. The risk of landslide hazard is greatest in areas with steep, unstable slopes. The project site is relatively flat and does not contain slopes. A search of the CGS shows that the project site is not located in a landslide or fault zone.¹⁰ The closest landslide zone is in the San Andreas fault zone approximately six miles to the southwest of the project site. Due to the substantial distance to the nearest landslide zone, the risk of landslide occurring on the project site is low. Therefore, landslides are not likely to occur on- or off-site as a result of the proposed project, and no impact would occur.

Lateral Spreading

Lateral spreading is horizontal/lateral ground movement of relatively flat-lying soil deposits towards a free face such as an excavation, channel, or open body of water; typically, lateral spreading is associated with liquefaction of one or more subsurface layers near the bottom of the exposed slope. The project site does not contain any open faces that would be considered susceptible to lateral spreading. In addition, as noted above, the site is not anticipated to be subject to substantial liquefaction hazards. Therefore, the potential for lateral spreading to pose a risk to the proposed development is relatively low.

Subsidence/Settlement

Subsidence is the settlement of soils of very low density generally from either oxidation of organic material, or desiccation and shrinkage, or both, following drainage. Subsidence takes place gradually, usually over a period of several years, and is a common consequence of liquefaction. As discussed above, on-site soils are not anticipated to be subject to substantial liquefaction risks. Because the site presents low potential for liquefaction, the potential for seismically induced settlement to occur at the project site is also considered to be low. However, the Southern California region is seismically active and commonly experiences strong ground shaking resulting from earthquakes along active faults. Therefore, preparation of a project-specific geotechnical report would be required to determine specific risks related to subsidence and settlement, and to provide recommendations to address any identified hazards.

Conclusion

Based on the above, construction of the proposed project would not directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving liquefaction, subsidence, or settlement, and would not be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse. From a geotechnical standpoint, provided that the recommendations included in a project-specific geotechnical exploration are implemented into project design, the geological and soil conditions on the site would be adequate to support development of the proposed project. Impacts would be less than significant.

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Conservation. *Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation*. Available at: <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/EQZApp/app/>. Accessed May 2025.

- b. Issues related to erosion and degradation of water quality during construction are discussed in Section X, Hydrology and Water Quality, of this IS/MND, under question 'a.' As noted therein, the proposed project would not result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil. Thus, a less-than-significant impact would occur.
- d. Expansive soils can undergo significant volume change with changes in moisture content. Specifically, such soils shrink and harden when dried and expand and soften when wetted. Expansive soils can shrink or swell and cause heaving and cracking of slabs-on-grade, pavements, and structures founded on shallow foundation. Building damage due to volume changes associated with expansive soil can be reduced by a variety of solutions. If structures are underlain by expansive soils, foundation systems must be capable of tolerating or resisting any potentially damaging soil movements, and building foundation areas must be properly drained. Exposed soils must be kept moist prior to placement of concrete for foundation construction.

According to the USDA NRCS Web Soil Survey program, mapped soils within the project site consist of Rosamund fine sandy loam and Sunrise sandy loam, shallow.¹¹ The Rosamund fine sandy loam, which covers 84.4 percent of the project site, has a very limited rating regarding flooding. A very limited rating indicates that the soil has one or more features that are unfavorable for dwellings of three-stories or less. Due to the potential for on-site soils to be expansive, the proposed project could potentially create substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property without mitigation. With implementation of mitigation, including the requirement that a Geotechnical Analysis is conducted for the proposed project, a less-than-significant impact would occur.

Mitigation Measure

VII-1. Prior to approval of any grading permits, a design-level Geotechnical Analysis shall be conducted by a California Registered Civil Engineer or Geotechnical Engineer to characterize the subsurface conditions of the project site. The report shall address and make recommendations on the following:

- Road, pavement, and parking area design;
- Structural foundations, including retaining wall design (if applicable);
- Grading practices;
- Erosion/winterization;
- Special problems discovered on-site, (i.e., groundwater, expansive/unstable soils, etc.);
- Subsidence and settlement potential; and
- Slope stability.

All grading and foundation plans for the development shall be designed by a Civil and Structural Engineer and reviewed and approved by the Director of Public Works/City Engineer, Chief Building Official, and a qualified Geotechnical Engineer prior to issuance of grading and building permits to ensure that all geotechnical recommendations specified in the Geotechnical Analysis are properly incorporated and utilized in the project design. The design-level Geotechnical Analysis shall be submitted to the City of Lancaster Development Services Department.

¹¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service. *Web Soil Survey*. Available at: <https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/WebSoilSurvey.aspx>. Accessed May 2025.

- e. The proposed project would connect to existing City sewer infrastructure. Thus, the construction or operation of septic tanks or other alternative wastewater disposal systems is not included as part of the project. Therefore, no impact regarding the capability of soil to adequately support the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems would occur.
- f. The Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County indicated that known fossil localities have not been previously recorded within the study area boundaries. However, the MEA indicates that excavations in the Quaternary alluvial sediments located in the balance of the study area may well encounter significant vertebrate fossil remains. Therefore, any excavations into intact Quaternary-age alluvial sediments in the study area have a high potential to impact paleontological resources. According to the USDA NRCS Web Soil Survey, there are two types of soil present on the project site; Rosamond fine sandy loam and Sunrise sandy loam, shallow. Thus, Quaternary-age alluvial sediments do not exist on the project site. However, previously unknown paleontological resources could exist within the project site. Ground-disturbing activity, such as grading, trenching, or excavating associated with development of the proposed project, could have the potential to disturb or destroy such resources. Therefore, the proposed project could result in the direct or indirect destruction of a unique paleontological resource. Mitigation measures have been identified below to address impacts to paleontological resources. With implementation of the identified mitigation, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure

- VII-2. In the event that a paleontological resource is inadvertently discovered during project-related earthwork, regardless of the depth of excavation or location, work shall be halted within 50 feet (15 meters) of the find and a qualified paleontologist (Society of Vertebrate Paleontology [SVP] 2010) and the City of Lancaster Development Services Department shall be notified. The resources shall be examined by the qualified paleontologist at the developer's expense, for the purpose of recording, protecting, or curating the discovery as appropriate. Construction activities could continue in other areas.

If the find is determined to be significant under SVP criteria, the find shall be left in place without further disturbance, or if avoidance is not feasible, then additional work, such as fossil recovery excavation (salvage) and curation at a certified repository, such as the University of California Museum of Paleontology (UCMP), may be warranted and would be discussed in consultation with the City of Lancaster Development Services Department, and any other relevant regulatory agency, as appropriate. The qualified paleontologist shall submit to the City of Lancaster Development Services Department for review and approval a report of the findings and method of curation or protection of the resources.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VIII. <u>GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS</u> . Would the project:				
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?			✘	
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?			✘	

- a,b. Emissions of GHGs contributing to global climate change are attributable in large part to human activities associated with the industrial/manufacturing, utility, transportation, residential, and agricultural sectors. Therefore, the cumulative global emissions of GHGs contributing to global climate change can be attributed to every nation, region, and city, and virtually every individual on Earth. An individual project's GHG emissions are at a micro-scale level relative to global emissions and effects to global climate change; however, an individual project could result in a cumulatively considerable incremental contribution to a significant cumulative macro-scale impact. As such, impacts related to emissions of GHG are inherently considered cumulative impacts.

Implementation of the proposed project would cumulatively contribute to increases of GHG emissions. Estimated GHG emissions attributable to future development would be primarily associated with increases of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and, to a lesser extent, other GHG pollutants, such as methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O) associated with area sources, mobile sources or vehicles, utilities (electricity and natural gas), water usage, wastewater generation, and the generation of solid waste. The primary source of GHG emissions for the project would be mobile source emissions. The common unit of measurement for GHG is expressed in terms of annual metric tons of CO₂ equivalents (MTCO_{2e}/yr).

In 2016, the AVAQMD developed a threshold of significance for project-level GHG emissions; AVAQMD's approach to developing the threshold was to identify a threshold level of GHG emissions for which a project would not be expected to substantially conflict with existing California legislation. At the time that the thresholds were developed, the foremost legislation regarding GHG emissions was AB 32, which established an emissions reduction goal of reducing statewide emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. The GHG emissions thresholds of significance recommended by AVAQMD to determine compliance with AB 32 are 100,000 MTCO_{2e}/yr and 548,000 lbs/day for both construction and operation. If a project generates GHG emissions above AVAQMD's adopted threshold levels for either construction or operation, the project is considered to generate significant GHG emissions and conflict with AB 32.

Since the adoption of AVAQMD's GHG thresholds of significance, the State legislature has passed SB 32, which builds upon AB 32 and establishes a statewide GHG reduction target of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. Considering the legislative progress that has occurred regarding statewide reduction goals since the adoption of AVAQMD's standards, the emissions thresholds presented above would determine whether a proposed project would be in compliance with the 2020 emissions reduction goals of AB 32 but

would not necessarily demonstrate whether a project would be in compliance with SB 32. As such, in addition to quantitatively assessing project GHG emissions in comparison to AVAQMD's thresholds, GHG emissions resulting from the proposed project have been assessed in relation to other existing statewide and Citywide plans related to climate change, including the 2022 Scoping Plan, the City's Climate Action Plan (CAP), and the Southern California Association of Governments Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCAG RTP/SCS).

AVAQMD Thresholds

During construction of the proposed project, GHGs would be emitted through the operation of construction equipment and from worker and builder supply vendor vehicles, each of which typically use fossil-based fuels to operate. Short-term GHG emissions from on-site construction activities would vary daily as construction activity levels change. The GHG emissions associated with construction of the project were evaluated with CalEEMod, using the modeling assumptions discussed in Section III, Air Quality, of this IS/MND. The construction of the proposed project would generate a maximum of 8,905 lbs/day of CO₂e, which is below the AVAQMD's threshold of 548,000 lbs/day. In addition, construction of the proposed project would generate approximately 647 MTCO₂e/yr, which would be below AVAQMD's threshold of 100,000 MTCO₂e/yr.

Long-term GHG emissions are typically generated from mobile sources (e.g., cars, trucks and buses), area sources (e.g., maintenance activities and landscaping), and indirect emissions from sources associated with energy consumption, waste sources (land filling and waste disposal), and water sources (water supply and conveyance, treatment, and distribution). Mobile-source GHG emissions associated with the proposed development would include project-generated vehicle trips to and from the project site. Area source emissions would be associated with activities such as landscaping and maintenance on the project site. Waste source emissions generated by the proposed project would include energy generated by land filling and other methods of disposal related to transporting and managing project generated waste. In addition, water source emissions associated with the proposed project would include emissions generated by water supply and conveyance, water treatment, water distribution, and wastewater treatment.

The GHG emissions associated with operation of proposed project were evaluated with CalEEMod, using the modeling assumptions discussed in Section III, Air Quality, of this IS/MND. The resulting daily and annual GHG emissions are summarized in Table 8 below. As shown in the table, the project's total unmitigated operational GHG emissions were estimated to be approximately 7,328 lbs/day of CO₂e, or 1,116 MTCO₂e/yr, which is below AVAQMD's applicable thresholds of significance for GHG emissions.

Based on the above, construction and operation of the proposed project would not be considered to conflict with the applicable AVAQMD thresholds or the emissions reduction target of AB 32.

2022 Scoping Plan

In the absence of adopted AVAQMD GHG emissions thresholds to assess compliance with SB 32, the proposed project has been qualitatively assessed for compliance with the 2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality Climate Change Scoping Plan (2022 Scoping Plan) as an alternative means of assessing a project's potential impacts related to GHG emissions. The 2022 Scoping Plan intends to achieve targets of carbon neutrality and a reduction of GHG emissions 85 percent below 1990 levels by 2045. The 2022 Scoping Plan plans to reduce GHG emissions on a sector wide scale, through compliance with SB 100, SB 375, the Off-Road Emissions Targeted Manufacturer Rule, In-use Off-Road Fueled Fleets Regulation, etc.

Table 8				
Maximum Unmitigated Operational GHG Emissions				
Emissions Source	Operational Emissions			
	CO₂	CH₄	N₂O	CO₂e
Daily (lbs/day)				
Area Source	34.6	< 0.005	< 0.005	34.7
Energy	1,741	0.16	0.01	1,748
Mobile	4,999	0.26	0.24	5,096
Solid Waste	90.9	9.08	0.00	318
Water	75.1	1.68	0.04	129
Total Daily				7,328
AVAQMD Threshold				548,000
Threshold Exceeded?				No
Annual (MT/yr)				
Area Source	2.82	<0.005	<0.005	2.83
Energy	288	0.03	<0.005	289
Mobile	1,030	0.06	0.06	749
Solid Waste	15.0	1.50	0.00	52.6
Water	12.4	0.28	0.01	21.4
Total Annual				1,116
AVAQMD Threshold				100,000
Threshold Exceeded?				No
Source: 15th Street West Affordable Housing Project CalEEMod Custom Report, May 2025				

Appendix D to the 2022 Scoping Plan provides examples of key project attributes related to VMT reductions and building decarbonization that could be considered to assess a project's compliance with the State's 2030 GHG emissions reductions goals. Thus, general implementation of the suggested project attributes would be considered to demonstrate the proposed project's compliance with the 2022 Scoping Plan and SB 32. The proposed project would generally comply with the majority of the key project attributes through the development of a high-density affordable housing community located less than 0.25 miles from public transit. The proposed project would also be required to comply with the CALGreen Code, MWELO, and applicable Municipal Codes, thereby including energy efficient measures as part of project design. In addition, as shown below in Table 9 and Table 10, the proposed project would implement measures and strategies which reduce the GHG emissions associated with the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with the applicable Statewide action measures provided within the 2022 Scoping Plan or any policy, plan, or regulation with the purpose of GHG emissions reduction.

Lancaster Climate Action Plan

The City of Lancaster's CAP provides measures within eight sectors to reduce GHG emissions, improve community health, and enhance government operations. The eight sectors include energy, transportation, water, land use, waste, built environment, community, and municipal operations. Table 9 below presents consistency with each applicable CAP measure.

Table 9 Consistency with CAP Measures	
CAP Measure	Project Consistency
Transportation-Measure 4.1.2c: Pedestrian Amenities.	The proposed project would improve sidewalk facilities along 15 th Street West and would provide long-term bicycle parking. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with Measure 4.1.2c.
Energy-Measure 4.2.1a: Renewable Energy Purchase Plan.	The proposed project would receive electricity from Lancaster Choice Energy. Additionally, the proposed project would be subject to CALGreen Code related to renewable solar energy. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with Measure 4.2.1a.
Water-Measure 4.4.2a: Sensor Technology.	Sensor technology, such as water saving irrigation would be installed with landscaping. Additionally, landscaping would be required to be consistent with MWELO and LMC Chapter 8.50. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with Measure 4.4.2a.
Measure 4.7.3a: Xeriscaping.	All landscaping would be consistent with the LMC and MWELO and therefore would be designed to be water efficient. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with Measure 4.7.3a.
Waste-Measure 4.5.1b: Recycling Incentives.	Bins for trash, recycling, and organics enclosures would be provided on the Project site. The project would divert 65 percent of construction waste from landfills as required by CALGreen. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with Measure 4.5.1b.

Based on the analysis above, the proposed project would remain consistent with the City's CAP and would not interfere with the applicable measures presented above.

Southern California Area of Governments Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategies/Connect SoCal

The SCAG RTP/SCS involves the development, management, and operation of transportation systems and networks for the SCAG planning area and sets a forecasted regional development plan. The RTP/SCS includes measures to reduce GHG emissions from transportation within the SCAG planning area. Table 10 below, presents the proposed project's consistency with such measures.

Table 10 Consistency with SCAG RTP/SCS/Connect SoCal	
Goal and Subgoal(s)	Project Consistency
Mobility: Build and maintain an integrated multimodal transportation network - Support investments that are well-maintained and operated, coordinated, resilient and result in improved safety, improved air quality and minimized greenhouse gas emissions - Ensure that reliable, accessible, affordable and appealing travel options are readily available, while striving to enhance equity in the offerings in high-need communities - Support planning for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds	The proposed project would result in the development of a high-density affordable housing community. The proposed project would also be required to comply with CALGreen Code, MWELo, and applicable Municipal Codes, which would result in GHG reductions through the project's inherent design features. Additionally, the development would include long-term bicycle parking and access to public transit within 0.25 miles, which would promote the use of alternative transportation options. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with the RTP/SCS goal and subgoals related to Mobility.
Communities: Develop, connect and sustain livable and thriving communities - Create human-centered communities in urban, suburban and rural settings to increase mobility options and reduce travel distances - Produce and preserve diverse housing types in an effort to improve affordability, accessibility and opportunities for all households	The proposed project would result in the development of an affordable housing community in close proximity to residential and commercial land uses within the City. The proposed project would provide increased access and mobility options within the community. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with the RTP/SCS goal and subgoals related to Communities.
Environment: Create a healthy region for the people of today and tomorrow - Develop communities that are resilient and can mitigate, adapt to and respond to chronic and acute stresses and disruptions, such as climate change - Integrate the region's development pattern and transportation network to improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enable more sustainable use of energy and water - Conserve the region's resources	As discussed throughout this section the proposed project would result in emissions below the AVAQMD GHG thresholds and would generally comply with the 2022 Scoping Plan, the City's CAP, and SCAG RTP/SCS. Thus, the proposed project would not significantly contribute to climate change. As detailed in Section XVII, Transportation, of this IS/MND, the proposed project is located within a Low VMT Area, or an area that has VMT at least 15 percent lower than the Antelope Valley Planning Area (AVPA). In addition, according to the City of Lancaster's screening criteria for VMT analysis, because the proposed project is 100% affordable, the proposed project is presumed to have a less-than-significant impact related to VMT. The proposed project would also include long-term bicycle parking and access to public transit within 0.25 miles, which would promote the use of alternative transportation options. In addition, as discussed above, the proposed project would be required to comply with the

	CALGreen Code, MWELo, and applicable Municipal Codes, which would result in GHG reductions related to energy and water usage and would help ensure conservation of the region's resources through the project's inherent sustainable design features. Finally, as discussed in Section XIX, Utilities and Service Systems, of this IS/MND, the proposed project would result in a less-than-significant impact related to increased demand on utilities. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with the RTP/SCS goal and subgoals related to Environment.
Economy: Support a sustainable, efficient and productive regional economic environment that provides opportunities for all people in the region • Improve access to jobs and educational resources Advance a resilient and efficient goods movement system that supports the economic vitality of the region, attainment of clean air and quality of life for our communities	The proposed project would provide affordable housing for the City of Lancaster, which would provide additional housing stock within the City; decreasing trips for any future residents who are currently travelling from outside the City boundaries for work, and, thereby, reducing regional VMT. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with the RTP/SCS goal and subgoals related to Economy.

Conclusion

Based on the above, the proposed project would not conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions. In addition, the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of GHG emissions during construction or operation. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
IX. <u>HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS</u> . Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?			✖	
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?			✖	
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?				✖
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?				✖
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?				✖
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?			✖	
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?			✖	

- a. Residential developments are not typically associated with the routine transport, use, disposal, or generation of substantial amounts of hazardous materials. On-site maintenance may involve the use of common household cleaning products, fertilizers, and herbicides, any of which could contain potentially hazardous chemicals; however, such products would be expected to be used in accordance with label instructions. Due to the regulations governing use of such products and the amount anticipated to be

used on the site, routine use of such products would not represent a substantial risk to public health or the environment.

Construction activities associated with the proposed project would involve the use of heavy equipment, which would contain fuels and oils, and various other products such as concrete, paints, and adhesives. Small quantities of potentially toxic substances (e.g., petroleum and other chemicals used to operate and maintain construction equipment) would be used at the project site and transported to and from the site during construction. However, the project contractor would be required to comply with all California Health and Safety Codes and local City ordinances regulating the handling, storage, and transportation of hazardous and toxic materials. Thus, construction of the proposed project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment.

Based on the above, the project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials, and a less-than-significant impact would occur.

- b. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) was prepared for the proposed project by KCE Matrix for the purposes of identifying recognized environmental conditions (RECs), controlled RECs (CRECs), and/or historical RECs (HRECs) associated with the project site (see Appendix D).¹²

A REC is defined by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) International as the presence or likely presence of any hazardous substances or petroleum products in, on, or at a property: (1) due to release to the environment; (2) under conditions indicative of a release to the environment; or (3) under conditions that pose a material threat of a future release to the environment. A CREC is defined as a REC resulting from a past release of hazardous substances or petroleum products that has been addressed to the satisfaction of the applicable regulatory authority, with hazardous substances or petroleum products allowed to remain in place subject to the implementation of required controls. A HREC is defined as a past release of any hazardous substances or petroleum products that has occurred in connection with the property and has been addressed to the satisfaction of the applicable regulatory authority or meeting unrestricted use criteria established by a regulatory authority, without subjecting the property to any required controls.

The Phase I ESA included a records review to identify potential RECs, CRECs, and/or HRECs, including an evaluation of physical setting and environmental records, information regarding fuel storage and waste management activities, previously regulated hazardous waste sites, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) Hazardous Waste and Substances Sites (Cortese) list of known contaminated sites, historical use information, and current uses of the property. A reconnaissance of the project site and interview with a representative of the client to identify property characteristics and any potential environmental hazards were also included as part of the Phase I ESA. Finally, a Vapor Encroachment Screen (VES) for the project site was conducted to identify the presence or likely presence of Chemicals of Concern (COC) vapors in the subsurface of the project site caused by the release of vapors from contaminated soil or groundwater either on or near the subject site.

According to the Phase I ESA and based on the historic information obtained during the investigation, the subject property consisted of vacant unoccupied land without structures since at least 1928 and through the present. On January 8, 2025, a representative of KCE Matrix conducted a site inspection and confirmed that the project site consists of vacant unoccupied land without structures and has a dirt surface. Overall, the reconnaissance did not find documentation or physical evidence of soil, gas, or groundwater

¹² KCE Matrix. *Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Report*. January 2025.

impairments associated with the use or past use of the project site that would indicate the likely presence of an environmental condition.

Based on the Phase I ESA, four sites, including automobile dealerships, gas stations, and commercial sites, were identified as being located within approximately 500 to 800 feet of the project site, east of the Antelope Highway. The four nearby sites were identified as Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)-NonGen sites and two of the four were reported as above-ground storage tank (AST) sites. None of the four sites were reported as having any type of unauthorized release related to environmental matters. Based on reconnaissance of the site vicinity, KCE Matrix did not observe evidence of subsurface assessment activity that would indicate the presence of subsurface contamination migrating towards the project site from the four other sites or other from properties.

Based on the VES conducted during the investigation for the Phase I ESA, a Vapor Encroachment Condition (VEC) originating from the project site was not identified. Furthermore, based on the research conducted during this investigation, a VEC originating from the vicinity of the project site was not identified.

Overall, the Phase I ESA did not identify any evidence of RECs, CRECs, or HRECs associated with the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the likely release of hazardous materials into the environment, and a less-than-significant impact would occur.

- c. The nearest public school to the proposed project is Miller Elementary School, approximately 0.80-mile east of the project site. Thus, the project is not located within one-quarter mile of an existing school. The proposed project is residential in nature and would not include any activities that would involve the routine emission or handling of substantial amounts of hazardous or acutely hazardous materials. Therefore, no impact would occur.
- d. The California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal-EPA) has compiled a list of data resources that provide information regarding the facilities or sites identified as meeting the “Cortese List” requirements, pursuant to Government Code 65962.5. The components of the Cortese List include the DTSC Hazardous Waste and Substances Site List, the list of leaking underground storage tank (UST) sites from the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) GeoTracker database, the list of solid waste disposal sites identified by the SWRCB, and the list of active Cease and Desist Orders (CDO) and Cleanup and Abatement Orders (CAO) from the SWRCB.

The project site is not included on the DTSC Hazardous Waste and Substances Site List,¹³ or the list of solid waste disposal sites.¹⁴ The project site is also not included on the list of leaking UST sites from the SWRCB’s database,¹⁵ or the list of active CDO and CAO from the SWRCB.¹⁶ Thus, the proposed project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment, and no impact would occur.

¹³ Department of Toxic Substances Control. Hazardous Waste and Substances Site List (Cortese). Available at: <https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/>. Accessed May 2025.

¹⁴ CalEPA. Sites Identified with Waste Constituents above Hazardous Waste Levels Outside the Waste Management Unit. Available at: <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://calepa.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/SiteCleanup-CorteseList-CurrentList.pdf>. Accessed May 2025.

¹⁵ State Water Resources Control Board. GeoTracker, Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) Cleanup Sites. Available at https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/search?cmd=search&site_type=LUFT. Accessed May 2025.

¹⁶ State Water Resources Control Board. Water Rights Enforcement: Cease and Desist Orders (CDOs). Available at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/enforcement/compliance/cease_desist_actions/#2023. Accessed May 2025.

- e. The nearest public airport to the site is the Palmdale Regional Airport, located approximately 4.97 miles to the southeast of the project site. According to the Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Plan, the project site is outside of the Palmdale Regional Airport Influence Area.¹⁷ Therefore, no impact would occur related to a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area associated with the project being located within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport or public use airport.
- f. The City of Lancaster 2024 Hazard Mitigation Plan¹⁸ and the General Plan Safety Element¹⁹ are the principal guides to the City of Lancaster's response to, and management of, emergencies and disasters. The project site is bordered to the east by SR 14, which is a major roadway within the City designated for use as an evacuation route in the event of an emergency. However, the proposed project would not involve modifications to SR 14, or alter the existing circulation system in the surrounding area. During operation, the proposed project would provide adequate access for emergency vehicles and would not interfere with potential evacuation or response routes used by emergency response teams. During construction of the proposed project, all construction equipment would be staged on-site so as to prevent obstruction of local and regional travel routes in the City that could be used as evacuation routes during emergency events. Thus, the proposed project would not interfere with the City of Lancaster 2024 Hazard Mitigation Plan or the General Plan Safety Element. As a result, the project would have a less-than-significant impact with respect to impairing the implementation of or physically interfering with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.
- g. According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) Fire and Resource Assessment Program, the project site is not located within a Very High or High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ).²⁰ The closest High FHSZ is located approximately 2.47 miles to the west of the project site, and the closest Very High FHSZ is located approximately 2.96 miles to the northwest of the project site. In addition, the site is located in a relatively developed area of the City, which precludes the uncontrolled spread of wildland fires. Therefore, the proposed project would not expose people or structures to the risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, and a less-than-significant impact would occur.

¹⁷ Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Commission. *Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Plan*. December 2004.

¹⁸ MLC & Associates. *City of Lancaster 2024 Hazard Mitigation Plan*. December 2024.

¹⁹ City of Lancaster Community Development Division and Atlas Planning Solutions. *City of Lancaster, California Safety Element*. February 2022.

²⁰ CAL FIRE. *Fire and Resource Assessment Program. FHSZ Viewer*. Available at: <https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/community-wildfire-preparedness-and-mitigation/fire-hazard-severity-zones>. Accessed June 2025.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
X. <u>HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY</u> . Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?			✖	
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?			✖	
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:				
i) Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site			✖	
ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site			✖	
iii) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff			✖	
iv) Impede or redirect flood flows			✖	
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?			✖	
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?			✖	

- a,ci. During the early stages of construction activities, topsoil would be exposed due to grading and excavation of the site. After grading and prior to overlaying the ground surface with impervious surfaces and structures, the potential exists for wind and water erosion to discharge sediment and/or urban pollutants into stormwater runoff, which could adversely affect water quality.

The SWRCB regulates stormwater discharges associated with construction activities where clearing, grading, or excavation results in a land disturbance of one or more acres. Given that the proposed project would disturb more than one acre of land, the proposed construction activities would be subject to applicable SWRCB regulations. Section 402 of the Clean Water Act requires National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits to allow for and regulate stormwater discharges into municipal storm drain systems. Pursuant to the City of Lancaster MEA, Engineering Design Guidelines, the proposed project would be required to obtain coverage under the NPDES General Permit requiring maintenance of drainage/stormwater control facilities, submittal of a Notice of Intent (NOI) to comply with the Construction General Permit to the California SWRCB, and implementation a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).

Following completion of project buildout, the site would be largely covered with impervious surfaces or landscaped areas, and topsoil would no longer be exposed. Pursuant to LMC Section 8.50.200, Stormwater Management and Rainwater Retention, the City would require stormwater management practices to minimize runoff and increase infiltration in order to recharge groundwater and improve water quality. As a regulated project, the proposed project would be required to include Low Impact Development (LID) Design Standards, including, but not limited to, replicating the site's natural drainage patterns, detain and retain runoff throughout the site, and concentrating development on portions of the site with less permeable soils and preserving areas that can promote infiltration. As such, the potential for the proposed project to result in impacts to water quality would be reduced. Compliance with the requirements of the SWRCB, NPDES, and implementation of a SWPPP would ensure that waste discharge requirements are not violated.

As discussed under question 'cii' through 'ciii', storm drainage from impervious areas would be collected and routed through water quality treatment facilities for removal of pollutants. According to the Preliminary Hydrology Study conducted for the proposed project by AMG & Associates (see Appendix E),²¹ the proposed project site would be delineated with a single drainage management area (DMA) and an on-site area drain system would collect stormwater flows from the roof and downspouts and route them into an infiltration system to be treated in the northerly drive aisle of the site. Emergency runoff would be directed to the emergency overflow flood channel in the northwest of the project site before discharging into a City of Lancaster Flood Control Facility.

Based on the above, the proposed project would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality. Thus, a less-than-significant impact would occur.

- b,e. All water would be obtained from Los Angeles County Waterworks District #40 and no ground water pumping would occur on the project site. Additionally, the project site has not been designated as an area for groundwater recharge. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

Currently, the project site is undeveloped and covered in pervious surfaces; therefore, implementation of the project would introduce new impervious surfaces on-site. However, runoff from the proposed impervious surfaces would be directed to the drainage management area and infiltration system in the northern portion of the project site to be treated. At both locations, runoff water would percolate and recharge the Lancaster area. Therefore, any new impervious surfaces associated with the proposed project would not interfere substantially with groundwater recharge within the City of Lancaster.

²¹ AMG Associates, LLC. *Preliminary Hydrology Study*. April 2025.

Based on the above, the proposed project would result in a less-than-significant impact with respect to substantially decreasing groundwater supplies or interfering substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project would impede sustainable groundwater management.

- cii,ciii. The proposed project would result in the development of a multi-family residential project. Specifically, implementation of the proposed project would result in approximately 7.31 acres of impervious surfaces and 3.55 acres of pervious surfaces within the site.

As previously discussed, pursuant to the City of Lancaster MEA, the proposed project would be required to comply with the NPDES General Permit requiring maintenance of drainage/stormwater control facilities, submittal of a NOI to comply with the Construction General Permit to the California SWRCB, and implementation a SWPPP.

According to the Preliminary Hydrology Study conducted for the proposed project by AMG & Associates, the project site would be delineated with a single DMA and an on-site area drain system would collect stormwater flows from the roof and downspouts and route them into an infiltration system in the northerly drive aisle of the site. These flows would then confluence at the north of the project site to the infiltration system to be treated on-site. Using the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (LACDPW) HydroCalc, the Preliminary Hydrology Study evaluated the 25 and 100 year storm water runoff for pre- and post-construction project site conditions. In a 10-year and 25-year storm, runoff would remain within the underground stormwater detention system, and would not pose a threat to people or structures.

Based on the above, the proposed project would not substantially alter or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site, or create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff. Therefore, a less-than-significant impact would occur.

- civ. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance Rate Map (FEMA FIRM) 06037C0420F effective September 26, 2008, the entirety of the project site is within Zone X, identified as an Area of Minimal Flood Hazard.²² The project site is not located within a 100-year floodplain or a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). Therefore, development of the proposed project would not impede or redirect flood flows, and a less-than-significant impact would result.
- d. Tsunamis are defined as sea waves created by undersea fault movement, whereas a seiche is a long-wavelength, large-scale wave action set up in a closed body of water such as a lake or reservoir. The project site is not located in proximity to a coastline and would not be potentially affected by flooding risks associated with tsunamis. The project site is located approximately 50 miles from the nearest coastline, and is not located nearby to any substantially sized lakes. Therefore, given the distance from any lakes or coastline, the project site is not anticipated to be exposed to the impacts of seiches. Based on the above, the proposed project would not pose a risk related to the release of pollutants due to project inundation due to flooding, tsunami, or seiche, and a less-than-significant impact would occur.

²² Federal Emergency Management Agency. *Flood Insurance Rate Map 06007C0400E*. Available at: <https://msc.fema.gov/portal/home>. Accessed May 2025.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XI. <u>LAND USE AND PLANNING</u> . Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?			✖	
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?			✖	

- a. A project risks dividing an established community if the project would introduce infrastructure or alter land use so as to change the land use conditions in the surrounding community, or isolate an existing land use. The project site is currently undeveloped. Surrounding land uses in the project vicinity include undeveloped land and a flood control channel with associated dirt access road to the north; the Lancaster Auto Mall and commercial uses to the east, across SR 14; an apartment complex to the west, across 15th Street West; and a paved parking lot and undeveloped land to the south. The proposed project would include development of a 228-unit apartment complex. As such, the proposed project would develop land uses similar to what is currently within the project vicinity. Given that the project site is currently undeveloped and surrounded by other existing commercial and residential uses, the proposed project would not physically divide an established community, alter the general development trends, or isolate an existing land use. Therefore, a less-than-significant impact would occur.
- b. The project site is designated as C by the City of Lancaster 2030 General Plan and zoned CPD. Pursuant to Chapter 17.12.080 of the City of Lancaster Code of Ordinances, multi-family residential projects are a permitted use in the CPD zone with a Conditional Use Permit. As such, residential development has been anticipated at the project site.

In addition, the proposed project would generally be consistent with surrounding residential development to the east. As demonstrated throughout this IS, the proposed project would be generally consistent with LMC and General Plan policies, as well as other applicable policies and regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating environmental effects.

Thus, the proposed project would be consistent with the General Plan and would not cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect, and a less-than-significant impact would occur.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XII. <u>MINERAL RESOURCES</u> . Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?				✘
b) 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?				✘

- a,b. The project site is located in a generally developed area of the City. According to the City's 2030 MEA, the Lancaster area is not likely to have large, valuable mineral and aggregate deposits. Pursuant to the California Department of Conservation's Mineral Land Classification map, the project site is located in a mineral land classification area of Portland cement concrete aggregate.²³ However, given that the project site is located within a developed and urbanized area, the site would not be anticipated to contain mineral resources. Furthermore, mineral extraction activity on the project site would not be compatible with the existing uses in the vicinity of the project site. Finally, given that the proposed project is consistent with the existing land use and zoning designations with the approval of a Conditional Use Permit, development of the project site with the proposed uses has been generally anticipated by the City. Therefore, no impact to mineral resources would occur.

²³ Department of Conservation California Geological Survey. *Mineral Land Classification Map*. Available at: <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/informationwarehouse/index.html?map=mlc>. Accessed May 2025.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIII. <u>NOISE</u> . Would the project:				
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?		✘		
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?			✘	
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				✘

- a. The following sections present information regarding sensitive noise receptors in proximity to the project site, the existing noise environment, and the potential for the proposed project to result in impacts during project construction and operation. The following term is referenced in the sections below:

- Decibel (dB): A unit of sound energy intensity. An A-weighted decibel (dBA) is a decibel corrected for the variation in frequency response to the typical human ear at commonly encountered noise levels. All references to dB in this section will be A-weighted unless noted otherwise.

Sensitive Noise Receptors

Some land uses are considered more sensitive to noise than others and, thus, are referred to as sensitive noise receptors. Land uses often associated with sensitive noise receptors generally include residences, schools, libraries, hospitals, and passive recreational areas. Noise-sensitive land uses are typically given special attention in order to achieve protection from excessive noise. The nearest sensitive receptors to the project site is the residential apartment building to the east, across 15th Street West, located approximately 70 feet to the west of the project site. Additionally, sensitive receptors in the immediately surrounding area are the multi-family developments to the southwest, Kaiser to the south, and the park to the southeast.

Standards of Significance

The City's General Plan lists objectives aimed at assuring that both non-transportation and transportation-generated noise sources comply with specific noise standards through proper analysis and mitigation. Table 3-1 of the City's General Plan establishes maximum noise level standards for various land uses within

the City. As shown therein, the City has established a maximum noise level standard of 65 dBA for residential uses and 70 dBA for commercial and industrial office areas.

Section 8.24.030 of the LMC provides that any person shall not make, cause or suffer, or permit to be made upon any premises owned, occupied or controlled by him/her any unnecessary noises or sounds which are physically annoying to persons of ordinary sensitiveness which are so harsh or so prolonged or unnatural or unusual in their use, time, or place as to occasion physical discomfort to the inhabitants of any neighborhood. In addition, Section 8.24.040 of the LMC states that a person at any time on Sunday or any day between the hours of 8:00 PM and 7:00 AM shall not perform any construction or repair work of any kind upon any building or structure within five hundred feet of an occupied dwelling, apartment, hotel, mobile home, or other place of residence.

The City of Lancaster MEA has identified 60-, 65-, and 70-dBA noise contours for several roadway segments within the City. As noted in the City of Lancaster MEA, the 70 dBA contour at buildout of the General Plan would be located at a maximum of 30 feet from the center of the roadway from Avenue K-8 between 15th Street West and 10th Street West. In addition, the 65 dBA contour at buildout of the General Plan would be located at a maximum of 93 feet, and the 60 dBA contour would extend to a maximum of 296 feet from the center of the roadway. The proposed project would be located approximately 60 feet from the center of the roadway of 15th Street West and 600 feet from the center of the roadway of Avenue K-8. As such, the proposed residential units adjacent to Avenue K-8 would be exposed to noise levels below 60 dBA, and the proposed residential units adjacent to 15th Street West would be exposed to noise levels of approximately 65 dBA.

The City of Lancaster has adopted the California Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI) land use compatibility chart for community noise as a planning guideline. The City of Lancaster MEA also implements the City of Lancaster Normalized Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) Corrections in order to identify acceptable and unacceptable noise levels for various land use types in the City. According to the City of Lancaster Noise Standards outlined in the MEA, multi-family residential units are “normally acceptable” in exterior noise environments up to 60 dBA and “conditionally acceptable” up to 70 dBA. Additionally, multi-family residential units are “normally and clearly unacceptable” in exterior noise environments of 70 dBA and above. A “normally acceptable” designation indicates that conventional construction can occur without special noise reduction requirements. A “conditionally acceptable” designation implies that new construction or development should be undertaken only after a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements for each land use type is made and needed noise insulation features are incorporated in the design.

Impact Analysis

The following sections provide an analysis of potential noise impacts associated with construction and operation of the proposed project.

Construction Noise

During construction of the proposed project, heavy-duty equipment would be used for grading, excavation, paving, and building construction, which would result in temporary noise level increases. Project haul truck traffic on local roadways would also result in a temporary noise level increase during construction activities. Noise levels would vary depending on the type of equipment used, how the equipment is operated, and how well the equipment is maintained. In addition, noise exposure at any single point outside the project site would vary depending on the proximity of construction activities to that point. Standard construction equipment, such as graders, backhoes, loaders, and haul trucks would

be used on-site. Construction activities would be temporary in nature and are anticipated to occur during normal daytime work hours.

Table 11 shows maximum noise levels associated with typical construction equipment. Based on the table, activities involved in typical construction would generate maximum noise levels up to 90 dB at a distance of 50 feet from the project site.

Table 11
Construction Equipment Noise

Type of Equipment	Maximum level, dB at 50 feet
Backhoe	78
Compactor	83
Compressor (air)	78
Concrete Saw	90
Dozer	82
Dump Truck	76
Excavator	81
Generator	81
Jackhammer	89
Pneumatic Tools	85
<i>Source: Federal Highway Administration. Roadway Construction Noise Model User's Guide. January 2006.</i>	

As noted previously, according to the City of Lancaster Noise Standards outlined in the MEA, multi-family residential units are “normally acceptable” in exterior noise environments up to 60 dBA and “conditionally acceptable” up to 70 dBA. Additionally, multi-family residential units are “normally and clearly unacceptable” in exterior noise environments of 70 dBA and above. As one increases the distance between equipment, or increases separation of areas with simultaneous construction activity, dispersion and distance attenuation reduce the effects of combining separate noise sources. The noise levels from a source decrease at a rate of approximately 6 dB per every doubling of distance from the noise source.²⁴ The nearest outdoor area associated with the multi-family residential developments to the west would be approximately 70 feet from the western boundary of the project site. As such, construction noise levels associated with the proposed project would be approximately 87 dBA at the multi-family residential outdoor areas. Based on distance attenuation, construction noise levels associated with the proposed project could exceed the noise standards established in the City’s MEA. Thus, temporary noise increases associated with construction activities, such as noise from internal combustion engines and construction equipment, including generators and air compressors, could be potentially significant.

Construction of the proposed project would be required to comply with the limited construction hours set forth within Section 8.24.040 of the LMC. As discussed above, Section 8.24.040 restricts noise producing construction activities to weekday and Saturday hours between 7:00 AM and 8:00 PM, and construction activities would not be permitted on Sunday. Although construction activities are temporary in nature and would occur during normal daytime working hours, the temporary increase in noise levels due to construction could still result in a temporary increase in ambient noise levels. Construction-related noise could result in sleep interference at existing noise-sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the project site if construction activities were to occur outside the normal daytime hours. Implementation of mitigation would be required in order to ensure the enforcement of time restrictions specified in the LMC, the use of noise-dampened equipment, the location of noise-generating equipment as far as is practical

²⁴ U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration. *OSHA Technical Manual (OTM) Section III: Chapter 5*. Available at: <https://www.osha.gov/otm/section-3-health-hazards/chapter-5#measurements>. Accessed May 2025.

from sensitive receptors, avoidance of unnecessary engine idling, and the use of equipment staging areas that maximize the distance between construction-related noise sources and noise-sensitive receptors to ensure that the temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity associated with construction of the proposed project would not be considered substantial.

Project Operational Noise

As discussed above, Section 8.24.030 of the LMC provides that any person shall not make, cause or suffer, or permit to be made upon any premises owned, occupied or controlled by him/her any unnecessary noises or sounds which are physically annoying to persons of ordinary sensitiveness which are so harsh or so prolonged or unnatural or unusual in their use, time, or place as to occasion physical discomfort to the inhabitants of any neighborhood. However, residential uses are not typically associated with the generation of substantial noise.

The operation of the proposed project would include typical residential noise such as landscape maintenance, HVAC systems, etc., which would be compatible with the adjacent existing residential use. As such, the proposed project is not anticipated to contribute a measurable operational noise level increase to the existing ambient noise environment at any sensitive receptor locations.

Generally, a doubling in traffic volumes is required to increase traffic noise levels by 3.0 dB, which is considered to be the threshold for a significant increase per the Federal Interagency Commission on Noise (FICON) when ambient noise is between 60 dB and 65 dB. According to the City of Lancaster Traffic Engineering Average Daily Traffic (ADT) map, Avenue K, located to the north of the project site, experienced an ADT volume of 14,145 trips per day in 2019.²⁵ Additionally, 10th Street West, located to the east of the project site, experienced an ADT volume of 11,343 trips per day in 2019. The proposed project would include the construction of 228 residential units. Thus, the additional traffic produced by the residents of the proposed project would not double traffic volumes on adjacent roads. In addition, the proposed project would be consistent with the project site's current land use and zoning designations with the approval of a Conditional Use Permit. Therefore, traffic noise level increases associated with residential uses on the project site have been generally anticipated by the City.

Conclusion

Based on the above, operation of the proposed project would not result in the generation of a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the City's General Plan and the LMC. However, considering the potential for construction activities to result in temporary increases in noise levels in the project area in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies, a potentially significant impact could occur without mitigation. With the implementation of mitigation, such as complying with specified construction hours and other noise reducing conditions of approval, a less-than-significant impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

XIII-1. Prior to approval of grading permits, the City shall establish the following as a condition of approval for any permit that results in the use of construction equipment: Construction operations shall not occur between 8:00 PM and 7:00 AM on weekdays or Saturday or at any time on Sunday. The hours

²⁵ City of Lancaster Traffic Engineering. *City of Lancaster Average Daily Traffic Map*. Available at: <https://www.cityoflanasterca.org/our-city/departments-services/development-services/city-engineering/traffic-engineering>. Accessed May 2025.

of ant construction-related activities shall be restricted to the periods and days permitted by local ordinance. Proof of compliance with the above measure shall be submitted to the City of Lancaster Development Services Department for review.

XIII-2 The on-site construction supervisor shall have the responsibility and authority to receive and resolve complaints. A clear appeal process to the owner shall be established prior to construction commencement that will allow for resolution of noise problems that cannot be immediately solved by the site supervisor. Proof of compliance with the above measure shall be submitted to the City of Lancaster Development Services Department for review.

XIII-3 Prior to approval of grading permits, the City shall establish the following as a condition of approval for any permit that results in the use of construction equipment: Electrically powered equipment shall be used instead of pneumatic or internal combustion powered equipment, where feasible. Proof of compliance with the above measure shall be submitted to the City of Lancaster Development Services Department for review.

XIII-4 Prior to approval of grading permits, the City shall establish the following as a condition of approval for any permit that results in the use of construction equipment: Material stockpiles and mobile equipment staging, parking, and maintenance areas shall be located as far away as practicable from noise-sensitive receptors. Proof of compliance with the above measure shall be submitted to the City of Lancaster Development Services Department for review.

XIII-5 Prior to approval of grading permits, the City shall establish the following as a condition of approval for any permit that results in the use of construction equipment: No project-related public address or music system shall be audible at any adjacent receptor. Proof of compliance with the above measure shall be submitted to the City of Lancaster Development Services Department for review.

XIII-6 Prior to approval of grading permits, the City shall establish the following as a condition of approval for any permit that results in the use of construction equipment: All noise-producing construction equipment and vehicles using internal combustion engines shall be equipped with mufflers, air-inlet silencers where appropriate, and any other shrouds, shields, or other noise-reducing features in good operating condition that meet or exceed original factory specifications. Mobile or "fixed" equipment (e.g., arc-welders, air compressors, etc.) shall be equipped with shrouds and noise control features that are readily available for the type of equipment. Proof of compliance with the above measure shall be submitted to the City of Lancaster Development Services Department for review.

- b. Similar to noise, vibration involves a source, a transmission path, and a receiver. However, noise is generally considered to be pressure waves transmitted through air, whereas vibration usually consists of the excitation of a structure or surface. As with noise, vibration consists of an amplitude and frequency. A person's perception of vibration depends on their individual sensitivity to vibration, as well as the amplitude and frequency of the source and the response of the system which is vibrating.

Vibration is measured in terms of acceleration, velocity, or displacement. A common practice is to monitor vibration in terms of peak particle velocities (PPV) in inches per second (in/sec). Standards pertaining to perception as well as damage to structures have been developed for vibration levels defined in terms of PPV. Human and structural response to different vibration levels is influenced by a number of factors, including ground type, distance between source and receptor, duration, and the number of perceived vibration events.

Table 12, which was developed by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), shows that the vibration levels that would normally be required to result in damage to structures range from 0.2 to 0.6 in/sec PPV. The general threshold at which human annoyance could occur is 0.10 in/sec PPV.

The primary vibration-generating activities associated with the proposed project would occur during grading, placement of underground utilities, and construction of foundations. Table 13 shows the typical vibration levels produced by construction equipment at various distances. The most substantial source of groundborne vibrations associated with project construction would be the use of vibratory compactors. Use of vibratory compactors/rollers could be required during construction of the proposed on-site drive aisles and parking areas.

Table 12
Effects of Vibration on People and Buildings

PPV		Human Reactions	Effect on Buildings
mm/sec	in/sec		
0.15 to 0.30	0.006 to 0.019	Threshold of perception; possibility of intrusion	Vibrations unlikely to cause damage of any type
2.0	0.08	Vibrations readily perceptible	Recommended upper level of the vibration to which ruins and ancient monuments should be subjected
2.5	0.10	Level at which continuous vibrations begin to annoy people	Virtually no risk of "architectural" damage to normal buildings
5.0	0.20	Vibrations annoying to people in buildings (this agrees with the levels established for people standing on bridges and subjected to relative short periods of vibrations)	Threshold at which there is a risk of "architectural" damage to normal dwelling - houses with plastered walls and ceilings. Special types of finish such as lining of walls, flexible ceiling treatment, etc., would minimize "architectural" damage
10 to 15	0.4 to 0.6	Vibrations considered unpleasant by people subjected to continuous vibrations and unacceptable to some people walking on bridges	Vibrations at a greater level than normally expected from traffic, but would cause "architectural" damage and possibly minor structural damage
<i>Source: Caltrans. Transportation Related Earthborne Vibrations. TAV-02-01-R9601. February 20, 2002.</i>			

Table 13
Vibration Levels for Various Construction Equipment

Type of Equipment	PPV at 25 feet (in/sec)	PPV at 50 feet (in/sec)	PPV at 100 feet (in/sec)
Large Bulldozer	0.089	0.031	0.011
Loaded Trucks	0.076	0.027	0.010
Small Bulldozer	0.003	0.001	0.000
Auger/drill Rigs	0.089	0.031	0.011
Jackhammer	0.035	0.012	0.004
Vibratory Hammer	0.070	0.025	0.009
Vibratory Compactor/roller	0.210	0.074	0.026
<i>Source: Federal Transit Administration. Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Guidelines. May 2006.</i>			

The proposed project would only cause elevated vibration levels during construction, as the proposed project would not involve any uses or operations that would generate substantial groundborne vibration. Although noise and vibration associated with the construction phases of the project would add to the noise and vibration environment in the immediate project vicinity, construction activities would be

temporary in nature and would occur during normal daytime working hours. In addition, the proposed construction activities would occur at distances of at least 50 feet from the nearest existing buildings. Therefore, per the vibration levels shown in Table 13, groundborne vibration levels at the nearest buildings would be less than the 0.20 in/sec PPV threshold established by Caltrans for architectural damage to buildings.

Based on the above, the proposed project would not expose people to or generate excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels, and a less-than-significant impact would occur.

- c. The nearest public airport to the site is the Palmdale Regional Airport, located approximately 4.97 miles to the southeast of the project site. According to the Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Plan, the project site is outside of the Palmdale Regional Airport Influence Area.²⁶ Given that the project site is not located within two miles of a public or private airport and that the project site is outside of the Palmdale Regional Airport Influence Area, the proposed project would not expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels associated with airports. Thus, no impact would occur.

²⁶ Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Commission. *Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Plan*. December 2004.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIV. <u>POPULATION AND HOUSING</u> . Would the project:				
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?			✘	
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				✘

- a. The proposed project would include the construction of 11 residential buildings, consisting of 228 units. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the City of Lancaster has a population of 166,236, as of July 1, 2023.²⁷ The average household size in Lancaster is 3.15 persons per household. Using the average household size of 3.15, the proposed project would result in a population of 718 residents. The estimated additional 718 residents would equate to an approximate population increase of 0.4 percent.

Furthermore, the population growth generated by the proposed project would not be unplanned, because the proposed project is consistent with the project site's current land use and zoning designations with the approval of a Conditional Use Permit. As a result, the project would have a less-than-significant impact with respect to inducing substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly or indirectly.

- b. The project site is currently undeveloped, and residences do not currently exist on the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not displace any people or housing, and no impact would occur.

²⁷ U.S. Census Bureau. *Lancaster city, California*. Available at: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/lancastercitycalifornia/PST045224>. Accessed May 2025.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XV. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES.</u>				
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
Fire Protection?			✗	
Police Protection?			✗	
Schools?			✗	
Parks?			✗	
Other Public Facilities?			✗	

- a-e. Fire protection services are currently provided to the site by the Los Angeles County Fire Department. Six fire stations exist in the City of Lancaster, and one in the unincorporated community of Antelope Acres.²⁸ The nearest fire station to the proposed project is Los Angeles County Fire Department Station 134, located at 43225 25th Street West, approximately 1.2 miles to the west of the project site. The Lancaster Police Department has developed a hybrid policing model with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department to provide law enforcement services to the City of Lancaster.²⁹ Lancaster Sheriff's Station is located approximately 2.17 miles to the northeast of the project site at 501 Lancaster Boulevard, and the Lancaster Police Department is located approximately 2.04 miles to the northeast of the project site at 44811 Sierra Highway. While some increase in demand for fire and law enforcement services could occur as a result of the increase in population associated with development of the proposed project, the proposed project is consistent with the site's zoning designation with the approval of a Conditional Use Permit. Therefore, such increases in demand have been generally anticipated by the City. In addition, the developer would be required to pay all applicable impact fees as established in Chapter 15.64 and 15.76 of the LMC, described further below. Therefore, the increase in demand associated with the proposed project would not be considered substantial and could be met by current service providers, without the

²⁸ City of Lancaster. *L.A. County Fire Department*. Available at: <https://www.cityoflanasterca.org/our-city/departments-services/public-safety/contract-services-emergency-response/l-a-county-fire-department>. Accessed May 2025.

²⁹ City of Lancaster. *Lancaster Police Department*. Available at: <https://www.cityoflanasterca.org/our-city/departments-services/public-safety>. Accessed May 2025.

need for expanding existing facilities or constructing new facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects.

Public school services for the proposed project would be provided by the Lancaster School District and the Antelope Valley Union High School District.³⁰ The nearest public school to the proposed project is Miller Elementary School, approximately 0.80-mile east of the project site. According to SB 50, payment of the necessary school impact fees for the project would be considered full and satisfactory CEQA mitigation. Proposition 1A/SB 50 prohibits local agencies from using the inadequacy of school facilities as a basis for denying or conditioning approvals of any “[...] legislative or adjudicative act [...] involving [...] the planning, use, or development of real property” (Government Code 65996(b)). As such, payment of developer fees would be considered sufficient to reduce any potential impacts related to the provision of school services.

The City of Lancaster provides more than 450 acres of public park space, with 12 City parks and facilities located throughout the City.³¹ The nearest public park to the proposed project is the Sgt. Steve Owen Memorial Park, located approximately 0.22-mile southeast of the project site. While some increase in demand for public park facilities could occur as a result of the increase in population associated with development of the proposed project, the developer would be required to pay all applicable park acquisition and development impact fees as established in Chapter 15.64.070 and 15.64.080 of the LMC. Additionally, the proposed project site includes several community amenities available throughout the site, such as a pool, fenced dog park, two tot lots, a shaded picnic area featuring tables, seating areas, and barbeques, and a half-basketball court. Because of the community amenities available at the project site, construction of the proposed project would not significantly increase demand for off-site facilities. Therefore, the increase in demand associated with the proposed project would not be considered substantial and could be met by current service providers, without the need for expanding existing facilities or constructing new facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects.

Other public facilities in the City of Lancaster or nearby surrounding areas include the Lancaster Library, located approximately 2.27 miles to the northeast of the project site, and the Quartz Hill Library, located approximately four miles to the southwest of the project site.

Therefore, the increase in demand associated with the proposed project would not be considered substantial and could be met by current service providers, without the need for expanding existing facilities or constructing new facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects.

Based on the above, the proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact related to the need for new or physically altered fire protection, law enforcement, schools, parks, or other public facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts.

³⁰ City of Lancaster. *Public School Districts*. Available at: <https://www.cityoflanasterca.org/services/local-resources/education/public-school-districts>. Accessed May 2025.

³¹ City of Lancaster. *PARCS: Parks, Arts, Recreation & Community Services*. Available at: <https://www.cityoflanasterca.org/our-city/departments-services/parks-recreation-arts/parks-and-facilities>. Accessed May 2025.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVI. <u>RECREATION</u> . Would the project:				
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?			✘	
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?			✘	

- a,b. As discussed in Section XIV, Population and Housing, the proposed project would include the development of 11 residential buildings, consisting of 228 units, supporting approximately 718 residents. While the proposed project would not include the dedication of parkland, the project would include various amenities that would provide residents with outdoor recreational activities. For example, the proposed project would incorporate several community amenities available throughout the site, including a pool, fenced dog park, two tot lots, a shaded picnic area featuring tables, seating areas, and barbeques, and a half-basketball court. In addition, the proposed project would be required to comply with LMC Section 15.64.070 and 15.64.080 park acquisition and development fees, which requires all new residential development in the City to mitigate the impacts of new residential development on the availability of open space land and park recreational facilities. The park development fee shall provide funds for the development of parks, recreation, and arts facilities.

Currently, the City of Lancaster includes several parks and recreational facilities that would be available to future residents of the proposed project, including American Heroes Park, Cedar Center for the Arts, Deputy Pierre Bain Park, El Dorado Park, Forrest E. Hull Park, Jane Reynolds Park, Sgt. Steve Owen Memorial Park, Mariposa Park, Prime Desert Woodland Preserve, Rawley Duntley Park, Skytower Park, and Tierra Bonita Park. Due the payment of development impact fees, the proposed project would not substantially increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated. In addition, as previously discussed, the proposed project would be consistent with the site's zoning designation with the approval of a Conditional Use Permit. Therefore, the proposed project and the associated recreational facility use have been anticipated by the City.

Based on the above, the proposed project would not result in population growth that could result in increased use of existing recreational facilities, nor would the proposed project include or require construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment. Thus, a less-than-significant impact would occur.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVII. <u>TRANSPORTATION</u> . Would the project:				
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?			✖	
b) Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?			✖	
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?			✖	
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?			✖	

- a. The law has changed with respect to how transportation-related impacts may be addressed under CEQA. Previously, lead agencies used a performance metric entitled ‘level of service’ (LOS) to assess the significance of such impacts, with greater levels of congestion considered to be more significant than lesser levels. Enacted as part of SB 743 (2013), PRC Section 21099(b)(1), directed the LCI to prepare, develop, and transmit to the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency for certification and adoption proposed CEQA Guidelines addressing “criteria for determining the significance of transportation impacts of projects within transit priority areas. Those criteria shall promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the development of multimodal transportation networks, and a diversity of land uses.”

Pursuant to SB 743, the Natural Resources Agency promulgated CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3 in late 2018, which became effective in early 2019. Subdivision (a) of that section provides that “[g]enerally, vehicle miles traveled is the most appropriate measure of transportation impacts. For the purposes of this section, ‘vehicle miles traveled’ (VMT) refers to the amount and distance of automobile travel attributable to a project. Other relevant considerations may include the effects of the project on transit and non-motorized travel. Except as provided in subdivision (b)(2) below (regarding roadway capacity), a project’s effect on automobile delay shall not constitute a significant environmental impact.” See question ‘b’ for a discussion of VMT.

Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Transit Facilities

The proposed project’s potential impacts related to pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities are discussed below.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Pedestrian facilities are comprised of crosswalks, sidewalks, pedestrian signals, and off-street paths, which provide safe and convenient routes for pedestrians to access destinations such as institutions, businesses, public transportation, and recreation facilities. Bicycle facilities include the following:

- Bike Paths (Class I) – Paved trails that are separated from roadways;
- Bike Lanes (Class II) – Lanes on roadways designated for use by bicycles through striping, pavement legends, and signs; and
- Bike Routes (Class III) – Designated roadways for bicycle use by signs or other markings may or may not include additional pavement width for cyclists.

Sidewalks are not currently located on the majority of the project site's 15th Street West frontage, except for the sidewalk that begins at the northwest corner of the project site. An existing sidewalk exists on the opposite side of 15th Street West from the proposed project, with pedestrian crossings at the corner of 15th Street West and West Avenue K8. Other streets do not border the project site, with the exception of SR 14 to the east of the site. The proposed project would construct an eight-foot sidewalk along the project frontage on 15th Street West to connect to the existing sidewalk located on the northwest corner of the site. The proposed project would also construct a six-foot sidewalk along the internal pathways of the site. Given that the proposed project would provide adequate access for pedestrians, the proposed project would not conflict with a program, plan, or ordinance addressing pedestrian facilities.

According to the City of Lancaster MEA, a Class II bicycle lane exists between the southern border of the project site and the West Avenue K8 travel lanes and extends north. The proposed project would not alter the existing circulation system in a way that would conflict with any existing or proposed bicycle facilities within the City. The existing bicycle facilities would be sufficient to accommodate additional bicycle traffic generated by the proposed project.

Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with a program, plan or ordinance addressing pedestrian or bicycle facilities.

Transit Facilities

Public transit service is provided to the Lancaster area by the Antelope Valley Transit Authority (AVTA). The AVTA currently operates seven regular local fixed routes within the City of Lancaster. According to the City of Lancaster MEA, Routes 5 and 12 have stops located nearby the project site. Route 5 has a stop located on 15th Street West approximately 0.17 miles southwest of the project site, and Route 12 has two stops located on West Avenue K8 approximately 0.16 miles southwest of the project site. Route 5 operates on 60-minute headways between Lancaster City Park and Mayflower Gardens, and Route 12 provides 30-minute weekday and 60-minute weekend headway service between Lancaster City Park and the intersection of 40th Street East and Avenue I. The lines run every day, starting as early as 5:00 AM on weekdays and 6:02 AM on Saturdays and ending as late as 11:38 PM on weekdays and 7:44 PM on Saturdays. Bus services are not available on holidays. AVTA operates Dial-A-Ride (DAR) service in the Antelope Valley, providing curb-to-curb van service to seniors and disabled persons. AVTA DAR operates from 6:00 AM to 7:30 PM on weekdays and from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM on weekends. Additionally, the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) operates MetroLink, the commuter rail service of Southern California, which provides passenger service to Lancaster. The Lancaster MetroLink station is located 2.17 miles to the northeast of the project site.

Although the proposed project could result in an increase in transit use, adequate transit facilities would be available to serve the future residents of the proposed project. Additionally, the proposed project would not conflict with existing or planned transit facilities.

Conclusion

Based on the above, the proposed project would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities, and a less-than-significant impact could occur.

- b. Section 15064.3 of the CEQA Guidelines provides specific considerations for evaluating a project's transportation impacts. Pursuant to Section 15064.3, analysis of VMT attributable to a project is the most appropriate measure of transportation impacts. Other relevant considerations may include the effects of the project on transit and non-motorized travel. In response to SB 743, which eliminated LOS as a basis for determining significant transportation impacts under CEQA and provided VMT as a new performance metric, the City of Lancaster adopted new transportation impacts thresholds to adhere to CEQA requirements and to provide guidance on conducting transportation studies in the City of Lancaster Circulation Element 2020.³² Several screening criteria were identified in the City of Lancaster guidelines that determine if a VMT analysis for a project is required. These criteria include requirements regarding project size, projects that have locally serving retail uses, projects located in a Low VMT Area, proximity to transit, affordable housing, and transportation facilities projects.

According to the Transportation Analysis Updates in Lancaster document prepared for the City of Lancaster by Fehr & Peers,³³ the proposed project is located within a Low VMT Area, or an area that has VMT at least 15 percent lower than the regional average, which is the AVPA. In addition, according to the City of Lancaster's screening criteria for VMT analysis, because the proposed project includes affordable housing, a VMT analysis is not required, and the proposed project is presumed to have a less-than-significant impact related to VMT.

Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b), and a less-than-significant impact would occur.

- c,d. The proposed project would not include any new sharp curves or dangerous intersections and would not be located in the vicinity of any such roadway features. Access to the project site would be provided by three entrances off of 15th Street West, along the western boundary of the project site. The proposed project would not alter the existing roadways in the City, including 15th Street West, and thus, would not impact emergency vehicle access on any City roadway. The project driveways and internal drive aisles would be designed in accordance with State and local standards, such that emergency vehicle access would be sufficient for the project site. In addition, the proposed residences, landscaping, and signage would be set back from the roadways in the project vicinity such that visibility for motorists would not be hindered. During project construction, public roads in the vicinity would remain open and available for use by emergency vehicles and other traffic.

Implementation of the proposed project would introduce additional vehicle traffic along adjacent roadways, such as 15th Street West and West Avenue K8. However, the proposed project would be consistent with the zoning designation for the site with the approval of a Conditional Use Permit, and any

³² City of Lancaster. *Circulation Element 2020*. 2020.

³³ Fehr & Peers. *Transportation Analysis Updates in Lancaster*. May 2020.

impacts related to hazards and emergency access associated with the proposed project were generally analyzed and anticipated in the General Plan EIR.

Based on the above, the proposed project would not substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment) or result in inadequate emergency access, and a less-than-significant impact would occur.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVIII. <u>TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES</u> . Would the project:				
a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k), or				✗
ii) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set for in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.				✗

ai,aii. As discussed in Section V, Cultural Resources, of this IS/MND, the Historical/Archaeological Resources Survey Report prepared for the proposed project included a records search of the CHRIS performed by the SCCIC for cultural resource site records and survey reports within the project area. The CHRIS records search included review of digital maps, records, and databases for previously identified cultural resources and existing cultural resources reports within a one-mile radius of the project area. The SCCIC records did not identify previous cultural resources studies that covered the project site with a systematic field survey. However, an archaeological site from the historic period was recorded as lying partially within the project site boundaries and subsequently designated Site 19-004789 in the California Historical Resources Inventory. CRM Tech concluded that Site 19-004789 does not meet any of the criteria for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources and therefore does not qualify as a historical resource, and concluded that historical resources do not exist within or adjacent to the project site. In addition, CRM TECH concluded that no human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries, were found on the project site. A search of the NAHC Sacred Lands File for the project area was completed and returned negative results, indicating that known tribal cultural resources do not exist on-site.

In compliance with AB 52 (PRC Section 21080.3.1), the City of Lancaster distributed project notification letters to the Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians, Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians – KizhNation, and Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation on April 9, 2025.

The Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation confirmed its desire to consult in a letter to the City on April 23, 2025. The Tribe included requests for mitigation measures to be included should resources be found during construction. The additional requests have been incorporated into this IS/MND document.

Although the project area has been subject to a records search which indicated that known tribal cultural resources are not present on the project site, unknown tribal cultural resources have the potential to be uncovered during ground-disturbing activities at the proposed project site. Therefore, the proposed project could result in a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource without the implementation of mitigation. With implementation of the mitigation measures described in Section V, Cultural Resources, of this IS/MND, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure

XVIII-1. Implement Mitigation Measures V-1 through V-5.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIX. <u>UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS</u> . Would the project:				
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction or new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?			✗	
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?			✗	
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?			✗	
d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impact the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?			✗	
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?			✗	

- a-c. Electricity, natural gas, telecommunications, water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater services would be provided by way of new connections to existing infrastructure in the immediate project area. Water and sanitary sewer services would be provided by the City of Lancaster. Brief discussions of the water, sewer service, stormwater drainage, electrical, natural gas, and telecommunications facilities that would serve the proposed project are included below.

Water

As previously mentioned under Section X, Hydrology and Water Quality, water supplies for the project site would be supplied by Los Angeles County Waterworks District #40. As determined by District #40, the project applicant must secure permanent water supply entitlements sufficient to meet the proposed project's annual water demands and would also be required to pay any applicable connection fees. District #40 has identified the project site area as needing significant improvements and would require the

proposed project's applicant to contribute a fair share amount and/or construct regional water system improvements to supply demands and meet the Fire Department's fire flow requirements. In addition, District #40 may require that property-specific water system facilities be installed at the applicant's expense in order to meet the requirements of the City Engineer and the County Fire Chief.³⁴ According to the City of Lancaster MEA, the City depends on local groundwater supplies and importation of water from outside the area. Currently, water demands in the Antelope Valley are greater than the natural recharge yield within the groundwater basin, and the City utilizes a combination of water conservation, water banking of excess supplies, waste water recycling, storm water management, groundwater recharge, and the importation of water to ensure availability of water. The primary source of imported water is from the California Aqueduct, purchased by the AVEK Water Agency.

Furthermore, all infrastructure required to provide water supply to the project would be developed by a connection to existing water mains located in the project vicinity, and the proposed project would not require major relocation or expansion of any water supply infrastructure.

Wastewater

According to the City of Lancaster MEA, collection, treatment, and disposal of wastewater within the City of Lancaster and adjacent unincorporated areas are under the jurisdiction of County Sanitation District No. 14 of Los Angeles County (District No. 14). District No. 14 owns and maintains the trunk sewers and Lancaster Wastewater Reclamation Plant (LWRP), which convey and treat wastewater generated by residential, commercial, and industrial areas of the City of Lancaster, as well as portions of the City of Palmdale and unincorporated County. Local sewer collection is provided by small diameter pipelines owned by the City of Lancaster. The majority of wastewater generated by the City of Lancaster is treated at the LWRP. According to the Lancaster Water Reclamation Plant 2020 Facilities Plan and EIR,³⁵ the LWRP capacity needed to be expanded to 26.0 million gallons per day (mgd) to treat the estimated flows of 2020. Expansion was proposed to occur in three phases, and to be completed in 2014. According to the Los Angeles County Sanitation District, the LWRP currently provides primary, secondary, and tertiary treatment for a design capacity of 18 mgd.³⁶

The project site is located within the jurisdictional boundaries of District No. 14 and the District would provide service to the project. The proposed project may be required to pay any applicable connection fees to District No. 14 before the proposed project would be permitted to discharge to the District's Sewerage System.³⁷ All wastewater would be treated at the Lancaster Water Reclamation Plant which has a design capacity of 18 million gallons per day (mgd) and currently produces an average recycled water flow of 12.8 mgd. The proposed project would discharge to a local sewer line for conveyance to the Districts' Trunk E Trunk Sewer, located in Avenue K at 17th Street West. This trunk sewer has a capacity of 1.9 mgd and conveyed a peak flow of 1 mgd when last measures in 2022. The proposed project would generate approximately 35,568 gallons of wastewater per day. The proposed project would not require

³⁴ Katsandonis, Stacey, Associate Civil Engineer, Los Angeles County Public Works. Personal Communication [email] with Viviana Martinez, Technician I – City of Lancaster Community Development Department. May 1, 2025.

³⁵ Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts. *Lancaster Water Reclamation Plant 2020 Facilities Plan and EIR*. Available at: https://www.lacsd.org/services/wastewater-sewage/ww-publications-reports/lancaster-palmdale-wrps-facilities-plans-and-eirs/-folder-65#docfold_14_170_225_65. Accessed May 2025.

³⁶ Los Angeles County Sanitation District. *Lancaster Water Reclamation Plant*. Available at: <https://www.lacsd.org/services/wastewater-sewage/facilities/lancaster-water-reclamation-plant>. Accessed May 2025.

³⁷ Wang, Shirley, Annexation and Will Serve Desk Coordinator, Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts. Personal Communication [email] with Shannon Edwin, AICP Planner, City of Lancaster Development Services Department. April 14, 2025.

the expansion of existing facilities or the construction of new facilities. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Based on the above information, the proposed project would not result in inadequate capacity to serve the project's demand in addition to the existing commitments and would not require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded wastewater treatment that could cause significant environmental effects.

Stormwater

Issues related to stormwater infrastructure are discussed in Section X, Hydrology and Water Quality, of this IS. As noted therein, the proposed project would not increase stormwater flows into the City's existing system, and stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces would be directed towards the on-site DMA. Therefore, the proposed project would not require or result in the construction of new stormwater drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects.

Other Utilities

Electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications utilities would be provided by way of connections to existing infrastructure located within the immediate project vicinity. The proposed project would not require major upgrades to, or extension of, existing infrastructure. Thus, impacts to electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications infrastructure would be less than significant.

Conclusion

Given that the utility infrastructure within the project vicinity has been designed with adequate capacity to accommodate demand from the proposed project, the increase in residents would not be substantial enough to require the construction of new utility infrastructure. Therefore, the project would result in a less-than-significant impact related to the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects.

- d,e. Solid waste, recyclable materials, and green waste collection is provided to residents of the City of Lancaster through Waste Management of Antelope Valley. Residential, commercial, and industrial trash collection is currently hauled to the Antelope Valley Landfill, located approximately seven miles to the south of the project site, or the Lancaster Landfill, located approximately 5.7 miles to the northeast of the project site. According to the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle), the maximum permitted capacity of the Antelope Valley Landfill is 30,200,000 cubic yards, and the facility's remaining capacity is 12,194,026 cubic yards with a cease operation date of 2044.³⁸ The maximum permitted capacity of the Lancaster Landfill is 27,700,000 cubic yards, and the facility's remaining capacity is 13,017,160 cubic yards with a cease operation date of 2044.³⁹ As such, sufficient capacity exists to serve the proposed project. Pursuant to the CALGreen Code, at least 65 percent diversion of construction waste is required for projects permitted after January 1, 2017. Because the landfill is not operating at maximum capacity and the project would only create a temporary increase in

³⁸ California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery. *SWIS Facility/Site Activity Details Antelope Valley Public Landfill*. Available at: <https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/SolidWaste/SiteActivity/Details/3458?siteID=1364>. Accessed May 2025.

³⁹ California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery. *SWIS Facility/Site Activity Details Lancaster Landfill and Recycling Center*. Available at: <https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/SolidWaste/SiteActivity/Details/3571?siteID=1035>. Accessed May 2025.

the amount of waste during construction activities, the proposed project would not result in a significant impact related to solid waste generation.

With respect to operational solid waste generation, the nature of the proposed project would not be expected to generate substantial amounts of solid waste due to the relatively small scale of the project. In addition, the proposed project is consistent with the City's zoning designation with the approval of a Conditional Use Permit, and therefore, an increase in solid waste has been anticipated by the City. The proposed project would also be required to comply with all applicable provisions of Chapter 13.17 of the LMC regarding recyclable and organic materials, including requirements regarding source separation of recyclable materials, organic waste, and solid waste, and space and zoning in order to provide adequate storage space for recyclable materials and organic waste on-site.

Based on the above, the proposed project would not generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals and would comply with federal, State, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste. Therefore, a less-than-significant impact would occur.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XX. <u>WILDFIRE</u> . If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:				
a) Substantially impact an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?			✖	
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildlife risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?			✖	
c) 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?			✖	
d) 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?			✖	

- a-d. According to the CAL FIRE Fire and Resource Assessment Program, the project site is not located within a Very High or High FHSZ. The closest High FHSZ is located approximately 2.47 miles to the west of the project site, and the closest Very High FHSZ is located approximately 2.96 miles to the northwest of the project site. The project site is also not located in a State Responsibility Area (SRA), and the closest SRA is located approximately 5.67 miles to the southwest of the project site. In addition, the project site is located near existing development and roadways. The presence of urban development and paved areas would preclude the uncontrolled spread of wildfire. Thus, the proposed project would not result in substantial risks or hazards related to wildfires, and a less-than-significant impact would occur.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XXI. <u>MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE.</u>				
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?		✘		
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulative considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?			✘	
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?		✘		

- a. As discussed in Section IV, Biological Resources, of this IS/MND, while a limited potential exists for Cooper's hawk, California horned lark, burrowing owl, and other nesting migratory birds and raptors protected by the MBTA to occur on-site, Mitigation Measures IV-1 and IV-2 would ensure that any impacts related to special-status species would be reduced to a less-than-significant level. Additionally, the project site is not known to contain any archaeological sites and has been subject to past disturbance. However, the potential exists for unknown buried resources to be discovered during ground disturbing activities. Thus, a significant impact could occur. As such, Mitigation Measures V-1 through V-5 would ensure that in the event that prehistoric resources are discovered within the project site, such resources would be protected in compliance with the requirements of CEQA and other State standards.

Considering the above, with implementation of Mitigation Measures IV-1, IV-2, and V-1, through V-5, the proposed project would not degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce or impact the habitat of fish or wildlife species, cause fish or wildlife populations to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory. Therefore, a **less-than-significant** impact would occur with implementation of the mitigation measures included within this IS/MND.

- b. The proposed project, in conjunction with other development within the City of Lancaster, could incrementally contribute to cumulative impacts in the area. However, as demonstrated in this IS/MND, all potential environmental impacts that could occur as a result of project implementation would be reduced to a less-than-significant level through compliance with the mitigation measures included in this IS/MND, as well as applicable General Plan policies, Municipal Code standards, and other applicable local and State regulations. Other projects within one mile of the proposed project site that have been approved or are under review are identified in Table 14.^{40,41} Like the proposed project, these projects are also required to be in accordance with the City of Lancaster’s zoning codes and General Plan.

All cumulative impacts related to air quality, noise, and transportation are either less than significant after mitigation or less than significant without the need for mitigation. Given the scope of the project, any incremental effects would not be considerable relative to the effects of all past, current, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. In addition, buildout of the site has already been anticipated by the City for residential uses as the proposed project is consistent with the City’s zoning designation with the approval of a Conditional Use Permit. As such, potential impacts resulting from development of the project have been generally analyzed in the General Plan Environmental Impact Assessment. Therefore, when viewed in conjunction with other closely related past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future projects, with the implementation of mitigation, development of the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to cumulative impacts, and the project’s incremental contribution to cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

Table 14

Related Projects List

Case No.	Location	APNs	Acres	Description	Status
CUP 21-01/ GPA 21-01/ ZC 21-01	SEC 15 th St W and Ave L			235 room hotel/181 apartment units/conference center/restaurants and retail	Under Review
CUP 19-12	10 St W & Ave K-8			Chevron and 3 commercial pads	Currently under construction
CIP 15BR004	Ave K; 20 th W to 10 th W (Interchange)			Improve northbound offramp, improvements to signal at Ave K and 15 th St W, improvements on 15 th St W from Ave K to Ave J-8	
CUP 23-006		3129-017-052		3rd hotel in the center	Under construction

***City to review Table 14**

- c. As described in this IS/MND, the proposed project would comply with all applicable General Plan policies, other applicable local and State regulations, in addition to the mitigation measures included herein.

⁴⁰ City of Lancaster. *Lancaster City Projects*. Available at: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/6915e44379c040fc895b4381cee89965>. Accessed May 2025.

⁴¹ City of Lancaster. *Residential Projects Map*. Available at: <https://lancasterca.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/basic/index.html?appid=da441d40cff749e38727d22be267cb59>. Accessed May 2025.

Additionally, as discussed in Section III, Air Quality, Section IX, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, and Section XIII, Noise, of this IS/MND, the proposed project would not cause substantial effects to human beings, including effects related to exposure to air pollutants, and hazardous materials. Therefore, the proposed project would result in a less-than-significant impact with implementation of the mitigation measures included within this IS/MND.

List of Referenced Documents and Available Locations*:

Acronyms	Document Title	Department
AIR:	Raney Planning and Management, 15 th Street West AHP Custom CalEEMod Report, May 2025	CDD
ALUP:	Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Plan	CDD
APFHZ:	CGS Seismic Hazards Program: Alquist-Priolo Fault Hazard Zones California Department of Conservation	CDD
BRA:	Endemic Environmental Services, Biological Resources Assessment, April 2025	CDD
Caltrans:	California Department of Transportation California Scenic Highway Mapping System	CDD
CIFF:	California Important Farmland Finder California Department of Conservation	CDD
CRS:	CRM Tech, Historical/Archaeological Resources Survey Report, April 2025	CDD
ESA:	KCE Matrix, Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Report, January 2025	CDD
FIRM:	Flood Insurance Rate Map Federal Emergency Management Agency	CDD
FRAP:	Fire and Resource Assessment Program FHSZ Viewer California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection	CDD
GPEIR:	Lancaster General Plan Environmental Impact Report	CDD
HMP:	City of Lancaster 2024 Hazard Mitigation Plan	CDD
LDG:	Lancaster Design Guidelines	CDD
LGP:	Lancaster General Plan	CDD
LMC:	Lancaster Municipal Code	CDD
LMEA:	Lancaster Master Environmental Assessment	CDD
NWI:	National Wetlands Inventory United States Fish and Wildlife Service	CDD
PHS	AMG & Associates, LLC, Preliminary Hydrology Study, April 2025	CDD
SWIS AVPL:	Antelope Valley Public Landfill Solid Waste Information System Facility/Site Activity Details	CDD
SWIS LLRC:	Lancaster Landfill and Recycling Center Solid Waste Information System Facility/Site Activity Details	CDD
USCB:	United States Census Bureau, Lancaster, California	CDD

* CDD: Community Development Department
Lancaster City Hall
44933 Fern Avenue
Lancaster, California 93534