DRAFT
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
FOR THE
2400 Juanita Way Road Extension Project
LAGUNA BEACH, ORANGE COUNTY

Prepared for:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

E.S.1 INTRODUCTION

The City of Laguna Beach (City) is proposing to extend the roadway by 18.5 linear feet at its terminus to provide driveway access for the development of a single-family residence at 2400 Juanita Way (Project or Proposed Project).

The Project has the following objectives:

- Implement right-of-way improvements and a roadway extension that provide safe and legal driveway access at the terminus of Juanita Way to a new building site at APN 656-131-04.
- Facilitate creation of a buildable lot - while respecting site constraints such as lot size, topography, and existing development patterns - that could accommodate the potential future construction of a single-family residence.
- Maintain neighborhood character and achieve visual compatibility with adjacent open space by incorporating design, materials, and finishes that reflect the existing background and minimize visual contrast

This document is a Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR or DEIR) prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); and it provides an overview of the Proposed Project and considered alternatives, identifies the anticipated environmental impacts from the Proposed Project and the alternatives, and identifies mitigation measures designed to reduce the level of significance of any impact.

E.S.2 PURPOSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The primary purpose of the CEQA process is to inform the public and decision-makers as to the potential impacts of a project and to allow an opportunity for public input to ensure informed decision-making by the Lead Agency. CEQA requires all State and local government agencies to consider the environmental effects of projects over which they have discretionary authority. CEQA also requires each public agency to mitigate or avoid the significant environmental impacts resulting from proposed projects, when feasible, and to identify a range of feasible alternatives to the proposed project that could reduce those environmental effects.

Under CEQA, an EIR analyzes the impacts of an individual activity or specific project and focuses primarily on changes in the environment that would result from that activity or project. The Draft EIR must include the contents required by CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines and examine all phases of the project, including planning, construction, operation, and any reasonably foreseeable future phases.

E.S.3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Applicant proposes to extend the road at the terminus of Juanita Way in the City of Laguna Beach, California. The project scope consists of adding approximately 18.5 linear feet of road surface at the terminus of Juanita Way. The proposed street access would facilitate the creation of a new building site and the development of a single-family residence at 2400 Juanita Way (APN 656-131-04).

E.S.4 AREAS OF KNOWN CONTROVERSY/ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED

Section 15123 of the CEQA Guidelines requires an EIR to identify areas of controversy known to the lead agency, including issues raised by agencies and the public, and issues to be resolved. Issues raised during the scoping process include:

- Consistency with the City's General Plan and Laguna Beach Municipal Code, and the precedent the Project may set for future development.
- Impacts to sensitive biological resources, including special-status species, wildlife corridors, and designated Environmentally Sensitive Areas/Open Space Preserves.
- Wildfire risk, including location within High Fire Hazard Severity and Fuel Modification Zones and potential impairment of evacuation routes.
- Construction-related impacts, including noise, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, drainage/debris flow, and effects on steep slopes.
- Visual and aesthetic impacts, including visibility from a scenic highway and alteration of natural canyon character.

E.S.5 ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15123(b)(3) specifies that a Draft EIR summary must identify issues that are to be resolved, including the choice among alternatives and whether or how to mitigate the significant effects.

Chapter 4.0, Environmental Impact Analysis, of this Draft EIR presents mitigation measures to reduce or avoid the significant impacts that have been identified for the Project. A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) will be prepared to define the timing for implementation of the measures, the parties that will be responsible for implementation, and the parties that will be responsible for reporting and verifying implementation.

The Draft EIR identifies impacts that would remain significant and unavoidable, even after implementation of the proposed mitigation measures. Consequently, the City will need to determine whether to approve the Project as proposed and, if so, provide its rationale in a Statement of Overriding Considerations. Chapter 5.0, Alternatives, of the Draft EIR presents alternatives to the project. The City will need to resolve whether any the alternatives presented are preferable from an environmental and community perspective compared with the Proposed Project.

E.S.5 TABLE OF SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

The Table ES-1 on the following pages summarizes potential significant adverse impacts of the Proposed Project. Each resource area is summarized in Chapter 4.0. Impacts found to be significant are listed with proposed mitigation measures. The resulting impact after each mitigation is indicated, and cumulative impacts, if any, will be identified as required under CEQA.

Table ES-1: Summary of Significant Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Significance Threshold	Project Related Impact	Level of Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation	Level of Significance After Mitigation
Biological Resources				
Substantially adverse effect on sensitive species	Thread-leaved brodiaea, Laguna Beach dudleya, many-stemmed dudleya, decumbent goldenbush, and big-leaved crownbeard) have moderate to high potential to occur on the Project site. California gnatcatcher, Crotch's bumble bee, California rufous crowned sparrow, and Cooper's hawk have moderate to high potential to occur on the Project site	Potentially significant	**MM BIO-1: Plant Protocol-Level Survey** A qualified biologist retained by the applicant shall conduct a plant protocol-level survey during the appropriate blooming periods, prior to construction, for moderate potential special-status plant species, including thread-leaved brodiaea (March-June) and Laguna Beach dudleya (May-June), and high potential special-status plant species, including Many-stemmed dudleya (April-July), Decumbent goldenbush (April-November), and Big-leaved crownbeard (March-July) to determine the presence of each plant species occurring within or adjacent to the Project site. The protocol-level survey shall be conducted in conformance with the California Native Plant Society Botanical Survey Guidelines (CNPS 2001), Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special Status Native Plant Populations and Sensitive Natural Communities (CDFW 2018), and the USFW's General Rare Plant Survey Guidelines (Cypher 2002). If the plant species cannot be avoided, a qualified biologist retained by the applicant shall develop a Restoration and Mitigation Plan according to California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) guidelines and in coordination with CDFW. At a minimum, the Plan shall include: ▪ A collection of complete plants or reproductive structures (as appropriate) from affected plants; ▪ A full description of microhabitat conditions necessary for each affected species; ▪ Seed germination requirements; ▪ Proposed restoration techniques for temporarily disturbed occurrences;	Less than Significant

Table ES-1: Summary of Significant Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Significance Threshold	Project Related Impact	Level of Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation	Level of Significance After Mitigation
			▪ An assessment of potential transplant and enhancement sites; ▪ A description of success criteria; and ▪ A monitoring program to follow the progress of mitigation individuals. **MM BIO-2: Pre-Construction Survey** A qualified biologist retained by the applicant shall conduct pre-construction surveys no more than 14 days prior to initial ground disturbance within High Value Habitat (HVH), including Lemonade Berry Scrub which provides foraging habitat for California Coastal gnatcatcher, and special-status species, including Crotch's bumble bee. If non-listed wildlife species are detected during the survey, the biologist shall implement appropriate avoidance and relocation measures, consistent with accepted professional standards, to prevent injury or mortality resulting from Project-related activities. If any State- or federally-listed species are observed, the appropriate regulatory agencies must be notified (e.g., U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or California Department of Fish and Wildlife). Project activities shall not occur in the affected area until avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures have been identified through agency coordination and approved by the City. Such measures may include, but are not limited to, establishment of species-specific exclusion buffers, modification of construction timing or methods, on-site biological monitoring, or habitat protection measures. . **MM BIO-3: Nesting Bird Survey**	

Table ES-1: Summary of Significant Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Significance Threshold	Project Related Impact	Level of Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation	Level of Significance After Mitigation
			In compliance with the MBTA, any vegetation clearing shall take place outside the general bird breeding season (February 1 to August 31), to the maximum extent practical. If this is not possible, a qualified biologist retained by the applicant shall conduct a nesting bird and raptor survey prior to vegetation removal and ground-disturbing activities. The survey should occur no more than three days (72 hours) prior to initiation of Project ground-disturbing activities, and any occupied passerine and/or raptor nests occurring within or adjacent to the Project site should be delineated. Additional follow-up surveys may be required by the resource agencies. To the maximum extent practicable, a species-specific minimum buffer zone around occupied nests should be established by the applicant-retained qualified biologist and maintained while Project activities occur near the nests. The buffer zone should be sufficient in size to prevent impacts to the nest. Once nesting has ceased, the buffer may be removed.	
Substantially adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community.	The Project site contains a mapped National Wetlands Inventory stream.	Potentially Significant	**MM BIO-2, listed above.** **MM BIO-4: Jurisdictional Delineation** Prior to issuance of grading or building permits, the applicant shall retain a qualified biologist to prepare a formal jurisdictional delineation of the on-site riverine feature consistent with current U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) methodologies. The delineation shall be submitted to the City for review and shall be used to identify the extent of jurisdictional waters. If the delineation confirms the presence of federal or State jurisdictional waters, the applicant shall obtain all required permits or approvals from	Less than significant

Table ES-1: Summary of Significant Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Significance Threshold	Project Related Impact	Level of Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation	Level of Significance After Mitigation
			USACE, RWQCB, and/or CDFW prior to construction. As a condition of Project approval, the applicant shall implement all avoidance, minimization, and compensatory mitigation measures required by these agencies, which may include, but are not limited to: redesign to avoid waters to the maximum extent feasible; establishment of protective setbacks or buffers; implementation of erosion and sediment control measures; restoration of temporarily disturbed areas; and compensatory mitigation through on-site or off-site habitat restoration or credit purchase	
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?	Migratory bird species would potentially use the Project site for nesting. California gnatcatcher also has a "moderate potential" to utilized the Lemonade Berry Scrub habitat on the Project site for foraging.	Potentially Significant	**MM BIO-2, listed above** **MM BIO-3, listed above**	Less than Significant
Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such	The Proposed Project is not consistent with the goals outlined in Policies, 8K, 13A, and 14K of the Open Space/Conservation Element given its (1) potential FMZ	Potentially Significant	No mitigation proposed.	Significant and unavoidable

Table ES-1: Summary of Significant Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Significance Threshold	Project Related Impact	Level of Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation	Level of Significance After Mitigation
as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	encroachment into an environmentally sensitive area, (2) disruption of a previously undisturbed area identified as an Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA), and (3) proposed construction and grading on steep hillside areas (up to 66 percent) that could create erosion and runoff issues. These elements are directly inconsistent with the intent and requirements of the cited General Plan policies, which are intended to minimize habitat disturbance and protect sensitive natural features.			
Cultural Resources				
Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource	Although there are no mapped historic resources within the Project site, there is potential to uncover historic resources during ground-disturbing activities.	Potentially significant impact	**MM CUL-1**: If previously unidentified cultural resources are encountered during ground-disturbing activities, work within 100 feet of the find shall cease and the Director of Community Development shall be notified and an applicant-retained qualified archaeologist, defined as an archaeologist who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for archaeology, shall be contacted immediately to evaluate the find. If necessary, the evaluation may require preparation of a treatment plan and archaeological testing for the California Register of Historical Resources	Less than Significant

Table ES-1: Summary of Significant Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Significance Threshold	Project Related Impact	Level of Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation	Level of Significance After Mitigation
pursuant to §15064.5?			(CRHR) or National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility. If the discovery proves to be significant under CEQA and cannot be avoided by the Project, additional work such as data recovery excavation may be warranted to mitigate any significant impacts. In the event an identified cultural resource is Native American in origin, the applicant-retained qualified archaeologist shall consult with the Project owner and the Director of Community Development, or designee, to implement Native American consultation procedures. Construction shall not resume in the area until appropriate protection and preservation measures are in place and have been approved by the Director of Community Development, or designee, and the qualified archaeologist states in writing that the proposed construction activities would not significantly damage any archaeological resources. **MM CUL-2:** Prior to the start of ground-disturbing activities, all construction personnel shall participate in a Workers Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) training conducted by a qualified archaeologist provided by the applicant. The training shall inform workers of the potential presence of unknown archaeological and cultural resources within the Project area; identify the types of materials that may be encountered; discuss regulatory requirements and penalties for intentionally disturbing cultural resources; and outline the procedures to follow if such resources are discovered.	
Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource	The positive results of the Sacred Lands File search indicate that there remains a potential for encountering archaeological resources during ground-disturbing activities.	Potentially significant	**MM CUL-1, listed above** **MM CUL-2, listed above**	Less than Significant

Table ES-1: Summary of Significant Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Significance Threshold	Project Related Impact	Level of Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation	Level of Significance After Mitigation
pursuant to §15064.5.				
Geology (Paleontology)				
Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geological feature?	The Project would require excavations up to approximately 30 feet for removal of undocumented fill. Deeper excavations could uncover significant fossil remains.	Potentially significant	**MM PALEO-1**: If fossils or fossil-bearing deposits are encountered during ground-disturbing activities, work within a 25-foot radius of the find shall halt, the Director of Community Development shall be notified, and an applicant-retained professional vertebrate paleontologist (as defined by the Society for Vertebrate Paleontology) shall be contacted immediately to evaluate the find. The paleontologist shall have the authority to stop or divert construction, as necessary. Documentation and treatment of the discovery shall occur in accordance with Society of Vertebrate Paleontology standards. The significance of the find shall be evaluated pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines. If the discovery proves to be significant, before construction activities resume at the location of the find additional work such as data recovery excavation may be warranted, as deemed necessary by the paleontologist.	Less than Significant
Land Use and Planning				
Would the Project cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of	While the Project aligns with the intended land use designation, meets dimensional requirements, and includes certain design features that address visual and environmental concerns, it raises substantial inconsistencies with established Municipal Code provisions and General Plan	Potentially significant	No mitigation measures are proposed.	Significant and Unavoidable

Table ES-1: Summary of Significant Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Significance Threshold	Project Related Impact	Level of Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation	Level of Significance After Mitigation
avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	policies. The Project conflicts with LBMC Section 21.12.090, LBMC Section 21.12.120, LBMC Section 21.12.080, LBMC Section 21.12.220, LBMC Section 21.12.250, LBMC Section 25.08.004 "Building Site", LBMC Section 25.10.008(D) LBMC Section 25.53.006(C), LUE Policy 2.7, LUE Policy 10.1, OSCE Policy 7A, OSCE Policy 7K, OSCE Policy 8A, OSCE Policy 8K, OSCE Policy 13A, OSCE Policy 14A–C, OSCE Policy 14F, OSCE Policy 14G, OSCE Policy 14I, OSCE Policy 14K, TCGME Policy 2M.			
Noise				
Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project site.	Project construction activities would exceed the City's construction noise recommended limit of above 75 dBA at the home to the southeast and home to the southwest. This would be considered a significant impact.	Potentially significant	**NOISE-1: Temporary Noise Barrier Installation** Prior to any construction activities, the Project applicant shall require the installation of minimum 6-foot-high temporary noise barriers that are located adjacent to the northwest property line at 2470 Junita Way (home to southeast) and adjacent to the northeast property line (from edge of driveway to north corner) at 2457 Juanita Way (home to southwest). The temporary noise barriers shall be constructed with either minimum 1/2" thick plywood or oriented strand board (OSB) or sound blankets that have a minimum Sound Transmission Class (STC) rating of 12 STC. Refer to Figure 1	Less than Significant

Table ES-1: Summary of Significant Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Significance Threshold	Project Related Impact	Level of Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation	Level of Significance After Mitigation
			in the Noise Technical Memorandum for the proposed locations for the temporary noise barriers.	
Transportation				
Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadways, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	The Proposed Project would potentially conflict with the Transportation, Circulation and Growth Management Element Policy 2M, which states that development should avoid extending roads and utilities to identified Environmentally Sensitive Areas and unincorporated County lands. The intent of this policy is to preserve sensitive habitats and prevent urban sprawl. In addition, the Project is inconsistent with several LBMC requirements relate roadway design standards.	Potentially Significant	MM BIO-1 through MM BIO-4	Significant and Unavoidable
Tribal Cultural Resources				
Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a	The Sacred Lands File request from the Native American Heritage Commission were positive. The Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians Kizh Nation, Juaneño Band of Mission	Potentially significant	**TCR-1: Retain a Native American Monitor Prior to Commencement of Ground-Disturbing Activities** a) The Project applicant shall retain a Native American Monitor in consultation with Gabrieleno Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation, the Juaneno Band of Mission Indians, Acjachemen Nation – Belardes, and the Juaneno Band of Mission Indians Acjachemen Nation 84A. The	Less than Significant

Table ES-1: Summary of Significant Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Significance Threshold	Project Related Impact	Level of Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation	Level of Significance After Mitigation
tribal cultural resource.	Indians, Acjachemen Nation – Belardes, and Juaneño Band of Mission Indians Acjachemen Nation 84A requested consultation.		monitor shall be retained prior to the commencement of any "ground-disturbing activity" for the subject project at all project locations (i.e., both onsite and any offsite locations that are included in the project description/definition and/or required in connection with the project, such as public improvement work). "Ground-disturbing activity" shall include, but is not limited to, demolition, pavement removal, potholing, auguring, grubbing, tree removal, boring, grading, excavation, drilling, and trenching. b) A copy of the executed monitoring agreement shall be submitted to the lead agency (City) prior to the earlier of the commencement of any ground-disturbing activity, or the issuance of any permit necessary to commence a ground-disturbing activity. c) The monitor will complete daily monitoring logs that will provide descriptions of the relevant ground-disturbing activities, the type of construction activities performed, locations of ground-disturbing activities, soil types, cultural-related materials, and any other facts, conditions, materials, or discoveries of significance to the Tribe. Monitor logs will identify and describe any discovered TCRs, including but not limited to, Native American cultural and historical artifacts, remains, places of significance, etc., (collectively, tribal cultural resources, or "TCR"), as well as any discovered Native American (ancestral) human remains and burial goods. Copies of monitor logs will be provided to the project applicant/lead agency upon written request to the Tribe. d) On-site tribal monitoring shall conclude upon the latter of the following: (1) Written confirmation to the Tribe or Tribal monitoring agency from a designated point of contact for the Project applicant/Lead Agency that all ground-disturbing activities and phases that may involve ground-disturbing activities on the project site or in connection with the	

			project are complete; or, (2) A determination and written notification by the Tribe or Tribal monitoring agency to the Project applicant/Lead Agency that no future, planned construction activity and/or development/construction phase at the project site possesses the potential to impact TCRs. **TCR-2: Unanticipated Discovery of Tribal Cultural Resource Objects (Non-Funerary/Non-Ceremonial)** a) Upon discovery of any TCRs, all construction activities in the immediate vicinity of the discovery shall cease (i.e., not less than the surrounding 50 feet) and shall not resume until the discovered TCR has been fully assessed by the Native American Monitor. The Tribe or Tribal monitoring agency will recover and retain all discovered TCRs in the form and/or manner the Tribe deems appropriate, in the Tribe's sole discretion, and for any purpose the Tribe deems appropriate, including for educational, cultural and/or historic purposes. **TCR-3: Unanticipated Discovery of Human Remains and Associated Funerary or Ceremonial Objects** a) Native American human remains are defined in PRC 5097.98 (d)(1) as an inhumation or cremation, and in any state of decomposition or skeletal completeness. Funerary objects, called associated grave goods in Public Resources Code Section 5097.98, are also to be treated according to this statute. b) If Native American human remains and/or grave goods are discovered or recognized on the project site, then Public Resource Code 5097.9 as well as Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 shall be followed. c) Human remains and grave/burial goods shall be treated alike per California Public Resources Code section 5097.98(d)(1) and (2). d) Preservation in place (i.e., avoidance) is the preferred manner of treatment for discovered human remains and/or burial goods. e) Any discovery of human remains/burial goods shall be kept confidential to prevent further disturbance.	

ES.5 PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

The following alternatives for the Draft EIR were identified and evaluated:

- No Project Alternative – no changes in existing conditions.
- Reduced Development (Single-Story) Alternative

The following alternatives were considered but ultimately rejected for study in the Draft EIR:

- Other Project Location Alternative
- Reduced Project Lot Area Alternative
- Build a road extending from the north
- Modified cul-de-sac

Chapter 5.0 discusses these alternatives and includes an analysis of potential environmental impacts associated with each.

CHAPTER 1.0 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT INTRODUCTION

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will discuss the purpose of the Draft EIR, scope, content, and environmental review process. The Project is described in further detail in Chapter 2.0, Project Description.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

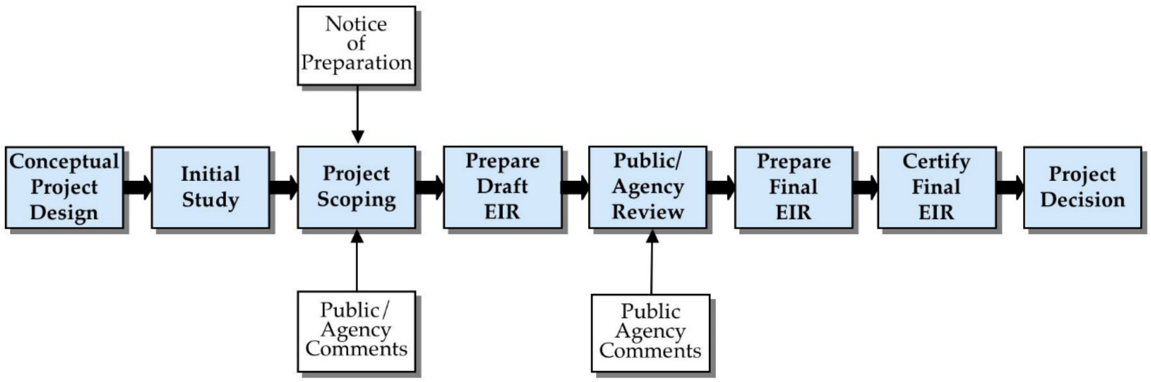
The Project requires discretionary approval of the City and is subject to environmental review requirements in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). All "projects" within the State of California are required to undergo environmental review to determine any potential environmental impacts associated with project implementation (Section 15021).

CEQA was enacted in 1970 by the California Legislature to disclose to decision-makers and the public the significant environmental effects of a proposed project and to identify possible ways to avoid or minimize significant environmental effects of a project by requiring implementation of mitigation measures or recommending feasible alternatives. CEQA applies to all California agencies at all levels, including local, regional, and State governments, as well as boards, commissions, and special districts. The City is the Lead Agency for the Project and is therefore required to conduct an environmental review to analyze any potential environmental effects associated with project implementation.

A Project EIR or an EIR has been prepared to evaluate impacts of the Proposed Project. Section 15161 of the CEQA Guidelines states that a Project EIR "… *examines the environmental impacts of a specific development project. This type of EIR should focus primarily on the changes in the environment that would result from the development project. The EIR shall examine all phases of the project including planning, construction, and operation."*

The Draft EIR is then circulated to the public and affected agencies for review and comment. One of the primary objectives of CEQA is to enhance public participation in the planning process; public involvement is an essential feature of this process. Community members are encouraged to participate in the environmental review process, request to be notified, monitor newspapers for formal announcements, and submit substantive comments at every possible opportunity afforded by the lead agency. The environmental review process provides ample opportunity for the public to participate through scoping, public notice, and public review of CEQA documents. A diagram illustrating the CEQA process is shown in Figure 1-1 below. Additionally, a Lead Agency is required to respond to public comments in Final EIRs and consider comments from the scoping process in the preparation of the Draft EIR.

Figure 1-1. The Environmental Review Process



1.3 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

1.3.1 Scoping Process

In compliance with Section 15201 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the City has taken steps to provide opportunities for public participation in the environmental process. An Initial Study (IS) and Notice of Preparation (NOP) were distributed on July 24, 2025 to State, regional, local government agencies, and interested parties for a 30-day public review period to solicit comments and to inform agencies and the public of the Project. The IS and NOP described the Proposed Project, identified potential environmental effects associated with Project implementation, and invited the agencies and the public to review and comment on the IS and NOP.

The purpose of the NOP was to formally convey to the public that the City was preparing a Draft EIR for the Proposed Project and to solicit input regarding the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in this Draft EIR.

A total of 18 comment letters were received during the public review period, including one petition letter. The breakdown of comments is as follows:

- 12 comments from Laguna Beach residents, opposing the Proposed Project;
- 3 letters from tribal representatives, requesting tribal consultation;
- 1 letter from the Project architect, expressing support for the Proposed Project;
- 1 letter from a local non-profit organization, stating opposition to the Proposed Project; and
- 1 petition letter signed by approximately 77 Laguna Beach residents, collectively opposing the Proposed Project.

The IS, NOP, and comments received on the IS and NOP are contained in Appendix A of this Draft EIR. Table 1.0-1 contains summaries of each comment received and where the issues raised in comments are addressed in the Draft EIR.

Table 1.0-1: Summary of Written Comments Received in Response to the Notice of Preparation

Commenting Party (Date of Letter/Email)	Summary of Comment	Addressed in Section(s) of the Draft EIR
Andrew Salas, Hereditary Chief of the Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation (8/4/25)	Hereditary Chief of the Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation requests government-to-government consultation with the City pursuant to Assembly Bill 52.	Section 4.13
Chairman of the Juaneno Band of Mission Indians, Acjachemen Nation 84A (8/24/26)	Chairman of Juaneno Band of Mission Indians, Acjachemen Nation 84A requests government-to-government consultation with the City pursuant to Assembly Bill 52.	Section 4.13
Joyce Perry, Cultural Resource Director of the Juaneno Band of Mission Indians, Acjachemen Nation – Belardes (8/21/25)	Cultural Resource Director of the Juaneno Band of Mission Indians, Acjachemen Nation - Belardes requests government-to-government consultation with the City pursuant to Assembly Bill 52.	Section 4.13
Richard & Wendy Malaspina(8/4/25)	Juanita Way residents note the Proposed Project's impacts on the following: traffic congestion; compromised wildfire evacuation routes; construction-related air and noise pollution; greenhouse gas emissions from vegetation clearing for fuel modification zones; impaired wildlife corridors provided by the canyon for special-status plant and wildlife species; and downslope debris flow from removal of retaining walls.	Sections 4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.7; 4.8; 4.10; 4.11; 4.12; 4.14
Nicole Gage (8/7/25)	A Juanita Way resident notes the Project's potential impact on special-status plants and wildlife in the canyon. The City's potential approval of the Project would set a precedent for future development, in direct conflict with the City's General Plan and Laguna Beach Municipal Code intended to preserve open space.	Sections 4.3; 4.9
Kim Gage (8/7/25)	A Juanita Way resident raises several concerns regarding the Proposed Project, including the following: visibility from the state-designated scenic highway (SR-1); non-compliance with the City's General Plan and Laguna Beach Municipal Code; construction-related noise; trenching impacts for a new fire hydrant and sewer line; and the precedent set by the City's potential approval of the Project for future development.	Sections 4.1; 4.9; 4.10; 4.12; 4.11
Cecilia Castro De Andrade & Rino Anthony Peruzzi(8/14/25)	Juanita Way residents express concern regarding the Proposed Project, including: impacts to sensitive biological resources; location within a High Fire Hazard Severity Zone; inconsistency with the City's General Plan; lack of compliance with Laguna Beach Municipal Code; and the	Sections 4.3; 4.9; 4.14

	precedent set by the City's potential approval of the Project for future development.	
Amy J. Creager, Brion Jeannette Architecture (8/25/25)	The commenter expresses support for the Proposed Project, noting it would have little to no impact on the following resources: scenic views; air quality; energy; geologic or paleontological features; greenhouse gas emissions; emergency evacuation routes; noise; or tribal cultural resources. They note the Project is consistent with zoning and would provide fire protection and suppression within the neighborhood.	Sections 4.1; 4.2; 4.4; 4.5; 4.6; 4.7; 4.8; 4.9; 4.10; 4.14
Gayle Waite, Laguna Canyon Conservancy President (8/22/25)	The commenter expresses concern for the Proposed Project, noting the following issues: inconsistency with the City's General Plan; designation as High Value Habitat in an Open Space Preserve; location within a High Fire Hazard Severity Zone; and existing drainage issues present that construction would exacerbate.	Sections 4.3; 4.9; 4.14
Petition Letter, signed by 70+ Laguna Beach residents (8/21/25)	The petition letter, signed by 77 Laguna Beach residents, expresses concern regarding the following issues associated with the Proposed Project: location in a High Fire Hazard Severity Zone; impacts to sensitive species and habitats; noise and air pollution; and damage to aesthetics provided by the canyon's open space.	Sections 4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.10; 4.14
John C. Abusaid & Ruth H. Abusaid(8/24/25)	The commenters express concern regarding the following issues associated with the Proposed Project: lack of compliance with Laguna Beach Municipal Code; inconsistency with the City's General Plan; potential interaction with special-status species and habitats; and issues that may arise developing beyond the legal grade limit.	Sections 4.3; 4.9
Bodil Dencker & Livio Ceppi(8/13/25)	The commenters express concerns regarding the Proposed Project, including the following: designation as an Environmentally Sensitive Area, Open Space Preserve, and High Value Habitat; increased wildfire risk due to its location within a Fuel Modification Zone; location within a High Fire Hazard Severity Zone; and the precedent set by the City's potential approval of the Project for future development.	Sections 4.3; 4.9; 4.14
Sarah & Thomas Bricker(8/20/25)	The commenters note the following areas of concern regarding the Proposed Project: designation as an Environmentally Sensitive Area, Open Space Preserve, and High Value Habitat; lack of compliance with Laguna Beach Municipal Code; inconsistency with the City's General Plan; location within a High Fire Hazard Severity Zone and Fuel Modification Zone, which may impair wildfire evacuation routes; and the precedent set by the City's potential approval of the Project for future development.	Sections 4.1; 4.3; 4.8; 4.9; 4.14
Tricia Lea(8/24/25)	The commenter notes the following areas of concern regarding the Proposed Project: designation as an Environmentally Sensitive Area, Open Space Preserve, and High Value Habitat; lack of compliance with Laguna Beach Municipal Code; inconsistency with the City's General Plan; location within a High Fire Hazard Severity Zone and Fuel Modification Zone, which may impair wildfire evacuation routes; the potential for development to diminish the natural character of the hillside; and the precedent set by the City's potential approval of the Project for future development.	Sections 4.1; 4.3; 4.8; 4.9; 4.14
Roger & Maggie Owens (8/25/25)	The commenters express concern regarding the Proposed Project, including the following: location within a biologically sensitive area; potential issues that may arise from construction on a steep grade;	Sections 4.1; 4.3; 4.9

	compromised natural character of the canyon; and the precedent set by the City's potential approval of the Project for future development.	
Glenna Matthews (8/14/25)	The commenter notes the Proposed Project would potentially impact special-status plants and wildlife species, pose wildfire risks, and impair evacuation routes.	Sections 4.3; 4.8; 4.14
Donald Clarfeld & Lilli Dumler (8/13/25)	The commenters raise the following concerns regarding the Proposed Project: potential impairment of scenic vistas; lack of compliance with Laguna Beach Municipal Code; designation as an Environmentally Sensitive Area, Open Space Preserve, and High Value Habitat; location within a High Fire Hazard Severity Zone; the alteration of existing drainage patterns, creating flooding and landslide risks; and the precedent set by the City's potential approval of the Project for future development.	Sections 4.1; 4.3; 4.9; 4.14
Andrew & Jerralee Bailey (8/24/25)	The commenters express concern regarding the Proposed Project's location within a biologically sensitive area and the precedent set by the City's potential approval of the Project for future development.	Sections 4.3; 4.9

Topics evaluated in this Draft EIR have been identified based on the IS prepared for the Project, the responses to the NOP, the review of the Proposed Project by City staff, and the comments made during the scoping meeting. The City determined through this initial review process that impacts related to the following environmental topics are potentially significant and require an assessment in this Draft EIR:

1. Aesthetics
2. Air Quality
3. Biological Resources
4. Cultural Resources
5. Energy
6. Geology/Soils
7. Greenhouse Gas Emissions
8. Hazards and Hazardous Materials
9. Land Use and Planning
10. Noise
11. Public Services
12. Transportation
13. Tribal Cultural Resources
14. Wildfire

Mitigation measures to reduce impacts to a less than significant level are proposed whenever feasible. In addition, through this NOP and EIR scoping process, the City determined there was no substantial evidence the Proposed Project would cause or otherwise result in significant environmental effects in the areas of Aesthetics (scenic resources, light/glare), Agriculture and Forestry Resources, Biological Resources (wetlands), Geology and Soils, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use and Planning (physically divide established community), Mineral Resources, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, Transportation (VMT, hazards due to geometric design feature), Utilities and Service Systems. The substantiation for determining these issues would result in no impact or a less than significant impact is described in further detail in Section 6.1, Effects Not Found to Be

Significant. Table 1.0-2 contains this list of sections required under CEQA Guidelines, along with reference to the chapter where these items can be found.

Table 1.0-2: Required EIR Contents

Chapter Title (CEQA Guidelines)	Location
Table of Contents (Section 15122)	Table of Contents
Summary (Section 15123)	Executive Summary
Introduction (Section 15122)	Chapter 1
Project Description (Section 15124)	Chapter 2
Environmental Setting (Section 15125)	Chapter 3
Consideration and Discussion of Environmental Impacts (Section 15126)	Chapter 4
Mitigation Measures (Section 15126.4)	Chapter 4.1-4.12
Cumulative Impacts (Section 15130)	Chapter 4.1-4.12
Alternatives to the Proposed Project (Section 15126.6)	Chapter 5
Growth-inducing Impacts (Section 15126.2)	Chapter 6
Effects Found Not to Be Significant (Section 15128)	Chapter 6
Organizations and Persons Consulted (Section 15129)	Chapter 7 and 8
List of Preparers	Chapter 8
Acronyms/Abbreviations	Chapter 9

1.3.2 Review and Comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report

The Draft EIR for the Project is being distributed directly to numerous agencies, organizations, and interested groups and persons for comment during the formal review period. The Draft EIR is also available for review at the following locations in the City of Laguna Beach:

- 505 Forest Avenue, Laguna Beach, CA 92651

Interested individuals, organizations, responsible agencies, and other agencies can provide written comments about the Draft EIR addressed to:

City of Laguna Beach
Attn: Heather Steven, Senior Planner
Community Development Department
505 Forest Avenue
Laguna Beach, CA 92651
(949) 497-0332
hsteven@lagunabeachcity.net

Agency responses to the Draft EIR should include the name of a contact person within the commenting agency. Due to the time limits mandated by State law (CEQA Guidelines Section 15205[d]), comments must be sent to the City at the earliest possible date but not later than March 9, 2026, which is 45 days after publication of this notice.

1.4 ORGANIZATION OF THE DRAFT EIR

The Draft EIR is organized into the following chapters so the reader can easily obtain information about the Proposed Project and related environmental issues:

- Executive Summary – Presents a summary of the Proposed Project and alternatives, potential impacts and mitigation measures, and impact conclusions regarding growth inducement and cumulative impacts.
- Chapter 1: Introduction – Describes the purpose and use of the Draft EIR, provides a brief overview of the Proposed Project, and outlines the organization of the Draft EIR.
- Chapter 2: Project Description – Describes the project location, project details, and the City's overall objectives for the Project.
- Chapter 3: Environmental Setting – Describes the baseline environmental setting and existing physical conditions, including related projects in the area.
- Chapter 4: Environmental Analysis – Describes the existing conditions, or setting, before project implementation; methods and assumptions used in impact analysis; thresholds of significance; impacts that would result from the Proposed Project; and applicable mitigation measures that would eliminate or reduce significant impacts for each environmental issue.
- Chapter 5: Alternatives Analysis – Evaluates the environmental effects of project alternatives, including the No Project Alternative and Environmentally Superior Project Alternative.
- Chapter 6: Other CEQA Considerations – Includes a discussion of issues required by CEQA that are not covered in other chapters. This includes unavoidable adverse impacts, impacts found not to be significant, irreversible environmental changes, and growth-inducing impacts.
- Chapter 7: References – Identifies the documents and individuals consulted in preparing the Draft EIR.
- Chapter 8: Report Preparation – Lists the individuals involved in preparing the Draft EIR and organizations and persons consulted.
- Chapter 9: Acronyms/Abbreviations – Presents a list of the acronyms and abbreviations.

Appendices – Present data supporting the analysis or contents of this Draft EIR. The Appendices include the following:

- **APPENDIX A** – Initial Study, Notice of Preparation, and comment letters
- **APPENDIX B** – Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Technical Memorandum
- **APPENDIX C** – Biotechnical Report
- **APPENDIX D** – Cultural Memo

- **APPENDIX E** – Geotechnical Report
- **APPENDIX F** – Noise Technical Memorandum
- **APPENDIX G** – AB 52 Tribal Consultation

CHAPTER 2.0 – PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

2.2 PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Juanita Way Road Expansion Project (Project) proposes extending the roadway by 18.5 linear feet at its terminus to provide driveway access to facilitate the creation of a new building site and for the potential future construction of a single-family residence at 2400 Juanita Way, Laguna Beach, CA 92651 (APN 656-131-04).

2.3 GENERAL PLAN LAND USE AND ZONING

The Project site is zoned for Residential Low-Density Zone (R-1) and is within a 'Village Low Density' General Plan land use designation (City 2024a). The Project site is also within the Coastal Zone boundary and is subject to the City's certified Local Coastal Program (CCC 2025; City 2025d).

2.4 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The Project has the following objectives:

- Implement right-of-way improvements and a roadway extension that provide safe and legal driveway access at the terminus of Juanita Way to a new building site at APN 656-131-04.
- Facilitate creation of a buildable lot - while respecting site constraints such as lot size, topography, and existing development patterns - that could accommodate the potential future construction of a single-family residence.
- Maintain neighborhood character and achieve visual compatibility with adjacent open space by incorporating design, materials, and finishes that reflect the existing background and minimize visual contrast

2.5 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Applicant proposes to extend the road at the terminus of Juanita Way in the City of Laguna Beach, California. The Project would add approximately 18.5 linear feet of asphalt road surface at the terminus of Juanita Way. This extension would provide street access to facilitate the creation of a new building site and the potential future construction of a single-family residence at 2400 Juanita Way.

Currently, the potential development site at 2400 Juanita Way is inaccessible due to intervening vegetation and the absence of adequate roadway infrastructure. The primary purpose of the proposed roadway extension is to provide vehicular access to the site to support a potential future single-family residential development.

The Project site consists of two lots (Tract 26, Block 14, Lots 7 and 8). The vacant, previously undisturbed lots are covered with native vegetation. For the purposes of environmental analysis, this EIR assumes maximum potential buildout based on site plans provided by the Applicant (see Figures 4-1 and 4-2). The parcel encompasses approximately 7,174 square feet, with 3,570.57 square feet proposed to remain as open space. Proposed grading activities would involve approximately 1,038.56 cubic yards of cut and 0.47

cubic yards of fill, resulting in approximately 1,038 cubic yards of material exported off-site. The proposed impervious surface area totals 3,603.03 square feet, representing approximately 50.23 percent of the total lot area.

Under the assumed buildout scenario, the future single-family residence would consist of a three-story terraced structure with an attached two-car garage and driveway access from the extended terminus of Juanita Way. The proposed home would include 3,482 square feet of living area, 462 square feet of garage and mechanical space, approximately 1,430 square feet of hardscaped area, and 1,635 square feet of landscaped area.

The proposed three-story single-family residence would be comprised of three levels:

- Lower Level (1,323.8 SF) consisting of a bedroom, bathroom, and laundry room;
- Middle Level (1,921.8 SF) consisting of one bedrooms, a half bath, and a master bathroom;
- Upper Level (245.2 SF) consisting of a studio and 2-car garage.

The proposed road extension is anticipated to disturb up to 1,500 square feet and would include demolition of the existing storm drain system at the road terminus, grading of the road extension area, installation of utilities (water, sewer, electric, and gas), construction of a new road terminus storm drain system as well as paving the new road area and repaving the portion of the existing road that was disturbed. The Project would also require off-site improvements, including a curb cut to accommodate the proposed asphalt driveway, and relocation of the existing catch basin at the Project site, which would be connected to the existing 16-inch-diameter storm drain pipe within the public right-of-way along Juanita Way.

The Project’s architectural design (i.e., terraced with planting strips) is consistent with the City’s Design Guidelines and with the character of the surrounding neighborhood in terms of mass and scale (City 2010). Specifically, the majority of neighboring residences exhibit a terraced design with multiple stories, balconies, and siting on a 20% slope, reflecting a California Coastal Contemporary style that is consistent with the Project’s proposed form and scale.

2.6 PROJECT SCHEDULE

Construction of the Proposed Project is anticipated to start Summer 2027 and have a duration of approximately seven months. All construction activities would occur between 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m on weekdays. per the City’s Noise Ordinance. No construction would occur on any weekend day or Federal holiday.

2.7 REQUIRED PERMITS AND APPROVALS

As required by the CEQA Guidelines, this section provides, to the extent the information is known to the Lead Agency, the City, a list of permits and approvals to implement the Project and list of agencies that will review this Draft EIR and use it in their decision-making process. The following lists City entitlements and permits that may be required for the Project prior to construction and operation:

Regional

- Southern California Edison (SCE)
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Local

- City of Laguna Beach Public Works
    - Construction Permit
- City of Laguna Beach Fire Department (LBFD)
- City of Laguna Beach Planning Commission and City Council (for approvals related to road extension and designation as a building site)
    - Road Extension Permit
    - Variance
    - Coastal Development Permit
    - Grading (concept approval)
- City of Laguna Beach Design Review Board (for approvals related to a future single-family dwelling)
    - Design Review
    - Coastal Development Permit (CDP)
- City of Laguna Beach Planning Commission and City Council (for approvals related to the merging of two lots into one)
    - Tentative and Final Parcel Map
    - CDP
- City of Laguna Beach Community Development Department (CDD), Building Division (for approvals related to a future single-family dwelling)
    - Building Permit
    - Grading Permit

The Final EIR must be certified by the City as to its adequacy in compliance with CEQA prior to any actions being taken on the Project. The analysis of this Draft EIR is intended to provide environmental review for the Project.

CHAPTER 3.0 – ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

3.1 EXISTING LAND USE

3.1.1 Existing Site Uses

Juanita Way is a dead-end street which currently serves 28 building sites. The road measures approximately 525 feet in length (measured from Alta Vista Way) and does not terminate with a turnaround. The proposed road extension does not include a turn around.

The existing Project site consists of two vacant, previously undisturbed lots covered with native vegetation, within a wildland-urban interface. The Project would add approximately 18.5 linear feet of asphalt road surface at the terminus of Juanita Way. This extension would provide street access to facilitate the creation of a new building site and the potential future construction of a single-family residence at 2400 Juanita Way, located in an existing residential neighborhood in the City. Located east from the Project site, the existing residential neighborhood generally consists of dead-end streets bisected by Alta Vista Way and terraced across the steep hillside slope. The hillside neighborhood is characterized by dense single-family development with surrounding open space.

The Project site is zoned for Residential Low-Density Zone (R-1) and is within a 'Village Low Density' General Plan land use designation (City 2024a). The Project site is also within the Coastal Zone boundary and is subject to the City's certified Local Coastal Program (CCC 2025; City 2025d).

The Project site is located on a vegetated, undeveloped parcel of land that is designated as an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) due to its classification under drainage, Open Space Preserve (OSP), and High-Value Habitat (HVH). The Project site primarily consists of Lemonade Berry Scrub Habitat (see Section 4.3) The site is in the Fuel Modification Zone (FMZ) and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ). The property is located on a hillside with a significant grade, characterized by rugged terrain typical of the coastal foothills in the region. The proposed driveway along the southern end of the Project site features slopes ranging from 2% to 30.9%. The remainder of the Project site features slopes ranging from 30.9% to 66%.

3.1.2 Surrounding Land Uses

Land use designations adjacent to the Project site include single-family residences to the south and east, with open space area to the north that separates this R-1 neighborhood from the developed portions of the Diamond/Crestview and Arch Beach Heights neighborhoods. The property currently fronts unimproved segments of Juanita Way and Iris Way, and shares a property line with the single-family dwelling located at 2470 Juanita Way.

3.1.3 Adopted Plans

2012 Laguna Beach General Plan – Land Use Element (LUE)

The 2012 Laguna Beach General Plan – Land Use Element (LUE) outlines over ten guiding principles for the City, including preserving the city's natural seaside and hillside environments and ensuring that development responds appropriately to individual site constraints. The LUE is one of seven elements in the Laguna Beach General Plan, serving as a long-range blueprint for community development. It designates the type, intensity, and general distribution of land uses throughout the City. The LUE provides information on the City's physical setting, population, economic characteristics, and existing land uses. It also outlines goals, policies, actions, and implementation procedures addressing major land use concerns identified by both the community and the City Council.

3.2 RELATED PROJECTS

CEQA requires that an EIR contain an assessment of the cumulative impacts that could result from a project and other related projects. As defined in the CEQA Guidelines, "[c]umulative impacts refer to two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts." Although project-related impacts may be individually minor, the cumulative effects of these impacts, in combination with the impacts of other projects, could be significant under CEQA and must be addressed. Through the evaluation of cumulative impacts, CEQA attempts to ensure that large-scale environmental impacts will not be ignored.

The analysis of cumulative effects "need not provide as great detail as is provided for the effects attributable to the project alone," but the discussion "shall reflect the severity of the impacts and their likelihood of occurrence" (CEQA Guidelines §15130(b)). Where a Lead Agency concludes that the cumulative effects of a project, taken together with the impacts of past, present, and probable future projects, are significant, the Lead Agency then must determine whether the project's incremental contribution to such significant cumulative impact is "cumulatively considerable," and thus significant in and of itself.

The section additionally states, "when the combined cumulative impact associated with the project's incremental effect and the effects of other projects is not significant, the EIR shall briefly indicate why the cumulative impact is not significant and is not discussed in further detail in the EIR. A Lead Agency shall identify facts and analysis supporting the Lead Agency's conclusion that the cumulative impact is less than significant" (State CEQA Guidelines §15130[a]).

This Draft EIR considers the effects of the Project in relation to the full development forecasted by General Plan and other related projects either proposed, approved, or under construction in the area. A total of 11 related projects within the City of Laguna Beach, illustrated in Table 3.0-1, have been identified in relation to the Project based on their proximity to the Project site.

Based on the timing of the NOP and in accordance with CEQA, these are projects which are considered reasonably foreseeable to be built in the near future. Table 3.0-1: Related Projects provides information on the land use, location, and size of these related projects. The list of related projects was used to assess cumulative conditions where appropriate.

Table 3.0-1: Related Projects

Project Name	Description	Approximate Distance from Project Site	Status
Laguna Beach Lodge, 30806 Coast Hwy	Community Development Hotel Project	0.80 miles south	Approved
Surf & Sand Hotel, 1555 South Coast Hwy	Community Development Hotel Project	0.67 miles north	Project Completed
Wood Cove Inn, 2020 South Coast Hwy	Community Development Hotel Project	0.36 miles north	Approved
Coast Inn, 1401 South Coast Hwy	Community Development Hotel Project	0.77 miles north	Anticipated project completion: 2026
Anita Street Sewer Lift Station and Beach Access Stairs Reconstruction	Capital Improvement Project	1.05 miles north	Anticipated project completion: late 2026.
Glenneyre Street Lighting Improvement Project, Forest Ave to Calliope St.	Capital Improvement Project	0.70 to 1.54 miles north	Anticipated construction commencement: late 2026.
Woods Cove	Utility Undergrounding Project	0.5 miles north	Anticipated project completion: August 2026.
Coast Highway (Agate Street – Arch Street)	Utility Undergrounding Project	0.5 miles north	Pending Approval
Bluebird Canyon Drive	Utility Undergrounding Project	0.6 miles north	Project Completed
Caltrans Coast Highway ADA South Improvements	Moss Street to Fifth Avenue ADA Improvements	0.3-2.3 miles	Anticipated project completion: May 2026.
Caltrans Coast Highway Signal Improvements – Cress Street	Intersection of Coast Highway and Cress Street Signal Improvements	0.85 miles northwest	Project Completed

CHAPTER 4.0 – ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES ADDRESSED

An Initial Study was prepared for the Project in May 2025. Based on the findings of the Initial Study, it has been determined that a Draft EIR is required for the Project. The City used the Initial Study as well as agency and public input received during the public comment period (July 24, 2025 to August 25, 2025) to determine the final scope for this Draft EIR. Environmental issue areas are listed by the level of significance of their impacts in Table 4.0-1: Environmental Issue Areas below, as determined by the analysis provided in the Initial Study.

Table 4.0-1: Environmental Issue Areas

No Impact	Less Than Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Impact
Agriculture and Forestry Resources	Hydrology and Water Quality	Aesthetics
Mineral Resources	Population and Housing	Air Quality
Recreation	Utilities / Service Systems	Biological Resources
		Cultural Resources
		Energy
		Geology / Soils
		Greenhouse Gas Emissions
		Hazards & Hazardous Materials
		Land Use / Planning
		Noise
		Public Services
		Transportation
		Tribal Cultural Resources
		Wildfire

The purpose of this section of the Draft EIR is to further analyze those impacts previously determined to be potentially significant in order to inform decision-makers and the public of the type and magnitude of the changes to the existing environment that would result from the Project. The following sections provide detailed discussion of the environmental setting for each topic addressed in this Draft EIR, the analysis of the potential impacts of the Project, potential cumulative impacts, and measures to mitigate potential significant impacts to the fullest extent feasible.

Impacts found to be less than significant in the Initial Study are further discussed in Section 6.1: Effects Not Found to be Significant of this Draft EIR.

TERMINOLOGY USED IN THIS ANALYSIS

For each CEQA checklist question listed in the Draft EIR, a determination of the level of significance of the impact is provided (CEQA Guidelines Appendix G). Impacts are determined in the following categories:

- **No Impact.** A designation of *no impact* is given when no adverse changes in the environment are expected.
- **Less Than Significant.** A *less than significant impact* would cause no substantial adverse change in the environment.

- **Less Than Significant with Mitigation.** A *potentially significant (but mitigable) impact* would have a substantial adverse impact on the environment but could be reduced to a less-than-significant level with incorporation of mitigation measure(s).

- **Potentially Significant.** A *significant and unavoidable impact* would cause a substantial adverse effect on the environment and no feasible mitigation measures would be available to reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level.

Please see Chapter 9.0: Acronyms and Abbreviations for a glossary of terms, definitions, and acronyms used in this Draft EIR.

4.1 AESTHETICS

This section provides a discussion of the existing visual character and aesthetic resources on the Project site and in the surrounding area and evaluates the potential for changes in the visual character that could result from implementation of the Proposed Project. This section also evaluates the potential loss of existing resources, effects on public views, and visual compatibility with existing uses.

4.1.1 <u>Existing Environmental Setting</u>

Regional Setting

Located east from the Project site, the existing residential neighborhood generally consists of dead-end streets bisected by Alta Vista Way and terraced across the steep hillside slope. The hillside neighborhood is characterized by dense single-family development with surrounding open space. Surrounding land uses around the Project site include single-family residences to the south and east, with open space area to the north.

The City's General Plan Land Use Element (LUE) Section 2: Physical Setting describes the unique geographic conditions that contribute to the aesthetic value of the City, including its steep hillsides, rugged canyon bottoms, prominent ridgelines, and large areas of open space. Aesthetic value provided by these natural landscapes that characterize the City are outlined in the City's Open Space and Conservation Element (OSCE), which is defined by an area's scenic beauty, uniqueness, stature, vastness of scale, and contrast of symmetry.

Project Site

The Project site is located on a vegetated, undeveloped parcel of land that is designated as an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) due to its classification under drainage, Open Space Preserve (OSP), and High-Value Habitat (HVH). The site is in the Fuel Modification Zone (FM) and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ). The Project site is located within the steep hillsides of Laguna Beach, with a direct view to the Pacific Ocean located 0.30 miles south within the Coastal Zone, and an elevational range of 422 to 370 feet above mean sea level (amsl). Situated atop steep hillside slopes characteristic of the region, the proposed driveway along the southern end of the site features slopes ranging from 2 percent to 30.9 percent. The remainder of the Project site features slopes ranging from 30.9 percent to 66 percent.

4.1.2 <u>Regulatory Setting</u>

State

<u>Coastal Act</u>

The California Coastal Act establishes the primary regulatory framework for land and water use planning along the state's coastal zone, with the overarching goal of protecting coastal resources while allowing for orderly and balanced development. The Act prioritizes public access to the shoreline, protection of environmentally sensitive habitat areas, preservation of scenic and visual resources, and maintenance of coastal-dependent and coastal-related uses. It also seeks to minimize risks from coastal hazards such as erosion, flooding, and sea level rise. Implementation of the Coastal Act is carried out by the California Coastal Commission and, in certain areas, by local governments through certified Local Coastal Programs (LCPs), which must be consistent with Coastal Act policies. Any development within the coastal zone generally requires a coastal development permit to ensure that proposed activities conform to these policies and do not adversely affect coastal resources or public access.

Section 30251 of the California Coastal Act (Public Resources Code) addresses the protection of scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas. It requires that the scenic and visual character of coastal resources be considered and protected as a public resource of statewide significance. Permitted development must be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, minimize alteration of natural landforms, be visually compatible with the surrounding area, and, where feasible, restore visual quality in visually degraded areas. The section emphasizes that development should not significantly degrade the visual character of the coastline and should respect the unique aesthetic qualities that define California's coastal environment.

City of Laguna Beach Local Coastal Program (LCP)

The City's Local Coastal Program (LCP) was certified by the California Coastal Commission on January 13, 1993 (City 2025d). The LCP delegates the Coastal Development Permit (CDP) authority from the Coastal Commission to the City. However, the following areas that are not covered by the LCP, in which the CDP reviews remain under the Coastal Commission's jurisdiction: Blue Lagoon, Lower Irvine Cove, and Three Arch Bay. The Project site is subject to the City's LCP.

The City's LCP is comprised of a variety of planning documents including, but not limited to, the Land Use Element (LUE), Open Space/Conservation Element, Coastal Technical Appendix, and Fuel Modification Guidelines (of the Safety General Element of the City's General Plan).

As discussed in the Coastal Technical Appendix, a supporting document of the City's LCP, scenic and visual resource policies associated with the City's LCP are implemented in the Land Use Element and the Open Space/Conservation Element of the City's General Plan (City 1984). Table 4.1-1 addresses the Project's conformance with applicable policies.

<u>Senate Bill 1467</u>

Senate Bill 1467 established the Scenic Highway Program. SB 1467 declares: "The development of scenic highways will not only add to the pleasure of the residents of this state, but will also play an important role in encouraging the growth of the recreation and tourist industries upon which the economy of many users of this State depends."

<u>California Scenic Highway Program</u>

The California Scenic Highway Program, created in 1963 by the California legislature, is managed by Caltrans. The goal of the program is to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from changes that would negatively impact the aesthetic quality of lands that are adjacent to highways. Caltrans defines a scenic highway as any freeway, highway, roadway, or other public right-of-way that passes through an area of valuable scenic quality. Qualification for designation as a State Scenic Highway is based on vividness, intactness, and unity.

The State Scenic Highway System includes a list of highways that are either eligible for designation as scenic highways or have been officially designated. The nearest officially designated State Scenic Highway is a portion of State Route (SR) 91, approximately 22 miles north of the Project site. The nearest eligible

State Scenic Highway is a portion of SR 1, located approximately 0.3 miles southwest from the Project site (Caltrans 2024).

Laguna Beach General Plan

The General Plan contains policies for the protection and conservation of scenic resources, open spaces within the Planning Area, and guidance for the design of new development. The Open Space and Conservation Element (OSCE), Landscape and Scenic Highways Element (LSHE), and the Land Use Element (LUE) of the General Plan provide specific goals and objectives for maintaining and protecting the aesthetic character of the region. Table 4.1-1 analyzes the consistency of the Project with specific policies contained in the General Plan associated with aesthetics.

To ensure alignment with previously documented planning considerations (City 2019d), the “Analysis” columns in Table 4.1-1 incorporate relevant concerns and recommendations identified in the City’s 2019 Planning Commission Staff Report.

Laguna Beach Municipal Code

The City’s Municipal Code (LBMC) serves to implement policies outlined in the City’s General Plan. The Proposed Project is subject to multiple provisions of the LBMC. Relevant LBMC sections are included below to ensure future residential development does not impair scenic resources and visual character:

- **LBMC Section 25.05.040(G): Design Guidelines.** "Design Guidelines" is a publication that has been developed by the City to assist designers in understanding the Design Review criteria. These guidelines complement the zoning regulations provided for in this Title by providing conceptual examples of potential design solutions and design interpretations. The guidelines are general and may be utilized with flexibility in their application to specific projects.
- **LBMC Section 25.05.040(H)(16): Design Review Criteria.** The development, including its landscaping, shall be designed to protect existing views from neighboring properties without denying the subject property the reasonable opportunity to develop as described and illustrated in the City’s “Design Guidelines.” The “Design Guidelines” are intended to balance preservation of views with the right to develop property.
- **LBMC Chapter 25.10 R-1 Residential Low Density Zone, Section 25.10.002 Intent and Purpose.** All new development in this zone shall be compatible with the immediate residential neighborhood with respect to scale, mass and height. The purpose of this zone is to allow low-profile, single-family residences that preserve existing public and private views and minimize building mass and bulk in a manner that is sensitive to their terrain and to environmental constraints.
- **LBMC Chapter 12.16.030: Criteria for determining significant view impairment.** The determination of a significant or egregious view impairment shall be made by evaluating and balancing the types and benefits of the view to be protected and the nature and significance of the vegetation benefits.
- **LBMC Section 25.50.040 Environmentally sensitive areas.** Buildings, structures and improvements within "environmentally sensitive areas," and on lots of greater than thirty-percent slope shall be subject to design review. Additional building setbacks, open areas and/or other conditions may be imposed as a result of said design review. Development on lots of greater than thirty-percent slope shall be conditioned to require an offer to dedicate an open space deed restriction or open space easement consistent with Policy 14-J of the certified land use plan. An

open space easement rather than a deed restriction shall be required in cases where the open space area is contiguous with another dedicated open space parcel. These environmentally sensitive areas are shown on a map adopted by resolution of the city council.

- **LBMC Section 25.10.008 Property Development Standards. T**he following property development standards shall apply to all land and structures in the R-1 zone:

  (D) Building Height.

  (1) No new building, additions to existing buildings or structures in this zone shall have a height greater than permitted under the following table when measured from the finished or natural grade, whichever is more restrictive:

Slope in Percent	Height Permitted (in feet)
0 to 15	25
16	26
17	27
18	28
19	29
20 and over	30

  (2) Through Lots. On a through lot, height shall be measured from the higher curb or street centerline.

  (3) In addition to (D)(1) above, building height shall be limited to the following:

Rear Lot Line Above Street (slope in percent)	Height Permitted Above Rear Lot Line (in feet)
0 to 5	25
5+ to 10	20
Over 10	15

Through Lot (slope in percent)	Height Permitted Above Upper Curb Elevation (in feet)
0 to 5	25
5+ to 10	22.5
10+ to 15	20
15+ to 20	17.5
Over 20	15
Rear Lot Line Below Street **(slope in percent)**	**Height Permitted Above Curb Elevation** **(in feet)**
0 to 5	25
5+ to 10	22.5
10+ to 15	20
15+ to 20	17.5
Over 20	15

Laguna Beach Design Guidelines

Adopted in December 2010, the City's Design Guidelines provide an overview of the design review criteria for residential development to maintain the unique, small-village atmosphere of the community. As noted above, LBMC Section 25.05.040(H)(16) establishes "View Equity" to "balance preservation of views with the right to develop property." As such, residential development is encouraged to be built in a way that integrates into the natural hillside topography to reduce visual mass and preserve the natural character of the hillside.

Table 4.1-1: General Plan Consistency

General Plan Policies	Consistency Determination	Analysis
Land Use Element		

Table 4.1-1: General Plan Consistency

General Plan Policies	Consistency Determination	Analysis
Policy 2.7: Evaluate the impact of proposed development on hillsides and along ridgelines and require building design, location, and arrangement to avoid continuous and intrusive impacts on hillside view areas and skyline profiles. *Policy 2.8:* Require building design and siting to be compatible and integrated with natural topographic features, minimize significant alteration of natural topography and/or other significant onsite resources, and protect public views as specified in the *Design Guidelines* and the *Landscape and Scenic Highways Resource Document.*	Consistent	The proposed single-family residence would be terraced into the existing hillside, minimizing its visual mass and enhancing integration with the natural topography. This building design approach helps to reduce the intrusive impacts on hillside view areas from surrounding public vantage points. See Analyses for *Policy 7A* regarding viewshed preservation.
Open Space and Conservation Element		
Policy 7A: Preserve to the maximum extent feasible the quality of public views from the hillsides and along the City's shoreline.	Consistent	The Proposed Project is situated near the top of a canyon wall, within areas characterized by average slopes of approximately 40 to 70 percent. Due to the site's prominent location and potential visibility from surrounding public vantage points. Given the Proposed Project's distance from scenic vistas, lower elevation, and compliance with applicable R-1 zoning and height limits, public views from the hillside would not be impaired.
Policy 7K: Preserve as much as possible the natural character of the landscape (including coastal bluffs, hillsides and ridgelines) by requiring proposed development plans to preserve and enhance scenic and conservation values to the maximum extent possible, to minimize impacts on soil mantle, vegetation cover, water resources, physiographic features, erosion problems, and require recontouring and replanting where the natural landscape has been disturbed.	Inconsistent	The City's General Plan OSCE notes that close to one-third of the City consists of undeveloped hillside lands that contribute to a "great diversity of visual resources," particularly hillsides with "noticeably steep slopes." Proposed grading activities would involve approximately 1,038.56 cubic yards of cut and 0.47 cubic yards of fill, resulting in approximately 1,038 cubic yards of material exported off-site. The Project's proposed fill and road extension would collectively alter the existing steep hillside topography, resulting in a significant disruption to its natural character. Specifically, cutting into the upper and sloped portions of the canyon to accommodate a single-

Table 4.1-1: General Plan Consistency

General Plan Policies	Consistency Determination	Analysis
		family residential development would visibly recontour the ridgeline and canyon face, replacing an uninterrupted natural landform with engineered slopes and structural elements that would be readily apparent from surrounding viewpoints
Policy 14F: Require grading projects to minimize earth-moving operations and encourage preservation for the natural topographic land features.	Inconsistent	The conceptual plans for the single-family dwelling convey an intent to step the multi-level residence with the slope as intended by OSCE *Policy 14F*. The terraced design of the multi-level residence would reduce the appearance of mass and better integrate the structure with the surrounding open space. However, due to the steep canyon topography, this results in construction within an area exceeding a 45-percent grade, inconsistent with *Policy 14A* and *Policy 14B*.
Policy 14K: The conversion of vacant hillside land into various types of urban development creates inescapable side effects that can potentially damage the natural environment. In order to minimize such effects, new construction and grading should not create undesirable encroachments into undeveloped hillside areas.	Inconsistent	Close to one-third of the City consists of undeveloped hillside lands that contribute to a “great diversity of visual resources,” particularly hillsides with “noticeably steep slopes.” The Proposed Project would encroach into an undeveloped hillside area with 40- to 70-percent average slopes, significantly altering the natural environment (e.g., fill and road extension).

4.1.3 Thresholds of Significance

In order to assist in determining whether a project would have a significant effect on the environment, the Lead Agency utilizes the State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Checklist.

Appendix G states that a project may be deemed to have an aesthetic impact if it would:

Threshold (a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

Threshold (c) **In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of 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?**

Please refer to **Section 6.1: Effects Found Not to Be Significant** for an evaluation of those topics that were determined to be less than significant or have no impact and do not require further analysis in the EIR**.**

4.1.4 Methodology

The assessment of Project-related aesthetic impacts involved reviewing applicable state, regional, and local regulations, including state planning and zoning laws (California Government Code Section 65300 et seq. and California Government Code Section 65800 et seq.). An in-depth analysis of the Project's consistency with the City's General Plan Elements – Land Use, Open Space Conservation, and Land Use and Scenic Highways – is provided in Table 4.1-1.

4.1.5 Project Impact Analysis

Threshold (a) **Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?**

Less than Significant Impact. The Laguna Beach General Plan includes an Open Space and Conservation Element (OCSE), adopted in 1984 and most recently updated in 2005. Topic 7: Visual Resources of OSCE includes a collection of policies that address potential adverse effects of development on a natural hillside setting, including the scenic environment. The OSCE notes that nearly 30% of the City consists of undeveloped hillside lands, supporting a great diversity of scenic resources with prominent exposure from both public and private property, including:

- Unique topographic forms – vertically exposed rock faces, bluffs, headlands, and noticeably steep slopes;
- Special land features such as prominent ridgelines, escarpments and rock outcroppings; and,
- Visual edges or boundaries of contrasting features where rock outcroppings may meet with surrounding vegetation or man-made features such as roads and buildings.

The following analysis focuses on whether the Proposed Project would block or change public views of these features from parks, trails, or other public vantage points. The Proposed Project is located within an existing neighborhood and would result in a road extension to create a new building site and the potential future construction of a new single-family residence. The Project site is zoned for Residential Low-Density Zone (R-1) and is within a 'Village Low Density' General Plan land use designation (City 2024a).

The Project area is not designated as a scenic corridor under the General Plan but there are nearby publicly accessible parks, scenic viewpoints and highways, and trailheads. Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park is located approximately 3 miles east of the Project site and has multiple publicly accessible scenic viewpoints and close to 30 trailheads within 4,500 acres of wilderness and open space land. Nearby scenic viewpoints located within Aliso Wood Canyons Wilderness Park include Aliso Peak (1.63 miles south at 683 ft amsl), Top of Meadows Trail (0.96 miles north at 817 ft amsl), Top of Moulton Peak (3.55 miles north at 890 ft amsl), and Top of the World (2.14 miles north at 1,036 ft amsl), located at the south edge of West Ridge Trail. Additionally, the nearest eligible State Scenic Highway is State Route (SR) 1, Pacific

Coast Highway, located 0.3 miles southwest of the Project site (Google 2025; Caltrans 2024). The nearest officially designated State scenic highway is a portion of State Route (SR) 91, approximately 22 miles north of the Project site (Caltrans 2024).

Given the Proposed Project's distance from scenic vistas and lower elevation (422 to 370 ft amsl), the road extension and residential development would not impair the viewshed.

The Project's architectural design (i.e., terraced form with planting strips) would be reviewed for consistency with the City's *Design Guidelines* and with the character of the surrounding neighborhood in terms of mass and scale (City 2010). The surrounding area includes residences that commonly exhibit terraced designs with multiple stories, balconies, and siting on steep slopes of approximately 20 percent, reflecting a California Coastal Contemporary style. Pursuant to LBMC 25.05.040(H)(16), the Project would be subject to discretionary review and approval by the Design Review Board (see Threshold c below), which would evaluate the Project's consistency with applicable design guidelines and neighborhood character.

Therefore, the Proposed Project would not introduce any incompatible uses that would block or significantly alter existing public views from nearby parks, trails, scenic highways, or designated vista points. Impacts would be less than significant.

Threshold (c) **In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of 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?

Less than Significant Impact. Visual character defines the overall look and feel of an area, including building styles and proper integration of development into the natural environment. As noted above in Section a), the Proposed Project is located in a residential area surrounded by undeveloped hillsides. The following analysis will assess if the Proposed Project would be consistent with both the visual character of the surrounding neighborhood and hillside landscape.

Visual Character

Refer to Table 4.1-1 General Plan Consistency above for the details of the Proposed Project's consistency with policies related to scenic resources.

LUE Policy 2.7 and 2.8 evaluate the impact of proposed development on hillsides and require design to minimize significant alteration of natural topography, respectively. The proposed single-family residence would be terraced into the existing hillside, minimizing its visual mass and enhancing integration with the natural topography. This building design approach helps to reduce the intrusive impacts on hillside view areas from surrounding public vantage points. These design features demonstrate compliance with the City's Design Guidelines and LBMC Design Criteria, Section 25.41.008(C) to maintain the visual character of the surrounding hillsides.

OSCE Policy 7K requires development to preserve the natural character of hillsides and ridgelines by minimizing grading and protecting scenic and conservation values. The Project does not conform to this policy because it proposes extensive grading (approximately 1,038 cubic yards of cut material exported off-site) and a road extension that would substantially alter the existing steep hillside. Cutting into the upper and sloped portions of the canyon to accommodate a single-family residence would visibly recontour the ridgeline and canyon face, replacing an uninterrupted natural landform with engineered slopes and structural elements, thereby disrupting the natural character and visual resources of the hillside identified in the General Plan.

OSCE Policy 14F requires grading projects to minimize earth-moving activities and preserve natural topographic features. The project is inconsistent with this policy because, although the conceptual plans show a stepped, terraced multi-level residence intended to follow the slope and reduce perceived mass, the steep canyon conditions necessitate construction and grading within areas exceeding a 45-percent grade. As a result, the project would require substantial disturbance of natural landforms, conflicting with the policy's objective to minimize grading and preserve existing topography, and is also inconsistent with OSCE Policy 14A and Policy 14B.

OSCE Policy 14K recognizes that development of vacant hillside land can damage the natural environment and therefore requires new construction and grading to avoid undesirable encroachments into undeveloped hillside areas. The Project is inconsistent with this policy because it would encroach into an undeveloped hillside with average slopes ranging from 40 to 70 percent, resulting in substantial alteration of the natural environment through grading, fill, and a road extension.

Given the OSCE Element of the General Plan is a component of the City's LCP, the Project inherently conflicts with the LCP due to its inconsistency with OSCE policies 7k, 14F, and 14K.

Zoning and Regulations

As described in Section 4.1.1 Existing Environmental Setting, the Project site is located in a residential, urbanized area surrounded by undeveloped canyon land. The Project site is zoned for Residential Low-Density Zone (R-1) and has a General Plan Land Use designation of 'Village Low Density' (City 2024a).

The table below analyzes the Project's conformance with zoning standards based on proposed site plans for the future single-family residence.

Table 4.1-2: Project Zoning Compliance

Description	Required/Allowed	Existing	After Proposed Development	Conforms?
Use	Single Family Development	Vacant	Single Family Development	Yes
Zone	R-1	R-1	R-1	Yes
Code	City Municipal Code Chapter 25.10	-	City Municipal Code Chapter 25.10	No
Lot Area	6,000 SF	7,174 SF	7,174 SF	Yes
Lot Width (Avg)	70'	79'-9"	79'-9"	Yes
Lot Depth (Avg)	80'	89'-11'	89'-11'	Yes
Lot Slope (LBMC 25.08.034, "Slope in percent")	-	2.86%	No Change	N/A

Max Building Height	25’ above higher curb or street centerline elevation	0	22’-6" above centerline elevation	Yes
Max Height from Grade	**25’**	**0**	**30’**	**No**
Front Yard Setbacks (Juanita Way and Iris Way) (Garage and building)	20’	0	20’	Yes
Side Yard	15.95’ (10% of the average lot width)	0	15.95’	Yes
Lot Coverage	2,644.24 SF (36.8% of the lot area)	0	2,174.05 SF (30.30% of the lot area)	Yes
Landscape Open Space	1,1634.95 (22.79% of lot area)	7,174 SF (100% of lot area)	3,570.57 SF (49.77% of the lot area)	Yes
Parking	2 covered spaces	0	2 covered spaces	Yes

Notes:
Avg = Average
Max = Maximum
SF = Square Feet

Section 25.10.008 of the LBMC regulates building height for R-1 development based on the “slope in percent” as defined in LBMC Section 25.08.034.. Based on the Applicant’s site plans for the single-family residence, the slope in percent for the Project site is approximately 2.86%, which corresponds to a maximum permitted height of 25 feet. Given the Applicant’s site plans proposed a building that would be 30 feet in height, the Proposed Project would not comply with this zoning restriction and would require a variance from the City.

In the City, all residential development is reviewed by the Design Review Board (DRB) pursuant to Chapter 25.05 of the Laguna Beach Municipal Code. The DRB is vested with discretionary authority to require project modifications, impose conditions of approval, and deny projects that do not adequately protect scenic quality, neighborhood character, and public views.

The Design Review process requires findings that a project is compatible with the site, surrounding development, and natural landforms, and that it minimizes visual impacts through building articulation, grading design, materials, colors, landscaping, and massing. Through this process, the DRB may require reductions in building height or bulk, modification of retaining walls, enhanced terracing, revegetation with native species, or other design refinements specifically aimed at protecting public views and reducing visual contrast with the hillside landscape. Compliance with these conditions is mandatory and enforceable.

Although the Proposed Project currently does not fully conform to certain scenic resource policies and zoning standards, including height limitations that would require a variance, the City’s discretionary design review authority provides a mechanism to ensure that the final project design would be visually subordinate to the surrounding landscape, consistent with community character, and complies with all applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. With implementation of DRB-required design modifications and conditions of approval, the Project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views when viewed from publicly accessible vantage points.

Therefore, while the Project presents potential visual sensitivity due to its hillside location, the availability and application of the City's discretionary Design Review process would reduce visual impacts to a level that is less than significant under CEQA.

4.1.6 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are defined in CEQA as "two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15355). Stated in another way, "a cumulative impact consists of an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing relating impacts" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 (a)(1)).

The geographic scope for the analysis of cumulative impacts on aesthetic resources includes the local viewshed within a one-mile radius of the Project site. Table 3.0-1, Related Projects identify the related projects considered for this cumulative impact analysis, which consist primarily of hotel projects, capital improvement projects, and utility undergrounding projects within a one-mile radius of the Project site.

Local cumulative effects could occur in the immediate Project viewshed if related projects, activities, and landscapes are visible in the same field of view as the Proposed Project and could generally be visible from the Proposed Project area. Beyond one mile, structures become less distinct or not visible because they blend sufficiently with background forms, colors, and textures. Also, beyond one mile, it is likely that sight lines will become impaired or blocked by intervening terrain and vegetation.

The Proposed Project would not impact scenic vistas from the surrounding Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park, located approximately 3 miles east of the Project site, or the view from SR 1 located one-quarter mile downslope. Although the Project does not conform to the City's height limits, it would be subject to discretionary review and approval by the City of Laguna Beach, including Design Review Board consideration and approval of a height variance, if granted. Through this discretionary process, the City has the authority to require project modifications, impose conditions of approval, or deny the Project to ensure consistency with community character, scenic quality, and applicable design standards. When considered in combination with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable development in the area, adherence to these discretionary review processes would limit the Project's contribution to cumulative visual impacts, and the Project would not result in a cumulatively considerable degradation of scenic resources or visual character..

4.1.7 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required, as all Project impacts regarding aesthetics are less than significant.

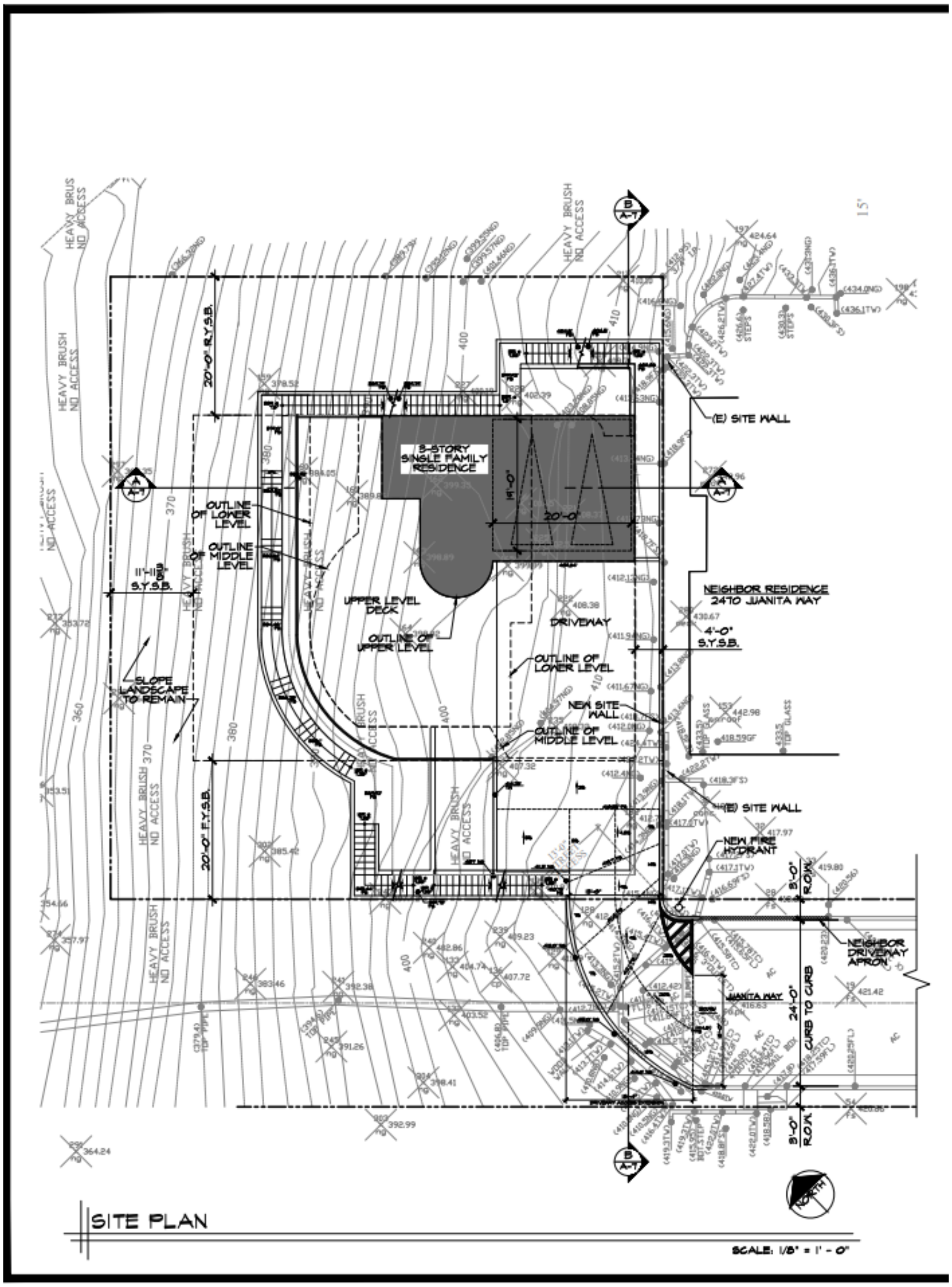
4.1.8 Level of Significance After Mitigation

No mitigation measures are required; thus, impacts related to aesthetics would remain less than significant.

FIGURES

Figure 4-1

2023 site plan includes the driveway and road extension to 2400 Juanita Way.



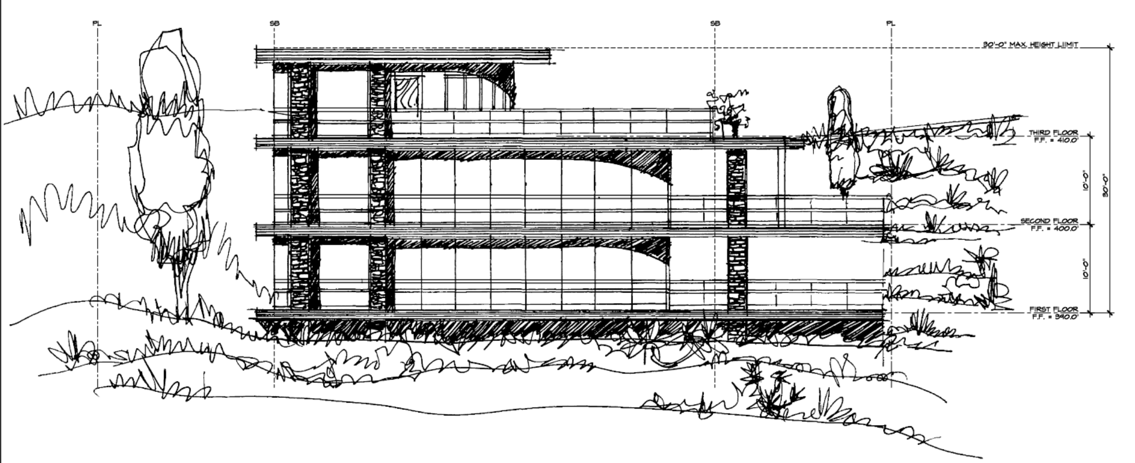


Figure 4-2

2023 site plan north elevation viewpoint depicting terraced design with planting strips.

Figure 4-3

Project site location and vicinity map.

4.2 AIR QUALITY

This section provides information on ambient air quality conditions in the vicinity of the Project site and identifies potential impacts to air quality as a result of the construction and operation of the Project. Information contained in this section is from the *Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Consumption Technical Memorandum,* dated November 14, 2025, prepared by Vista Environmental (Appendix B). This analysis follows the SCAQMD recommendations for preparing a GHG emissions analysis under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

4.2.1 Existing Environmental Setting

Regional Air Quality

The Project site is located in the City of Laguna Beach in south Orange County, which is part of the South Coast Air Basin (SCAB). The SCAB includes all of Orange County, as well as the non-desert portions of Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Bernardino counties. The SCAB is located on a coastal plain connecting broad valleys and low hills to the east. Regionally, the SCAB is bounded by the Pacific Ocean to the southwest and high mountains to the east forming the inland perimeter. The Project site is located toward the northeast portion of the SCAB near the foot of the San Bernardino Mountains, which define the eastern boundary of the SCAB.

Air Pollutants of Concern

Criteria Air Pollutants

Federal and State laws regulate the air pollutants emitted into the ambient air by stationary and mobile sources. These regulated air pollutants are known as criteria air pollutants and are categorized as primary and secondary pollutants. Primary air pollutants are those that are emitted directly from sources. Carbon monoxide (CO), volatile organic compounds (VOC), nitrogen oxides (NOx), sulfur dioxide (SO_2), and most fine particulate matter (PM_{10}, $PM_{2.5}$), including lead (Pb) and fugitive dust, are primary air pollutants. Of these CO, SO_2, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$ are criteria pollutants. VOC and NOx are criteria pollutant precursors and go on to form secondary criteria pollutants through chemical and photochemical reactions in the atmosphere. Ozone (O_3) and nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) are the principal secondary pollutants.

Toxic Air Contaminants

The public's exposure to toxic air contaminants (TACs) is a significant environmental health issue in California. In 1983, the California Legislature enacted a program to identify the health effects of TACs and to reduce exposure to these contaminants to protect the public health. The Health and Safety Code defines a TAC as "an air pollutant which may cause or contribute to an increase in mortality or in serious illness, or which may pose a present or potential hazard to human health." A substance that is listed as a hazardous air pollutant pursuant to subsection (b) of Section 112 of the Federal Act (42 U.S. Code [U.S.C.] Sec. 7412[b]) is a toxic air contaminant. Under State law, the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), acting through the California Air Resources Board (CARB), is authorized to identify a substance as a TAC if it determines the substance is an air pollutant which may cause or contribute to an increase in mortality or an increase in serious illness, or which may pose a present or potential hazard to human health.

Cancer Risk

One of the primary health risks of concern due to exposure to TACs is the risk of contracting cancer. The carcinogenic potential of TACs is a particular public health concern because it is currently believed by many scientists that there is no safe level of exposure to carcinogens; that is, any exposure to a carcinogen poses some risk of causing cancer. Health statistics show that one in three people will contract cancer over their lifetime from all causes, including diet, genetic factors, and lifestyle choices (ACS 2025).

Noncancerous Health Risks
Unlike for carcinogens, it is believed that for most noncarcinogens a threshold level of exposure to the compound exists below which it will not pose a health risk. The CalEPA and California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment have developed reference exposure levels (RELs) for noncarcinogenic TACs that are health-conservative estimates of the levels of exposure at or below which health effects are not expected. The noncancerous health risk due to exposure to a TAC is assessed by comparing the estimated level of exposure to the REL. The comparison is expressed as the ratio of the estimated exposure level to the REL, called the hazard index (HI).

<u>Other Effects on Air Pollution</u>
Just as humans are affected by air pollution, so too are plants and animals. Animals must breathe the same air and are subject to the same types of negative health effects. Certain plants and trees may absorb air pollutants that can stunt their development or cause premature death.

4.2.2 <u>Regulatory Setting</u>

Federal

Clean Air Act

The federal Clean Air Act (CAA), which was initially enacted by the U.S. Congress in 1963 and substantially revised in 1970, 1977 and 1990, can be found in Title 42, Chapter 85 of the United States Code. An important aspect of the CAA is its requirement for the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to establish National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). There are NAAQS in place for seven "criteria" pollutants: carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, particle pollution—further defined as particles having diameters equal to or less than 10 micrometers (PM10) and particles having diameters equal to or less than 2.5 micrometers (PM2.5)—and sulfur dioxide. Standards are classified as primary and secondary. Primary standards are designed to protect public health, including sensitive individuals, such as children and the elderly, whereas secondary standards are designed to protect public welfare, such as visibility and crop or material damage. The EPA sets the NAAQS based on a process that involves science policy workshops, a risk/exposure assessment (REA) that draws on the information and conclusions of the science policy workshops to development quantitative characterizations of exposures and associated risks to human health or the environment, and a policy assessment by EPA staff that bridges the gap between agency scientific assessments and the judgments required of the EPA administrator, who then takes the proposed standards through the federal rulemaking process.

The Clean Air Act requires the EPA to routinely review and update the NAAQS in accordance with the latest available scientific evidence. For example, the EPA revoked the annual PM10 standard in 2006 due to a lack of evidence linking health problems to long-term exposure to PM10 emissions. The 1-hour standard for O3 was revoked in 2005 in favor of a new 8-hour standard that is intended to better protect public health.

CAA Section 182(e)(5) allows the EPA administrator to approve provisions of an attainment strategy in an extreme area that anticipates development of new control techniques or improvement of existing control technologies if the state has submitted enforceable commitments to develop and adopt contingency measures to be implemented if the anticipated technologies do not achieve planned reductions.

Nonattainment areas that are classified as “serious” or “worse” are required to revise their air quality management plans to include specific emission reduction strategies to meet interim milestones in implementing emission controls and improving air quality. The EPA can withhold certain transportation funds from states that fail to comply with the planning requirements of the act. If a state fails to correct these planning deficiencies within two years of federal notification, the EPA is required to develop a Federal Implementation Plan for the identified nonattainment area or areas.

State

California Clean Air Act

The California Clean Air Act of 1988 requires all air pollution control districts in the state to aim to achieve and maintain state ambient air quality standards for O_3, CO, and NO_2 by the earliest practical date and to develop plans and regulations specifying how the districts will meet this goal. There are no planning requirements for the state PM10 standard. CARB, which became part of the California Environmental Protection Agency in 1991, is responsible for meeting state requirements of the federal Clean Air Act, administrating the California Clean Air Act, and establishing the California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS). The California Clean Air Act, amended in 1992, requires all air districts in the state to endeavor to achieve and maintain the CAAQS. The CAAQS are generally stricter than national standards for the same pollutants, but there is no penalty for nonattainment. Similar to the federal process, the standards for the CAAQS are adopted after review by CARB staff of the scientific literature produced by agencies such as the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), the Air Quality Advisory Committee, which is comprised of experts in health sciences, exposure assessment, monitoring methods, and atmospheric sciences appointed by the Office of the President of the University of California, and public review and comment.

State Implementation Plans

An important component of the SCAQMD air quality planning strategy is contained in the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for the State of California. The federal Clean Air Act requires all states to submit a SIP to the EPA. This statewide SIP is often referred to as an “infrastructure” SIP. Infrastructure SIPs are administrative in nature and describe the authorities, resources, and programs a state has in place to implement, maintain, and enforce the federal standards. It does not contain any proposals for emission control measures.

In addition to infrastructure SIPs, the Clean Air Act requires submissions of SIPs for areas that are out of compliance with the NAAQS. These area attainment SIPs are comprehensive plans that describe how an out-of-compliance area will attain and maintain the particular NAAQS standard(s) it does not conform to. Once an out-of-compliance area has attained the standard in question, a maintenance SIP is required for a period of time to ensure the area will continue to meet the standard.

State Implementation Plans are not single documents. They are a compilation of new and previously submitted plans, programs (such as monitoring, modeling, permitting, etc.), district rules, state regulations, and federal controls. Many of California's SIPs rely on the same core set of control strategies, including emission standards for cars and heavy trucks, fuel regulations, and limits on emissions from consumer products. State law makes CARB the lead agency for all purposes related to SIPs. Local air districts and other agencies prepare SIP elements and submit them to CARB for review and approval. CARB forwards those revisions to the EPA for approval and publication in the Federal Register.

California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 13, Article 4.8, Chapter 9, Section 2449

CCR Title 13 § 2449 establishes general requirements for in-use off-road diesel-fueled fleets in California. Its purpose is to reduce emissions of oxides of nitrogen (NOx), diesel particulate matter (PM), and other criteria pollutants from off-road diesel vehicles and engines. The regulation applies to owners/operators of off-road diesel vehicles with engines rated at 25 horsepower or greater that are not designed for on-road use, including certain workover rigs and two-engine vehicles, and also applies to sellers of such vehicles. It sets forth definitions, applicability criteria, labeling, reporting, and compliance obligations for affected fleets to achieve reduced emissions and ensure proper fleet management under the California Air Resources Board's oversight.

The code establishes the following to reduce toxic air contaminants:

- Idling of equipment must be limited to no more than five minutes;
- Equipment operators must label each piece of equipment;
- Equipment operators must provide annual reports to CARB on their fleet's usage and emissions;
- By January 2026, 75 percent or more of all contractors' equipment fleets must be Tier 2 or higher; and
- By January 2029, 100 percent of all equipment fleets must be Tier 2 or higher.

Regional

South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD)

The South Coast Air Quality Management District is the agency principally responsible for comprehensive air pollution control in the Air Basin. To that end, as a regional agency, the SCAQMD works directly with the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), county transportation commissions, and local governments and cooperates actively with all federal and state agencies. SCAQMD develops rules and regulations, establishes permitting requirements for stationary sources, inspects emission sources, and enforces such measures through educational programs or fines, when necessary. SCAQMD is directly responsible for reducing emissions from stationary, mobile, and indirect sources.

Rule 401

Rule 401 prohibits the discharge of particulate emissions that cause visible air contaminants of a specified opacity. Generally, this rule limits visible plumes from stationary sources to prevent excessive smoke and particulate pollution that can degrade local air quality and contribute to nuisance conditions. It is part of SCAQMD's Regulation IV, which encompasses prohibitions against public health and nuisance impacts from stationary source emissions.

Rule 402

SCAQMD Rule 402 prohibits emissions from any source that cause a public nuisance, defined as air contaminants that are injurious to health, offensive to the senses, or interfere with the comfortable enjoyment of life or property. The rule is enforceable even if other specific SCAQMD rules are met, and it serves as a general safeguard to prevent emissions such as dust, smoke, or odors from adversely affecting the public or nearby properties. Compliance with Rule 402 is mandatory for all sources of air pollution under the district's jurisdiction.

Rule 403

Rule 403 requires the implementation of Best Available Control Measures (BACM) to minimize fugitive dust emissions from activities that disturb soil, including grading, excavation, and material handling. Measures such as watering exposed surfaces, covering stockpiles, and limiting disturbed areas are used to prevent particulate matter from becoming airborne. This rule is designed to reduce emissions of PM10 and PM2.5, protect public health, and ensure consistency with regional air quality standards.

Rule 445

Rule 445 regulates wood-burning fireplaces, stoves, and other devices to limit particulate emissions that can affect both local and regional air quality. The rule specifies allowable device types, emission performance standards, and operational restrictions during periods of poor air quality. These measures reduce exposure to particulate matter (PM2.5) and help maintain compliance with air quality standards.

Rule 481

Rule 481 regulates spray painting and spray coating operations to reduce volatile organic compound (VOC) and particulate emissions from coating applications. It sets forth requirements for equipment, controls (such as spray enclosures and transfer efficiency standards), and operational practices to minimize overspray and emissions from these processes, which are common sources of VOCs and toxics in industrial and commercial settings.

Rule 201, 219, and 222

Rule 201 establishes the requirement for a permit to construct any source of air emissions, Rule 219 identifies equipment that does not require a written permit, and Rule 222 establishes filing requirements for exempt equipment. Together, these rules provide a framework to determine whether new or modified emission sources require review, permitting, or registration with SCAQMD. They ensure that stationary equipment and other sources of emissions are properly evaluated for compliance with applicable air quality standards.

Rule 1108

Rule 1108 controls emissions from cutback asphalt, a liquid asphalt cement blended with petroleum solvents. The rule limits the use and application of cutback asphalt in paving and related operations to reduce emissions of reactive organic compounds that contribute to ozone formation. It forms part of Regulation XI (Source-Specific Standards) and requires use of lower-emitting materials or alternatives to traditional cutback asphalt to comply with VOC limits.

Rule 1113

Rule 1113 limits the volatile organic compound (VOC) content of architectural coatings, including paints, primers, and sealants. VOCs contribute to the formation of ground-level ozone and smog in the South Coast Air Basin. The rule establishes maximum VOC content limits and application practices to reduce emissions, supporting regional efforts to maintain air quality and protect public health.

Rule 1143

Rule 1143 limits the VOC content of consumer paint thinners and multi-purpose solvents sold or supplied within the district. The rule applies to manufacturers, suppliers, and users of these products to reduce evaporative emissions that contribute to ozone formation and local air quality degradation. By regulating product formulation, storage, and sale, the rule helps lower VOC emissions associated with everyday solvent use.

Local

City of Laguna Beach Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP)

The City's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) is a strategic framework that outlines how a city, its residents, and businesses will reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and prepare for the impacts of climate change through targeted policies, programs, and actions. It typically includes two major components, including mitigation measures to reduce emissions and adaptation strategies to prepare and respond to climate-related hazards. The City's CAAP includes a greenhouse gas inventory, emissions reduction targets, and sector-based strategies (transportation, energy, waste, etc.), along with an implementation plan.

Laguna Beach General Plan

Relevant City General Plan policies related to air quality are provided below. Table 4.2-1 discusses the Project's consistency with the City's General Plan policies.

Table 4.2-1: General Plan Consistency

General Plan Policies	Consistency with General Plan	Analysis
Open Space and Conservation Element		
Topic 11: Air Quality		
Policy 11-A: Promote the establishment of effective regional, state, and federal standards and programs for control of all airborne pollutants and noxious odors, regardless of source.	Consistent	The regional plan that applies to the Proposed Project includes the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP). As shown in Table 4.2-3 and Table 4.2-4, all construction and operational emissions associated with the Proposed Project would be well below SCAQMD thresholds for local and regional emissions.

4.2.3 Thresholds of Significance

In order to assist in determining whether a project would have a significant effect on the environment, the City utilizes the State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Checklist. Appendix G states that a project may be deemed to have an air quality impact if it would:

Threshold a) **Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?**

Threshold b) **Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard?**

Threshold c) **Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?**

Threshold d) **Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?**

Please refer to **Section 6.1: Effects Found Not to Be Significant** for an evaluation of those topics that were determined to be less than significant or have no impact and do not require further analysis in the EIR**.**

4.2.4 Methodology

The criteria pollutants and GHG emissions impacts created by the Proposed Project have been analyzed through use of the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) Version 2022.1.1.32 CalEEMod is a computer model published by the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) for estimating air pollutant and GHG emissions. The CalEEMod program uses the EMFAC2021 computer program to calculate the emission rates specific for Orange County for employee, vendor and haul truck vehicle trips and the OFFROAD2017-ORION v1.0.1 model to calculate emission rates for heavy equipment operations. The OFFROAD2007 and OFFROAD2011 models were also utilized to determine the "Horsepower" and "Load Factor" for the default construction equipment. EMFAC2021 and all versions of OFFROAD computer models are generated by CARB that calculates composite emission rates for vehicles. Emission rates are reported by the program in grams per trip and grams per mile or grams per running hour.

The Proposed Project characteristics in the CalEEMod model were set to a project location of Orange County, utility companies of Southern California Edison and Southern California Gas (with 2027 forecast factors) and a project opening year of 2027.

4.2.5 Project Impact Analysis

Threshold a) **Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?**

Less than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project consists of the extension of Juanita Way by 18.5 linear feet of road surface to facilitate the creation of a new building site and the potential future construction of a new single-family residence at 2400 Juanita Way, which is a 7,174 square foot lot located adjacent to the northeast side of the current terminus of Juanita Way. The proposed home would include 3,482 square feet of living area, 462 square feet of garage and mechanical space, approximately 1,430 square feet of hardscaped area, and 1,635 square feet of landscaped area. The proposed road extension is anticipated to disturb up to 1,500 square feet and would include demolition of the existing storm drain system at the road terminus, grading of the road extension area, installation of utilities, construction of a new road terminus storm drain system as well as paving the new road area and repaving the portion of the existing road that was disturbed.

Implementation of the Proposed Project could potentially result in air quality impacts during project construction and operation. Construction air quality impacts would potentially include emissions from construction exhaust and travel, demolition and earth-moving activities, architectural coatings, and asphalt paving. Operational air quality impacts would potentially include emissions from mobile sources (from vehicles and road dust), area sources (from consumer products, architectural coatings, and landscaping equipment), and energy usage (from natural gas usage).

SQAMD AQMP. CEQA requires a discussion of any inconsistencies between the Proposed Project and applicable general plans, specific plans, and regional plans (CEQA Guidelines Section 15125). The regional plan that applies to the Proposed Project includes the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP). To estimate if the Proposed Project may adversely affect the air quality in the region, the SCAQMD has prepared the CEQA Air Quality Handbook (SCAQMD 1993) to provide guidance to those who analyze the air quality impacts of proposed projects. The SCAQMD CEQA Air Quality Handbook states that any project in the Air Basin with daily emissions that exceed any of the identified significance thresholds should be considered as having an individually and cumulatively significant air quality impact.

For the purposes of this air quality impact analysis, a regional air quality impact would be considered significant if emissions exceed the SCAQMD significance thresholds identified in Table 4.2-2.

Table 4.2-2: SCAQMD Regional Criteria Pollutant Emission Thresholds of Significance

	Pollutant Emissions (pounds/day)					
	VOC	NOx	CO	SOx	PM10	PM2.5
Construction	75	100	550	150	150	55
Operation	55	55	550	150	150	55

Source: https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/ceqa/handbook/south-coast-aqmd-air-quality-significance-thresholds.pdf?sfvrsn=25

In order to assess local air quality impacts the SCAQMD has developed Localized Significant Thresholds (LSTs) to assess the project-related air emissions in the project vicinity. SCAQMD has also provided Final Localized Significance Threshold Methodology (LST Methodology), July 2008, which details the methodology to analyze local air emission impacts. The LST Methodology found that the primary emissions of concern are NO_2, CO, PM10, and PM2.5.

The Look-Up Tables include site acreage sizes of 1-acre, 2-acres and 5-acres. The Project site is approximately 0.23 acre, which is closest to the 1-acre project site shown in the Look-Up Tables that has been utilized in this analysis. The project site is located in Air Monitoring Area 20, Central Orange County Coastal. The nearest sensitive receptor to the Project site is a single-family home located as near as three feet (0.9 meter) southeast of the Project site. According to LST Methodology, any receptor located closer than 25 meters (82 feet) shall be based on the 25-meter thresholds. Table 4.2-3 below shows the NOx, CO, PM10, and PM2.5 for both construction and operational activities.

Table 4.2-3: SCAQMD Local Air Quality Thresholds of Significance

Activity	Allowable Emissions[1] (pounds/day)			
	NOx	CO	PM10	PM2.5
Construction	92	647	4	3
Operation	92	647	1	1

Notes:
[1] The nearest sensitive receptor to the project site is a single-family home located as near as 3 feet (0.9 meters) southeast of the project site. According to SCAQMD methodology, all receptors closer than 25 meters are based on the 25-meter threshold.
Source: Calculated from SCAQMD's Mass Rate Look-up Tables for one acre in Air Monitoring Area 20, Central Orange County Coastal.

Construction-Related Air Quality Impacts

The CalEEMod model has been utilized to calculate construction-related emissions from the Proposed Project. A summary of the daily construction-related criteria pollutant emissions from the Proposed Project is shown below in Table 4.2-4.

Table 4.2-4: Construction-Related Criteria Pollutant Emissions

Season and Year of Construction	Maximum Daily Pollutant Emissions (pounds/day)					
	VOC	NOx	CO	SO_2	PM10	PM2.5
Summer 2025	0.88	8.3	8.4	0.02	1.8	1.0
Winter 2025	5.2	4.9	7.2	0.01	0.41	0.22
Maximum Daily Construction Emissions	**5.2**	**8.3**	**8.4**	**0.02**	**1.8**	**1.0**
SCQAMD Regional Thresholds	**75**	**100**	**550**	**150**	**150**	**55**
SCAQMD Local Thresholds[1]	**--**	**92**	**647**	**--**	**4**	**3**
Exceeds Thresholds?	No	No	No	No	No	No

Notes:
[1] The nearest sensitive receptor to the project site is a single-family home located as near as 3 feet (0.9 meters) southeast of the project site. According to SCAQMD methodology, all receptors closer than 25 meters are based on the 25-meter threshold. Calculated from SCAQMD's Mass Rate Look-up Tables for one acre in Air Monitoring Area 20, Central Orange County Coastal.
[2] Construction timing shown (Summer 2025 and Winter 2025) is illustrative and provided for analytical purposes only. Actual construction start and completion dates may vary and could occur later than shown. Variations in construction timing would not result in a change to the estimated construction emissions, which are based on worst-case daily activity levels and applicable emission factors.
Source: CalEEMod Version 2022.1.

Table 4.2-4 shows that none of the analyzed criteria pollutants would exceed either the regional or local emissions thresholds during construction of the Proposed Project. Therefore, implementation of the Proposed Project would not conflict with the SCAQMD AQMP established air quality thresholds of significance, as the construction phase would result in a less than significant regional and local air quality impact. Impacts would be less than significant.

Operational Air Quality Impacts

The Proposed Project would generate air emissions from area sources, energy usage, and from project-generated vehicle trips. The operations-related criteria air quality impacts created by the Proposed Project have been analyzed through use of the CalEEMod model. CalEEMod calculates maximum daily emissions for the summer and winter periods. The worst-case summer or winter VOC, NOx, CO, SO2, PM10, and

PM2.5 daily emissions created from the proposed project's long-term operations are summarized below and the CalEEMod emissions printouts are attached to Appendix B.

Table 4.2-5 Operation-Related Criteria Pollutant Emissions

Emissions Source	Pollutant Emissions (pounds/day)					
	ROG	NOx	CO	SO_2	PM10	PM2.5
Mobile Sources[1]	0.03	0.03	0.29	<0.01	0.08	0.02
Area Sources[2]	0.10	0.02	0.06	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
Energy Usage[3]	<0.01	0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
Total Operational Emissions	**0.13**	**0.06**	**0.35**	**<0.01**	**0.08**	**0.02**
SCQAMD Regional Thresholds	**75**	**55**	**550**	**150**	**150**	**55**
SCAQMD Local Thresholds[4]	**--**	**92**	**647**	**--**	**1**	**1**
Exceeds Thresholds?	No	No	No	No	No	No

Notes:
[1] Mobile sources consist of emissions from vehicles and road dust.
[2] Area sources consist of emissions from consumer products, architectural coatings, and landscaping equipment.
[3] Energy usage consists of emissions from natural gas usage.
[4] The nearest sensitive receptor to the project site is a single-family home located as near as 3 feet (0.9 meters) southeast of the project site. According to SCAQMD methodology, all receptors closer than 25 meters are based on the 25-meter threshold. Calculated from SCAQMD's Mass Rate Look-up Tables for one acre in Air Monitoring Area 20, Central Orange County Coastal.
Source: CalEEMod Version 2022.1.

The data provided in the table above shows that none of the analyzed criteria pollutants would exceed either the regional or local emissions thresholds during operation of the Proposed Project. Therefore, a less than significant regional and local air quality impact would occur from operation of the Proposed Project.

Threshold b) **Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard?**

Less than Significant Impact. As described in 4.2.1 Existing Environmental Setting, federal and state laws regulate the air pollutants emitted into the ambient air by stationary and mobile sources, known as criteria air pollutants. Criteria air pollutants are categorized into primary and secondary air pollutants. Primary air pollutants are emitted directly from sources, including volatile organic compounds (VOC), nitrogen oxides (NOx), carbon monoxide (CO), sulfur dioxide (SO_2), and most fine particulate matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$). Of these CO, SO_2, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$ are criteria pollutants. VOC and NOx are criteria pollutant precursors and go on to form secondary criteria pollutants through chemical and photochemical reactions in the atmosphere.

As discussed above in Section a), the CalEEMod model utilized to calculate construction-related emissions from the Proposed Project shows that none of the analyzed criteria pollutants (including VOC, Nox, CO, SO_2, PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$) would not exceed either the regional or local emissions thresholds during the construction phase and during operations. Therefore, Project construction and operations would result in a less than significant regional and local air quality impact. Impacts would be less than significant.

Threshold c) **Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?**

Less than Significant Impact. Sensitive receptors are generally defined as facilities that house or attract groups of children, the elderly, people with illnesses, or others who are especially sensitive to the effects of air pollution. Schools, hospitals, residential areas, and convalescent facilities are examples of sensitive receptors. The closest sensitive receptors are two homes located immediately adjacent to the Project site. The Proposed Project may potentially result in short-term construction and permanent operational air pollutant emissions of particulate matter, carbon monoxide, reactive organic gases, oxides of nitrogen, and toxic air contaminants.

Construction-Related Toxic Air Contaminant Impacts

According to the *Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Consumption Technical Memorandum*, the greatest potential for toxic air contaminant emissions would be related to diesel particulate matter (DPM) emissions associated with heavy equipment operations during construction of the Proposed Project.

According to SCAQMD methodology, health effects from carcinogenic air toxics are usually described in terms of "individual cancer risk," which determines the likelihood that a person exposed to concentrations of toxic air contaminants over a 70-year lifetime will contract cancer, based on the use of standard risk-assessment methodology. It should be noted that the most current cancer risk assessment methodology recommends analyzing a 30-year exposure period for the nearby sensitive receptors (OEHHA, 2015).

Additionally, the California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 13, Article 4.8, Chapter 9, Section 2449 regulates emissions from off-road diesel equipment in California, which establishes the following to reduce toxic air contaminants:

- Idling of equipment must be limited to no more than five minutes;
- Equipment operators must label each piece of equipment;
- Equipment operators must provide annual reports to CARB on their fleet's usage and emissions;
- By January 2026, 75 percent or more of all contractors' equipment fleets must be Tier 2 or higher; and
- By January 2029, 100 percent of all equipment fleets must be Tier 2 or higher.

Given the relatively limited number of pieces of heavy-duty construction equipment, the varying distances that construction equipment would operate to the nearby sensitive receptors (located as near as 3 feet southeast of the Project site), and the short-term, 7-month-long construction schedule, the Proposed Project would not result in a long-term (i.e., 30 or 70 years) substantial source of toxic air contaminant emissions and corresponding individual cancer risk. Therefore, construction of the proposed project would result in a less than significant exposure of sensitive receptors to substantial TAC pollutant concentrations.

Threshold d) **Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?**

Less than significant impact. Individual responses to odor or dust emissions are highly variable and can result in a variety of effects. Generally, the impacts from odor or dust emissions result from a variety of factors such as frequency, intensity, duration, offensiveness, location, and sensory perception. The frequency is a measure of how often an individual is exposed to emissions. The intensity refers to an individual's or a group's perception of the odor or dust emissions strength or concentration. The duration of the emissions refers to the elapsed time over which the emissions are experienced by individuals or groups. The offensiveness of the emissions is the subjective rating of the unpleasantness of the odor or dust. The location accounts for the distance between the source of the emission and the individuals or groups affected by the emissions. Sensory perception refers to an individual's ability to detect and interpret the odor or dust, as well as their overall reaction to it.

Potential sources that may emit odor or dust emissions during construction activities include emissions from demolition and dirt moving activities, diesel equipment emissions, and emissions from building materials that include asphalt pavement, paints, and solvents. The objectionable emissions that may be produced during the construction process would be temporary and would likely not be noticeable for extended periods of time beyond the project site's boundaries.

Odor and dust emissions during construction would be short-term and temporary in nature, occurring only during active construction periods and limited to the operation of the diesel equipment and the use of typical construction materials. These emissions would be intermittent, would vary by construction activity, and would dissipate rapidly with distance from the construction site due to atmospheric dispersion. While nearby residences, particularly those directly adjacent to the Project site, may occasionally detect construction-related odors or dust, such effects would be localized, infrequent, and limited in duration. Construction would comply with applicable SCAQMD regulations, including Rule 403 for fugitive dust control. Accordingly, construction-related odor and dust emissions would not result in a substantial adverse effect on nearby sensitive receptors, and impacts would be less than significant.

The Proposed Project would consist of single-family residential development, a land use that is not typically associated with the generation of substantial or objectionable odors. The Project would not include industrial, agricultural, waste-handling, wastewater treatment, or other activities known to produce persistent odor emissions. Operational activities would be limited to typical residential uses, which are not regulated by SCAQMD as odor-generating sources. Accordingly, the Proposed Project would not generate odors that could adversely affect surrounding land uses, and no significant odor impacts would occur during ongoing operations.

4.2.6 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are defined in CEQA as "two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15355). Stated in another way, "a cumulative impact consists of an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing relating impacts" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 (a)(1)).

Cumulative impacts would exist when either direct air quality impacts or multiple construction projects occur within the same area simultaneously. If a project were to produce air quality emissions simultaneously to a nearby construction project, the addition of both project emissions to the environment could exceed significance thresholds.

The analysis of potential cumulative criteria pollutant impacts has been provided in Threshold a) above. This analysis found that construction activities associated with implementation of the Proposed Project would be below the significance thresholds for all phases of construction activities and that regional emissions associated with the operation of the Proposed Project would be less than the daily significance thresholds. As such, the Proposed Project would create a less than significant cumulative impact to air quality, and no mitigation is required.

4.2.7 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required, as all Project impacts regarding air quality are less than significant.

4.2.8 Level of Significance After Mitigation

Impacts related to air quality would be less than significant. No mitigation measures would be required.

4.3 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

This section provides a background discussion of the regulatory framework, the affected environment, and impacts to biological resources. The regulatory framework discussion focuses on the federal, State, and local regulations that apply to plants, animals and sensitive habitats. The affected environment discussion focuses on the topography and soils; general vegetation; general wildlife; sensitive biological resources; riparian habitat and sensitive natural communities; jurisdictional waters; and habitat connectivity and wildlife corridors. Information contained in this section is summarized from the Biological Technical Report in Appendix C of this EIR.

4.3.1 Existing Environmental Setting

Regional Setting

The City of Laguna is located in southwest Orange County within the Coastal Zone and occupies 8.84 square miles. The Project site is located at 2400 Juanita Way (APN 656-131-04), which is in a residential neighborhood. East of the Project site lies an existing residential neighborhood characterized by dead-end streets bisected by Alta Vista Way and arranged in terraces across a steep hillside slope. The hillside neighborhood is characterized by dense, single-family development with surrounding open space.

Surrounding land uses around the Project site include single-family residences to the south and east, with open space to the north that separates this R-1 neighborhood from the developed portions of the Diamond/Crestview and Arch Beach Heights neighborhoods. The property currently fronts unimproved segments of Juanita and Iris Way and shares a property line with the single-family dwelling located at 2470 Juanita Way.

Project Site

The Project site is located on a vegetated, undeveloped parcel of land that is designated as an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) due to its Drainage, Open Space Preserve (OSP), and High-Value Habitat (HVH) classifications. The site is in the Fuel Modification (FM) Zone and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ). The property is located on a hillside with a significant grade, characterized by rugged terrain typical of the coastal foothills in the region. The proposed driveway along the southern end of the site features slopes ranging from 2 percent to 30.9 percent. The remainder of the Project site features slopes ranging from 30.9 percent to 66 percent. The elevational range within the Project site is 422 to 370 feet above mean sea level (amsl).

Developed areas are present within the Project site and make up approximately 0.02 acres, including an asphalt road at the terminus of Juanita Way along with a cement drainage structure that directs runoff from the road into the adjacent NWI-mapped riverine feature.

4.3.2 Regulatory Setting

Federal

Federal Endangered Species Act

The federal ESA protects federally listed threatened and endangered species and their habitats from unlawful take and ensures that federal actions do not jeopardize the continued existence of a listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat. Under the ESA, “take” is defined as to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct. USFWS regulations define harm to mean “an act which actually kills or injures wildlife” (50 CFR 17.3).

Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) prohibits the kill or transport of native migratory birds, or any part, nest, or egg of any such bird unless allowed by another regulation adopted in accordance with the MBTA. The prohibition applies to birds included in the respective international conventions between the U.S. and Great Britain, the U.S. and Mexico, the U.S. and Japan, and the U.S. and Russia. Disturbances that cause nest abandonment and/or loss of reproductive effort or the loss of habitats upon which these birds depend may be a violation of the MBTA.

Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940

The Bald Eagle Protection Act of 1940 protects bald eagle (Haliaeetus leucocephalus) and golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) by prohibiting the taking, possession, and commerce of such birds and establishes civil penalties for violation of this Act. ‘Take’ is defined as “pursue, shoot, shoot at, poison, wound, kill, capture, trap, collect, molest or disturb.” ‘Disturb’ is defined as “to agitate or bother a bald or golden eagle to a degree that causes, or is likely to cause, based on the best scientific information available: (1) injury to an eagle, (2) a decrease in its productivity, by substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior, or (3) nest abandonment, by substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior” (72 Federal Register [FR] 31132; 50 CFR 22.3). All activities that may disturb or incidentally take an eagle or its nest as a result of an otherwise legal activity must be permitted by the USFWS under this Act.

Section 404 Permit (Clean Water Act)

The Clean Water Act establishes a program to regulate the discharge of dredge and fill material into waters of the U.S., including wetlands. Activities regulated under this program include fills for development, water resource projects (e.g., dams and levees), infrastructure development (e.g., highways and airports), and conversion of wetlands to uplands for farming and forestry. Either an individual 404b permit or authorization to use an existing U.S Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Nationwide Permit will need to be obtained if any portion of the construction requires fill into a river, stream, or stream bed that has been determined to be a jurisdictional waterway.

State

Coastal Act – PRC Section 30231

PRC Section 30231 requires that the biological productivity and water quality of coastal and inland water resources be maintained and, where feasible, restored to support marine life and protect human health by minimizing wastewater impacts, controlling runoff, preventing groundwater depletion and disruption of surface flows, maintaining natural vegetation buffers, and limiting alteration of natural streams.

Coastal Act – PRC Section 30240

PRC section 30240 mandates that environmentally sensitive habitat areas be protected from significant disruption of habitat values, allowing only resource-dependent uses within such areas, and further requires that development adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitat, park, and recreation areas be sited and designed to avoid significant degradation of those resources and to remain compatible with their continued use and preservation.

California Endangered Species Act

Provisions of CESA protect State-listed threatened and endangered species. California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) regulates activities that may result in "take" of individuals ("take" means "hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill"). Habitat degradation or modification is not expressly included in the definition of "take" under California FGC. Additionally, California FGC contains lists of vertebrate species designated as "fully protected" (California FGC §§ 3511 [birds], 4700 [mammals], 5050 [reptiles and amphibians], 5515 [fish]). Such species may not be taken or possessed.

In addition to state-listed species, CDFW has also produced a list of Species of Special Concern to serve as a "watch list." Species on this list are of limited distribution or the extent of their habitats has been reduced substantially such that threats to their populations may be imminent. Species of Special Concern may receive special attention during environmental review, but they do not have statutory protection.

Birds of prey are protected in California under California FGC. Section 3503.5 states it is "unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any birds of prey (in the order Falconiformes or Strigiformes) or to take, possess, or destroy the nest or eggs of any such bird except as otherwise provided by this Code or any regulation adopted pursuant thereto." Construction disturbance during the breeding season could result in the incidental loss of fertile eggs or nestlings or otherwise lead to nest abandonment.

California Fish and Game Code Section 1600 (as amended)

California Fish and Wildlife Code Section 1600 regulates activities that substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow of any river, stream, or lake or use materials from a streambed. This can include riparian habitat associated with watercourses.

California Fish and Game Codes 3503, 3503.5, and 3513

Under Sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3513 of the California FGC, activities that would result in the taking, possessing, or destroying of any birds-of-prey, taking or possessing of any migratory nongame bird as designated by the MBTA, or the taking, possessing, or needlessly destroying of the nest or eggs of any raptors or non-game birds protected by the MBTA, or the taking of any non-game bird pursuant to FGC Section 3800 are prohibited. Additionally, the State further protects certain species of fish, mammals, amphibians and reptiles, birds, and mammals through CDFW's Fully Protected Animals which prohibits any take or possession of classified species.

Native Plant Protection Act (California Fish and Game Code Sections 1900-1913)

California's Native Plant Protection Act prohibits the taking, possessing, or sale within the State of any plant listed by CDFW as rare, threatened, or endangered. This allows CDFW to salvage listed plant species that would otherwise be destroyed.

Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

Under the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, all projects proposing to discharge waste that could affect waters of the State must file a waste discharge report with the appropriate regional board. The Project falls under the jurisdiction of the RWQCB.

California Environmental Quality Act

Title 14 CCR 15380 requires the identification of endangered, rare, or threatened species or subspecies of animals or plants that may be impacted by a project. If any such species are found, appropriate measures should be identified to avoid, minimize, or mitigate the potential effects of projects.

Local

Laguna Beach General Plan

The Open Space and Conservation Element of the General Plan provides detailed plans and measures for the preservation and management of biological and cultural resources, soils, and open space. Table 4.3-1 analyzes the consistency of the Project with specific policies contained in the General Plan associated with biological resources.

To ensure alignment with previously documented planning considerations (City 2019d) the "Analysis" columns in Table 4.3-1 incorporate relevant concerns and recommendations identified in the City's 2019 Planning Commission Staff Report.

Laguna Beach Municipal Code

The City's Municipal Code (LBMC) serves to implement policies outlined in the City's General Plan. The Proposed Project is subject to multiple provisions of the LBMC. Relevant LBMC sections are included below related to biological resources:

- **LBMC Chapter 12.08 Preservation of Heritage Trees**. Establishes regulations for the preservation of heritage trees to protect trees that contribute to the City's scenic quality, character, and environmental resources. The chapter defines criteria for heritage tree designation, outlines procedures for identification and listing, and restricts the removal, destruction, or significant alteration of such trees without City approval. It also provides incentives to encourage preservation, sets forth permit and appeal procedures, and ensures that development activities consider the protection of significant tree resources consistent with the City's planning and coastal protection goals.

  Criteria for protected heritage trees include the following:

  a) A tree or stand of trees which is of historical significance and is older than fifty years;

b) A tree or stand of trees which has distinctive characteristics of form, size or shape;
c) A tree or stand of trees associated with a person or an event of community-wide significance;
d) A large tree or stand of trees remaining from an original native stand of California Live Oaks, Sycamores and Toyons: or
e) A tree or stand of trees that is scenically prominent from public view corridors.

- **LBMC Section 12.18.020 Definitions.** "Habitat, high value" means areas of vegetation as defined and described in Topic 8 (Vegetation and Wildlife Resources) of the Open Space/Conservation Element of the city's general plan and as inventoried and depicted on Biological Resources Values maps contained therein as "High" habitat value.

- **LBMC Section 25.05.040(C)(3): Biological Report Requirements.** Prior to deliberation and action on a design review application, the applicant shall submit a biological report that is prepared by a professional in the fields of wildlife biology or botany for any proposal to clear native vegetation on undeveloped parcels that are located within or adjacent to areas designated high or very high value on the city's biological values maps and any other areas that contain environmentally sensitive habitat resources except for annual weed abatement and approved fuel modification programs.

- **LBMC Section 25.50.040 Environmentally sensitive areas.** Buildings, structures and improvements within "environmentally sensitive areas," and on lots of greater than thirty-percent slope shall be subject to design review. Additional building setbacks, open areas and/or other conditions may be imposed as a result of said design review. Development on lots of greater than thirty-percent slope shall be conditioned to require an offer to dedicate an open space deed restriction or open space easement consistent with Policy 14-J of the certified land use plan. An open space easement rather than a deed restriction shall be required in cases where the open space area is contiguous with another dedicated open space parcel. These environmentally sensitive areas are shown on a map adopted by resolution of the city council.

Table 4.3-1: General Plan Consistency

General Plan Policies	Consistency with General Plan	Analysis
Open Space and Conservation Element		
Topic 8: Vegetation and Wildlife Resources		
Policy 8A: Preserve the canyon wilderness throughout the City for its multiple benefits to the community, protecting critical areas adjacent to canyon wilderness, particularly stream beds whose loss would destroy valuable resources.	Consistent	According to the 2025 BTR, the Project site is located with the Laguna Coastal Streams Watershed and contains one (1) NWI-mapped riverine feature that potentially runs through the northern corner of the Project site. While the Proposed Project plans avoid encroachment near adjacent drainage courses and tributaries, a formal jurisdictional delineation will be required by the applicant if impacts are unavoidable. See BIO MM-4: Jurisdictional Delineation.
Policy 8J(3): When development for any type of construction, including grading,	Inconsistent	The Project site is not yet a legal building site and its location within an ESA is the primary

is proposed on an existing subdivided parcel that is not a legal building site and the development is consistent with all other policies of the Land Use Plan except for its location entirely within an identified ESA as confirmed by a site-specific assessment, the following shall apply: a) Resource Management uses including estuaries, nature centers and other similar scientific or recreational uses are permitted subject to a Conditional Use Permit to assure that uses are sited and designed to prevent degradation of the resource value; b) No new building sites shall be created which are entirely within a Coastal ESA or which do not contain a site where development can occur consistent with the ESA policies of this Plan. c) Very high value habitats shall be preserved and high value habitat shall be preserved to the greatest extent possible; and mitigation measures for immediately adjacent areas shall also be required.		reason for noncompliance with the City's Land Use plan. Thus, the provisions of Policy 8J(3) apply. The Project site is entirely within Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) due to its Drainage, Open Space Preserve (OSP), and High-Value Habitat (HVH) classifications, thus the proposed road and residential development would directly conflict with Policy 8J(3)(b) and 8J(3)(c).
Policy 8K: Prohibit intrusion of fuel modification programs into environmentally sensitive areas, including chaparral and coastal sage scrub.	Inconsistent	Due to the Project site's location within a wildland-urban interface, the proposed road extension and residential development would necessitate the creation of a fuel modification zone (FMZ), which would extend into a mapped open space preserve area. The 2025 BTR notes that fuel break maintenance may potentially threaten one special status plant species, including thread-leaved brodiaea which has a moderate potential to occur within the Project site and big-leaved crownbeard, that has a high potential to occur within the Project site. MM BIO-1 through MM BIO-3 would mitigate impacts to special-status species and nesting birds within the FMZ area. Although impacts would be mitigated to less than significant levels, the Project would be inconsistent with this policy due to the FMZ intrusion into environmentally sensitive areas.

Topic 13: Ridgelines		
Policy 13A: Preserve the function of ridgelines, hillsides and canyons as a link between adjoining open space areas.	Inconsistent	The Proposed Project would disturb a previously undisturbed area that is identified as an Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA).The Project would extend roadway infrastructure and introduce development onto an undeveloped hillside that currently functions as part of a continuous ridgeline and canyon open space system. Grading, road construction, and associated improvements would alter the natural hillside and reduce contiguous open space, diminishing its role as a connective corridor. Although surrounded by residential development, the Project site is only loosely linked to the CDFW Orange County Central-Coast Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP)/Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) through proximity, as the nearest reserves are located approximately 2-4 miles away.
Topic 14: Hillside Slopes		
Policy 14K: The conversion of vacant hillside land into various types of urban development creates inescapable side effects that can potentially damage the natural environment. Loss of valuable habitat […] and increased runoff and erosion […] are often the undesirable by-products of new development. In order to minimize such effects, new construction and grading should not create undesirable encroachments into undeveloped hillside areas.	Inconsistent	The Proposed Project is located on an existing steep hillside within a wildland-urban interface. According to the 2025 BTR, the proposed driveway along the southern end of the site features slopes ranging from 2 percent to 30.9 percent, with the remainder of the site featuring slopes ranging from 30.9 percent to 66 percent. Given the Proposed Project and its associated FMZ would encroach into a designated ESA on an undeveloped canyon hillside, the Project would be inconsistent with this policy.
Transportation, Circulation and Growth Management Element		
Policy 2M: Avoid extending roads and utilities to identified Environmentally Sensitive Areas and unincorporated County lands.	Inconsistent	The proposed road extension and single-family home are located on a vegetated, undeveloped parcel. The Project site is designated as an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) due to its classification as drainage, Open Space Preserve (OSP), High-Value Habitat (HVH), Fuel Modification Zone (FMZ), and its location within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ).

4.3.3 Thresholds of Significance

In order to assist in determining whether a project would have a significant effect on the environment, the City utilizes the State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Checklist. Appendix G states that a project may be deemed to have impacts to biological resources if it would:

Threshold 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 Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?**

Threshold 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 Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?**

Threshold 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?**

Threshold e) **Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?**

Threshold 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?**

Please refer to **Section 6.1: Effects Found Not to Be Significant** for an evaluation of those topics that were determined to be less than significant or have no impact and do not require further analysis in the EIR**.**

4.3.4 Methodology

Prior to performing the biological reconnaissance survey, Chambers Group conducted a literature review for soils, potential jurisdictional water features that contribute to hydrology, and special status species and habitats known to occur within the Project's vicinity (approximately 5 miles) of the Project site.

Additionally, the assessment of Project-related impacts to biological resources involved reviewing applicable state, regional, and local regulations, including state planning and zoning laws (California Government Code Section 65300 et seq. and California Government Code Section 65800 et seq.). An in-depth analysis of the Project's consistency with the City's General Plan Open Space Conservation Element is provided in Table 4.3-1.

Biological Reconnaissance Survey

Chambers Group biologists conducted a reconnaissance-level survey within the Project site to identify the potential for occurrence of sensitive species, vegetation communities, and habitats that could support sensitive wildlife species. The survey was conducted on foot throughout the Project site in October 2025. All plant and wildlife species and vegetation communities observed within the Project site were recorded.

Additionally, an assessment of jurisdictional waters regulated by the USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW was conducted to determine the potential of jurisdictional waters to be found within the Project site.

4.3.5 Project Impact Analysis

Section 4.4 Biological Resources of the Initial Study incorporated a Biological Technical Report (BTR) prepared by Glenn Lukos Associates in December 2017. The following analysis incorporates results from the Chambers Group BTR prepared in October 2025, herein referred to as the "2025 BTR" for clarity. The analysis covers all anticipated impacts resulting from development of the proposed road, potential single-family residence, and fuel modification plan.

Threshold 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?**

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The Proposed Project consists of the construction of an 18.5 linear foot of road surface at the terminus of Juanita Way, located in a residential neighborhood, and would facilitate the creation of a new building site and the potential future construction of a single-family home. The construction of the future home and required fuel modification would potentially result in disturbance/removal of 0.158 acres (6,900 square feet) of existing vegetation on the site.

According to the City's Environmentally Sensitive Areas Map, the Project is located on Lots 7 and 8, Block 14, Tract 26, which means the Project is directly within the boundaries of designated "open space preserved areas" (City 1976). Additionally, the City's GIS map shows the Proposed Project site is designated as an Environmentally Sensitive Area due to its classification under drainage, Open Space Preserve (OSP), and High-Value Habitat (HVH). The site is in the Fuel Modification Zone (FMZ) and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) (City 2025b).

According to the 2025 BTR, there are 43 total special status plant species and 25 total special status wildlife species documented to occur within the vicinity of the Project site.

Special Status Plant Species

Based on the literature review, the assessment of the habitat types in the Project site, and the results of the reconnaissance survey, it was determined that 32 of the 43 species with a potential to occur are considered "Absent" from the Project site due to a lack of suitable habitat for these species or the species would have been conspicuous and was not observed. Five plant species had a "Low Potential" to occur because either no historical records exist of the species within 5 miles of the Project site, the microhabitat characteristics that normally support these species are not present, or a historical record exists of the species within 5 miles of the Project site but the species is likely a horticultural planting outside of its natural range.

Two plant species, which include the thread-leaved brodiaea and Laguna Beach dudleya, have a "Moderate Potential" to occur within the Project site due to the presence of marginally suitable habitat and recent occurrences within three miles. Three plant species, which include the many-stemmed dudleya, decumbent goldenbush, and big-leaved crownbeard, have a "High Potential" to occur within the Project site. Focused plant protocol-level surveys are required for special-status plant species that have a moderate to high potential to occur on site, included in MM BIO-1.

Special Status Wildlife Species

Based on the literature review, the assessment of the habitat types within the Project site, and the results of the reconnaissance survey, it was determined that seven of the 25 special status wildlife species known to occur within the Project site are considered "Absent" due to a lack of suitable habitat. An additional 13 species are considered to have "Low Potential" to occur, as they have been recorded within 5 miles of the site, but low-quality habitat is present on site.

While one species, the monarch butterfly, was observed within the Project site, the last documented sighting and roosting site was observed in 1993, 2.87 miles of the Project site. In addition, no milkweed was observed within the Project site removing the potential for roosting. Therefore, there is a "Low Potential" for the monarch butterfly to be negatively impacted by Project activities and protocol level surveys are not required.

Two species, which include the coastal California gnatcatcher and Crotch's bumble bee, are considered to have a "Moderate Potential" to occur, based on documented recent occurrences within 3 miles and the presence of marginally suitable habitat within the Survey Area, which encompasses the Project site located at 2400 Juanita Way and up to a 500-foot buffer where feasible. Therefore, pre-construction surveys are recommended for Crotch's bumble bee and coastal California gnatcatcher (see MM BIO-2).

Two species, which include the southern California rufous crowned sparrow and Cooper's hawk, have a "High Potential" to occur within the Project site due to recent occurrences within one mile and/or habitat requirements associated with these species occur on site. A nesting bird and raptor survey should be conducted prior to construction to minimize potential negative impacts to nesting birds and special status bird species in compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), which includes the implementation of the mitigation measure (MM) BIO-3.

Protections for Special Status Plant and Wildlife Species

In summary, focused protocol-level surveys are required for five special status plant species (thread-leaved brodiaea, Laguna Beach dudleya, many-stemmed dudleya, decumbent goldenbush, and big-leaved crownbeard) (MM BIO-1). Pre-construction surveys are required for two special status wildlife species (coastal California gnatcatcher and Crotch's bumble bee) (MM BIO-2).

As defined in MM BIO-3, a nesting bird and raptor survey should be conducted prior to construction to minimize potential negative impacts to two nesting special-status birds (southern California rufous crowned sparrow and Cooper's hawk) in compliance with MBTA.

Implementation of MM BIO-1 through MM BIO-3 would reduce the impacts to special status plant and wildlife species to less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Threshold 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 Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?**

Less than Significant Impacts with Mitigation Incorporated. As described in a), the Proposed Project consists of the construction of an 18.5 linear foot of road surface at the terminus of Juanita Way and would facilitate the creation of a new building site and the future construction of a single-family home. The construction of the future home and required fuel modification would result in removal or degradation of 0.158 acres (6,900 square feet) of sensitive habitat on the site. The City's Environmentally Sensitive Areas Map and GIS Map show that the Proposed Project is located directly within the boundaries of designated "open space preserved areas" and that the Proposed Project site is designated as an Environmentally Sensitive Area due to its classification under drainage, Open Space Preserve (OSP), and High-Value Habitat (HVH). The site is in the Fuel Modification Zone (FMZ), and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) (City 1976; City 2025b). The Project's requires a fuel modification zone that could result in removal or degradation of sensitive habitat.

The 2025 BTR identified three special status communities – Southern Coast Live Oak Riparian Forest, Southern Cottonwood Willow Riparian Forest, and Southern Sycamore Alder Riparian Woodland – within 5 miles of the proposed Project site, but these special status communities were not present on the Project site or within the Survey area, which encompasses the Project site located at 2400 Juanita Way and up to a 500-foot buffer where feasible. According to the USFWS Critical Habitat WebGIS map, the Project site does not fall within any Designated Critical Habitat, but Critical Habitat is located within 5 miles of the Project site (USFWS 2025b). Given the area between the Project site and these Critical Habitats is mostly developed, movement corridors are limited. Therefore, tidewater goby and thread-leaved brodiaea are not anticipated to occur or be impacted by Project activities.

High Value Habitat. As noted in Section a), Coastal California gnatcatchers are considered a special-status wildlife species with a moderate potential to occur within the Project site. California coastal gnatcatchers also have a moderate potential to utilize habitats in the vicinity of the Project site, as marginally suitable habitat is located within the Survey Area for foraging. Approximately 0.11 acre within the northern portion of the Survey Area is mapped by the City's General Plan Open Space Conservation Element as "High Value Habitat." Most of the area mapped as "High Value Habitat" corresponds to the Lemonade Berry Scrub observed within the Survey Area, which is consistent with the City's definition of "High Value Habitat." The Proposed Project would remove up to 0.14 acres of this habitat, thus resulting in a direct and permanent impact. Given the presence of suitable Lemonade Berry Scrub habitat and the California Coastal gnatcatchers' moderate potential both to occur on-site and to use adjacent habitats for foraging, pre-construction surveys shall be implemented as an appropriate mitigation measure (see MM BIO-2 above).

NWI-Mapped Riverine Feature. The Project site is located within the Laguna Coastal Streams Watershed and contains one NWI-mapped riverine feature that potentially runs through the northern corner of the Project site, characterized by distinct channelization and a well-defined bank with a small amount of riparian vegetation. The riverine feature may be subject to USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW jurisdiction. Based on site plans provided by the Applicant, the proposed single-family residence and fuel modification zone would completely avoid the mapped riverine feature; no grading, filling, or construction is proposed within the feature or its channel. As a result, no direct impacts to jurisdictional waters are anticipated.

However, indirect impacts could occur as a result of construction-related activities, including temporary increases in erosion, sedimentation, or changes in surface runoff patterns that could affect downstream water quality or channel stability.

A formal jurisdictional delineation shall be required under MM BIO-4 to confirm regulatory oversight and determine whether additional environmental permits will be required. Associated environmental permitting will incur further measures to reduce, avoid, or mitigate impacts towards the identified riverine feature.

Protections for Special Status Habitats

Implementation of MM-BIO-2 would reduce the impacts to special status species habitats and designated "High Value Habitats" to less than significant with mitigation incorporated. MM-BIO-4 implementation would require the preparation of a formal jurisdictional delineation to determine if the covered culvert is subject to USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW jurisdiction and appropriate subsequent environmental permitting, reducing impacts to riparian habitats to less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Threshold 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?**

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. As described above, the Proposed Project is located directly within the boundaries of designated "open space preserved areas," and the Proposed Project site is designated as an Environmentally Sensitive Area due to its classification under drainage, Open Space Preserve (OSP), and High-Value Habitat (HVH). The site is in the Fuel Modification Zone (FMZ) and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) (City 1976; City 2025b).

USFWS Critical Habitat is defined as areas of land, water, and air space containing the physical and biological features essential for the survival and recovery of endangered and threatened species. Designated Critical Habitat includes sites for breeding and rearing, movement or migration, feeding, roosting, cover, and shelter. According to the USFWS Critical Habitat WebGIS map, the Project site does not fall within any Designated Critical Habitat, but Critical Habitat for three species are located within 5 miles of the Project site, including Tidewater goby (1.43 miles southeast), thread-leaved brodiaea (2.36 miles northeast), and coastal California gnatcatcher (1.53 miles southeast) (USFWS 2025b). Because the area between the Project site and these Critical Habitats is mostly developed, movement corridors are limited. Therefore, tidewater goby and thread-leaved brodiaea are not anticipated to occur within the site or be impacted by Project activities.

The Project would extend roadway infrastructure and introduce development onto an undeveloped hillside that currently functions as part of a continuous ridgeline and canyon open space system. Grading, road construction, and associated improvements would alter the natural hillside and reduce contiguous open space, diminishing its role as a connective corridor. However, the Project would not completely fragment the open space or prevent movement through the area, as it extends development from an existing roadway rather than creating a fully separate or disconnected section of habitat.

As defined in MM BIO-3, a nesting bird and raptor survey shall be conducted prior to construction to minimize potential negative impacts to two nesting special-status birds (southern California rufous crowned sparrow and Cooper's hawk) in compliance with MBTA.

As noted above in Sections a) and b), California gnatcatchers have a "Moderate Potential" to occur based on documented recent occurrences within 3 miles and the presence of marginally suitable habitat within the Survey Area. Additionally, because California gnatcatchers have a "Moderate Potential" to utilize habitats in the vicinity of the Project for foraging, such as the Lemonade Berry Scrub within High Value Habitat (HVH), MM BIO-2 is recommended to conduct pre-construction surveys to avoid potential impacts to the species. Implementation of MM-BIO-2 and MM BIO-3 will reduce the Proposed Project's impacts to special status wildlife species (i.e., California gnatcatcher) to less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Threshold e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

Significant and Unavoidable Impact. There are no designated heritage trees within the Project site (City 2022). Therefore, the Project would not conflict with LBMC Chapter 12.08, *Preservation of Heritage Trees*.

As noted above in Section 4.3.2 Regulatory Setting, the Proposed Project is located within the City's General Plan. Table 4.3-1 General Plan Consistency demonstrates the Proposed Project's alignment with relevant City General Plan Open Space Element (OSCE) policies related to the protection of biological resources, including the following: Topic 8: Vegetation and Wildlife Resources (Policy 8A and 8K); Topic 13: Ridgelines (Policy 13A); and Topic 14: Hillsides (Policy 14K).

The Proposed Project demonstrates alignment with Policy 8A regarding streambed preservation, as the Project plans avoid encroachment near adjacent drainage courses and tributaries. Based on site plans provided by the Applicant, the proposed single-family residence and fuel modification zone would completely avoid the mapped riverine feature; no grading, filling, or construction is proposed within the feature or its channel. As a result, no direct impacts to jurisdictional waters are anticipated.

However, indirect impacts could occur as a result of construction-related activities, including temporary increases in erosion, sedimentation, or changes in surface runoff patterns that could affect downstream water quality or channel stability. Implementation of MM-BIO-4 will ensure appropriate environmental permitting, reducing impacts to riparian habitats to less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

The Proposed Project is not consistent, however, with the goals outlined in Policies, 8K, 13A, and 14K given its (1) potential FMZ encroachment into an environmentally sensitive area, (2) disruption of a previously undisturbed area identified as an Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA), and (3) proposed construction and grading on steep hillside areas (up to 66 percent) that could create erosion and runoff issues. These elements are directly inconsistent with the intent and requirements of the cited General Plan policies, which are intended to minimize habitat disturbance and protect sensitive natural features. Under CEQA, a project's inconsistency with adopted plans and policies that protect biological resources constitutes a significant environmental impact. Because the Project would not conform to these policies and no feasible mitigation measures would result in Project compliance with these policies, the conflict with local biological resource protection policies would be significant and unavoidable. Thus, impacts would be significant and unavoidable.

Threshold 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?

Less than Significant Impact. As of 1992, the City is enrolled in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Orange County Central-Coastal Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP)/Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). The NCCP, implemented by the Natural Communities Coalition, establishes a framework of conservation of natural communities in the central/coastal Orange County region and covers 208,000 acres of planning area. The City has three reserves within NCCP/HCP, including:

- Laguna Coast Wilderness Park (located 2.75 miles north);
- Aliso and Wood Canyons Regional Park (located 2.90 miles northeast); and,
- Crystal Cove State Park (located 4.40 miles north).

The Project site is not within a habitat reserve or special linkage area that would be subject to the provisions of the NCCP (County 1996a). The NCCP/HCP provides regulatory coverage for a total of thirty-nine (39) individual species (County 1996b). According to the 2025 BTR, none of the covered 39 species have a moderate or high potential of occurring within the Project site. The Project site is located two to four miles away from designated Habitat Reserves under the NCCP/HCP. Given that the Project does not occur within an NCCP/HCP reserve or linkage area, does not affect covered habitat, and would not interfere with the implementation of the NCCP/HCP conservation strategy, the Project would not conflict with the provisions of an adopted habitat conservation plan. Impacts would be less than significant.

4.3.6 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are defined in CEQA as "two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15355). Stated in another way, "a cumulative impact consists of an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing relating impacts" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 [a][1]).

The geographic scope for the analysis of cumulative impacts on biological resources includes other related projects in the City within a one mile radius of the Project site. Table 3.0-1, Cumulative Projects, and Exhibit 3.0-1, Cumulative Project Map, in Section 3.0 of this DEIR identify the related projects considered for this cumulative impact analysis, which consist primarily of community develop hotel projects, capital improvement projects, and utility undergrounding projects.

Development of cumulative projects could result in direct take to special-status plant and wildlife species; construction and operational disturbances; and/or special-status habitat conversion. However, as with the Proposed Project, these cumulative projects would also be required to avoid and/or mitigate impacts to special-status species and habitats in accordance with City, CDFW, and USFWS requirements. Given its limited scope and isolated nature, the Project is not expected to make a cumulatively considerable contribution to any significant impacts to biological resources.

4.3.7 Mitigation Measures

In order to minimize potential impacts to biological resources, MM BIO-1-4 should be implemented to protect special status plants, wildlife, and habitat:

MM BIO-1: Plant Protocol-Level Survey

A qualified biologist retained by the applicant shall conduct a plant protocol-level survey during the appropriate blooming periods, prior to construction, for moderate potential special-status plant species, including thread-leaved brodiaea (March-June) and Laguna Beach dudleya (May-June), and high potential special-status plant species, including Many-stemmed dudleya (April-July), Decumbent goldenbush (April-November), and Big-leaved crownbeard (March-July) to determine the presence of each plant species occurring within or adjacent to the Project site. The protocol-level survey shall be conducted in conformance with the California Native Plant Society Botanical Survey Guidelines (CNPS 2001), Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special Status Native Plant Populations and Sensitive Natural Communities (CDFW 2018), and the USFW's General Rare Plant Survey Guidelines (Cypher 2002).

If the plant species cannot be avoided, a qualified biologist retained by the applicant shall develop a Restoration and Mitigation Plan according to California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) guidelines and in coordination with CDFW. At a minimum, the Plan shall include:

- A collection of complete plants or reproductive structures (as appropriate) from affected plants;
- A full description of microhabitat conditions necessary for each affected species;
- Seed germination requirements;
- Proposed restoration techniques for temporarily disturbed occurrences;
- An assessment of potential transplant and enhancement sites;
- A description of success criteria; and
- A monitoring program to follow the progress of mitigation individuals.
- progress of mitigation individuals.

MM BIO-2: Pre-Construction Survey

A qualified biologist retained by the applicant shall conduct pre-construction surveys no more than 14 days prior to initial ground disturbance within High Value Habitat (HVH), including Lemonade Berry Scrub which provides foraging habitat for California Coastal gnatcatcher, and special-status species, including Crotch's bumble bee.

If non-listed wildlife species are detected during the survey, the biologist shall implement appropriate avoidance and relocation measures, consistent with accepted professional standards, to prevent injury or mortality resulting from Project-related activities.

If any State- or federally-listed species are observed, the appropriate regulatory agencies must be notified (e.g., U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or California Department of Fish and Wildlife). Project activities shall not occur in the affected area until avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures have been identified through agency coordination and approved by the City. Such measures may include, but are not limited to, establishment of species-specific exclusion buffers, modification of construction timing or methods, on-site biological monitoring, or habitat protection measures. .

MM BIO-3: Nesting Bird Survey

In compliance with the MBTA, any vegetation clearing shall take place outside the general bird breeding season (February 1 to August 31), to the maximum extent practical. If this is not possible, a qualified biologist retained by the applicant shall conduct a nesting bird and raptor survey prior to vegetation removal and ground-disturbing activities.

The survey should occur no more than three days (72 hours) prior to initiation of Project ground-disturbing activities, and any occupied passerine and/or raptor nests occurring within or adjacent to the Project site should be delineated. Additional follow-up surveys may be required by the resource agencies. To the maximum extent practicable, a species-specific minimum buffer zone around occupied nests should be established by the applicant-retained qualified biologist and maintained while Project activities occur near the nests. The buffer zone should be sufficient in size to prevent impacts to the nest. Once nesting has ceased, the buffer may be removed.

MM BIO-4: Jurisdictional Delineation

Prior to issuance of grading or building permits, the applicant shall retain a qualified biologist to prepare a formal jurisdictional delineation of the on-site riverine feature consistent with current U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) methodologies. The delineation shall be submitted to the City for review and shall be used to identify the extent of jurisdictional waters.

If the delineation confirms the presence of federal or State jurisdictional waters, the applicant shall obtain all required permits or approvals from USACE, RWQCB, and/or CDFW prior to construction. As a condition of Project approval, the applicant shall implement all avoidance, minimization, and compensatory mitigation measures required by these agencies, which may include, but are not limited to: redesign to avoid waters to the maximum extent feasible; establishment of protective setbacks or buffers; implementation of erosion and sediment control measures; restoration of temporarily disturbed areas; and compensatory mitigation through on-site or off-site habitat restoration or credit purchase.

4.3.8 Level of Significance After Mitigation

Incorporation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-3, and BIO-4 would reduce impacts to special-status plants, wildlife, and habitats to less than significant.

However, as noted in Threshold e), the Proposed Project conflicts with the City's General Plan policies, resulting in significant and unavoidable impacts to biological resources.

4.4 CULTURAL RESOURCES

This section describes the cultural resources at the Project site and general vicinity. Cultural resources include prehistoric and historic archaeological sites, archaeological districts, historic buildings and structures, and isolated occurrences of artifacts.

Information used in preparing this section and in evaluating potential impacts on cultural resources was derived from the Cultural Resources Record Search Results memo contained in Appendix D of this EIR. Due to the confidential nature of the location of cultural resources, information regarding locations of these resources has been removed and is not included in the appendix.

4.4.1 Existing Environmental Setting

Existing Conditions

The Project site is located at the terminus of Juanita Way in the Arch Beach Heights neighborhood of Laguna Beach, situated on an undeveloped hillside within the San Joaquin Hills. The area is characterized by steep slopes, natural open space, and coastal sage scrub habitat, with portions of the surrounding landscape forming part of the South Coast Wilderness. The Project site itself remains undeveloped and lacks existing built structures; however, its location within a largely natural hillside environment contributes to its sensitivity for potential subsurface cultural resources.

Cultural Setting

The broader Laguna Beach area has a rich cultural history and is considered sensitive for archaeological resources. The region was historically inhabited by the Acjachemen (Juaneño) and Tongva indigenous peoples, whose presence is documented through archaeological findings in nearby Laguna Canyon, including stone tools, grinding implements, and habitation sites that indicate long-term occupation. The discovery of the "Laguna Woman" skull, one of the oldest known human remains in California, further demonstrates the area's prehistoric significance. Historically, the San Joaquin Hills were part of the Rancho San Joaquin land grant during the Mexican period before being incorporated into the Irvine Ranch for cattle grazing and agricultural uses. In the late 20th century, community-led preservation efforts, including the Laguna Canyon Project and the establishment of the Laguna Coast Wilderness Park, protected large portions of surrounding open space.

4.4.2 Applicable Regulations

Federal

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

Enacted in 1966, the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (16 U.S.C §§ 470 et seq.) declared a national policy of historic preservation and instituted a multifaceted program, administered by the Secretary of the Interior, to encourage the achievement of preservation goals at the federal, state, and local levels. The NHPA authorized the expansion and maintenance of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), established the position of State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), provided for the designation of State Review Boards, set up a mechanism to certify local governments to carry out the purposes of the NHPA, assist Native American tribes in preserving their cultural heritage, and created the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP).

NHPA establishes the nation's policy for historic preservation and sets in place a program for the preservation of historic properties by requiring federal agencies to consider effects to significant cultural resources (i.e., historic properties) prior to undertakings.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act

Section 106 of the NHPA states that federal agencies with direct or indirect jurisdiction over federally funded, assisted, or licensed undertakings must take into account the effect of the undertaking on any historic property that is included in, or eligible for inclusion in, the NRHP and that the ACHP and SHPO must be afforded an opportunity to comment, through a process outlined in the ACHP regulations at 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 800, on such undertakings.

National Register of Historic Places

The NRHP was established by the NHPA of 1966 as "an authoritative guide to be used by federal, state, and local governments, private groups, and citizens to identify the Nation's cultural resources and to indicate what properties should be considered for protection from destruction or impairment." The NRHP recognizes properties that are significant at the national, state, and local levels. To be eligible for listing in the NRHP, a resource must be significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture. Districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects of potential significance must also possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, or association. A property is eligible for the NRHP if it is significant under one or more of the following criteria:

- Criterion A: It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- Criterion B: It is associated with the lives of persons who are significant in our past.
- Criterion C: It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; represents the work of a master; possesses high artistic values; or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- Criterion D: It has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Notwithstanding Criteria Considerations, in general cemeteries, birthplaces, or graves of historic figures; properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes; structures that have been moved from their original locations; reconstructed historic buildings; and properties that are primarily commemorative in nature are not considered eligible for the NRHP unless they satisfy certain conditions. In general, a resource must be at least 50 years of age to be considered for the NRHP, unless it satisfies a standard of exceptional importance.

In addition to the four National Register Criteria noted above, qualifying resources must maintain elements of integrity. Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. "The evaluation of integrity is sometimes a subjective judgment, but it must always be grounded in an understanding of a property's physical features and how they relate to its significance" (NPS 1997:44). The National Register Bulletin (1990, revised 1997) identifies seven aspects of integrity that a property should retain, and include: Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling, and Association. While maintenance of all aspects of integrity is not required, a property should possess most of the aspects that are integral to its ability to convey its significance. Understandably, not all aspects of integrity are applicable across the range of buildings, structure, objects, or sites under evaluation. Aspects such as design or feeling likely would not be integral to understanding the significance of an archaeological deposit, whereas these would be essential in understanding a significant building, or landscape.

The Bulletin further exemplifies how to broadly assess the integrity of eligible resources when applying the qualifying National Register Criteria. Under Criteria A and B, a property that is significant for its historic association is eligible if it retains the essential physical features that made up its character or appearance during the period of its association with the important event, historical pattern, or person(s). If the property is a site (such as a treaty site) where there are no material cultural remains, the setting must be intact. Eligible archaeological sites must be in overall good condition with excellent preservation of features, artifacts, and spatial relationships to the extent that these remains are able to convey important associations with events or persons.

Under Criterion C, a property important for illustrating a particular architectural style or construction technique must retain most of the physical features that constitute that style or technique. A property that has lost some historic materials or details can be eligible if it retains the majority of the features that illustrate its style in terms of the massing, spatial relationships, proportion, pattern of windows and doors, texture of materials, and ornamentation. The property is not eligible, however, if it retains some basic features conveying massing but has lost the majority of the features that once characterized its style. Eligible archaeological sites must be in overall good condition with excellent preservation of features, artifacts, and spatial relationships to the extent that these remains are able to illustrate a site type, time period, method of construction, or work of a master.

Properties eligible under Criterion D, including archaeological sites and standing structures studied for their information potential, less attention is given to their overall condition, than if they were being considered under Criteria A, B, or C. Archaeological sites, in particular, do not exist today exactly as they were formed. There are numerous cultural and natural processes that may have altered the deposited materials and their spatial relationships. For properties eligible under Criterion D, integrity is based upon the property's potential to yield specific data that addresses important research questions, such as those identified in the historic context documentation, or in the research design, for projects meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Archeological Documentation (NPS 1997:46).

<u>Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990</u>

The NAGPRA of 1990 sets provisions for the intentional removal and inadvertent discovery of human remains and other cultural items from federal and tribal lands. It clarifies the ownership of human remains and sets forth a process for repatriation of human remains and associated funerary objects and sacred religious objects to the Native American groups claiming to be lineal descendants or culturally affiliated with the remains or objects. It requires any federally funded institution housing Native American remains or artifacts to compile an inventory of all cultural items within the museum or with its agency and to provide a summary to any Native American tribe claiming affiliation.

State

Coastal Act – PRC Section 30244

PRC Section 30244 mandates that where development would adversely impact archaeological or paleontological resources as identified by the State Historic Preservation Officer, reasonable mitigation measures shall be required.

Assembly Bill 4239

AB 4239 established the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) as the primary government agency responsible for identifying and cataloging Native American cultural resources. The bill authorized the NAHC to act in order to prevent damage to and insure Native American access to sacred sites and authorized the NAHC to prepare an inventory of Native American sacred sites located on public lands.

Public Resources Code 5097.97

No public agency and no private party using or occupying public property or operating on public property under a public license, permit, grant, lease, or contract made on or after July 1, 1977, shall in any manner whatsoever interfere with the free expression or exercise of Native American religion as provided in the United States Constitution and the California Constitution; nor shall any such agency or party cause severe or irreparable damage to any Native American sanctified cemetery, place of worship, religious or ceremonial site, or sacred shrine located on public property, except on a clear and convincing showing that the public interest and necessity so require.

Public Resources Code 5097.98 (b) and (e)

Public Resources Code (PRC) 5097.98 (b) and (e) require a landowner on whose property Native American human remains are found to limit further development activity in the vicinity until he/she confers with the NAHC-identified Most Likely Descendants (MLDs) to consider treatment options. In the absence of MLDs or of a treatment acceptable to all parties, the landowner is required to reinter the remains elsewhere on the property in a location not subject to further disturbance.

California Health and Safety Code, Section 7050.5

California Health and Safety Code, Section 7050.5 makes it a misdemeanor to disturb or remove human remains found outside a cemetery. This code also requires a project owner to halt construction if human remains are discovered and to contact the county coroner.

Local

City of Laguna Beach General Plan

The Historic Resources Element of the General Plan includes goals, objectives, and policies for the protection of cultural resources and scientific sites that emphasize identification, documentation, and protection of cultural resources. Table 4.4-1 provides a consistency analysis of the applicable General Plan policies relevant to cultural resources as they relate to the Project.

Table 4.4-1: General Plan Consistency

General Plan Policies	Consistency with General Plan	Analysis
Historic Resources Element		
Goal #1 Preserve and enhance buildings and structures of historic significance in Laguna Beach. Assure that neighborhoods which have a preponderance of older homes and which greatly contribute to the village atmosphere be maintained as cohesive neighborhood units through consistency of size, scale and character.		
1.6 Ensure the preservation of historic homes by requiring the owners to record a document acknowledging their obligation and responsibilities	Not Applicable	The Project site is located on an undeveloped hillside with no existing buildings or recorded historic resources within the property boundaries. Development would not alter or demolish any structures of historic significance, nor would it affect established neighborhoods that contribute to the village atmosphere.
Goal #2 Continue and expand programs practices that encourage an appreciation of history and historic preservation in Laguna Beach.		
2.1 Require Heritage Committee review when design review is required for modifications to a historic resource.	Not Applicable	No historic resources are located on the project site; therefore, Heritage Committee review is not required.
2.2 Support the requirement that the Design Review Board emphasize compatibility, including historic character and context within deliberations of new or remodeled structures.	Consistent	As the site lacks historic structures, the Proposed Project would not conflict with design review requirements related to historic character and context.
2.3. Provide specific guidelines for the rehabilitation of historic structures. Include “how-tos” and pictures and illustrations of successful projects.	Not Applicable	There are no historic structures on the project site requiring rehabilitation.
2.4. Foster community pride through identification and aesthetic improvement of historic sites and areas, such as plaque programs and historically relevant brochures.	Consistent	The Project would not affect any known historic sites and would not conflict with City programs intended to identify or enhance historic resources.
2.6. Prepare a manual showing techniques of preservation to help property owners understand what to expect during remodeling/restoration process and to provide information on how preservation can be accomplished within local ordinances.	Not Applicable	Since the Project site does not contain any historic resources, this policy does not apply.
2.7 Disseminate information on the provisions of the Historic Preservation Ordinance.	Consistent	The Project would comply with all applicable provisions of the Historic Preservation Ordinance if any previously unidentified historic resources are discovered during ground-disturbing activities.
Goal #3 Promote community awareness of local history and historic architecture and enhance recognition of the City’s historic role as an important art colony and seaside resort.		
3.1. Increase awareness and appreciation for Laguna Beach’s cultural and historic heritage through activities and events such as designating May as the City’s Heritage Month	Consistent	The Proposed Project would not conflict with ongoing community activities or City programs promoting historic awareness.

Table 4.4-1: General Plan Consistency

General Plan Policies	Consistency with General Plan	Analysis
Historic Resources Element		
3.5. Encourage property owners to seek listing for appropriate properties on the National Register of Historic Places and the California State Register of Historical Resources.	Not Applicable	The Project site contains no structures or features eligible for listing on local, state, or federal historic registers.
3.6 Work with local Historic Preservation groups to develop a program that informs new buyers of historic homes of the benefits and responsibilities of owning a historic resource.	Not Applicable	No historic homes are present on the project site; therefore, this policy does not apply.

4.4.3 Thresholds of Significance

In order to assist in determining whether a project would have a significant effect on the environment, the City utilizes the State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Checklist. Appendix G states that a project may be deemed to have impacts to cultural resources if it would:

Threshold a) **Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5.**

Threshold b) **Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5.**

Threshold c) **Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.**

4.4.4 Methodology

On March 28, 2025, Chambers Group prepared a Cultural Resources Record Search Result memo (Cultural Memo) in support of the Proposed Project. The Cultural Memo is included in Appendix D.

4.4.5 Project Impact Analysis

Threshold a) **Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5?**

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. Chambers Group requested a records search from the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC) at Cal State Fullerton, on January 28, 2025. A records search of the Project site and surrounding 0.5-mile radius was requested to provide context and additional information regarding types and extent of resources recorded within the study area. The SCCIC returned the records search results on March 25, 2025, providing information on all documented cultural resources and previous archaeological investigations within the Project site.

Based on the records search conducted by the SCCIC, six previously recorded cultural resources are recorded within the study area. Of the six resources, none are mapped within the Project site. Additionally, 10 cultural resource studies have previously been completed within the study area. Of these 10 reports, one is partially mapped within the Project site.

Although there are no mapped historic resources within the Project site, there is potential to inadvertently discover historic resources during ground-disturbing construction activities. With implementation of MM CUL-1 and MM CUL-2, the Project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15064.5. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Threshold b) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. Chambers Group requested a Sacred Lands File (SLF) records search from the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), on January 28, 2025. The purpose of the request is to determine if any sacred lands or other resources important to local tribal groups have been recorded within the Project site or adjacent areas. The results of the SLF search, provided by the NAHC on February 5, 2025, were positive, and included a list of 25 tribal government contacts representing 14 tribes to seek additional information. The SLF results letter specifically named the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians Acjachemen Nation – Belardes Tribe for outreach in order to obtain further information in relation to their tribal lands. See Section 4.13 for further discussion on impacts related to Tribal Cultural Resources.

Although the steep slopes within the Project site make the presence of archaeological remains unlikely, the positive results of the SLF search indicate that there remains a potential for encountering archaeological resources during ground-disturbing activities. With implementation of MM CUL-1 and MM CUL-2, impacts to archeological resources would be reduced to a level of less than significant.

Threshold c) Would the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

Less than Significant Impact. No prehistoric or historic human remains were identified within the Project site as a result of the CHRIS records search or NAHC SLF search. In the unlikely event that human remains are uncovered during Project grading or excavation, Government Code Sections 27460 et seq. mandate that there shall be no further excavation or soil disturbance until the Orange County Coroner has determined that the remains are not subject to the provisions of Section 27491 of the Government Code or any other related provisions of law concerning investigation of the circumstances, manner, and cause of death, and the required recommendations concerning the treatment and disposition of the human remains have been made to the person responsible for the excavation, or to his or her authorized representative, in the manner provided in Public Resources Code Section 5097.98.

Pursuant to California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, the coroner shall make his or her determination within two working days of notification of the discovery of the human remains. If the coroner determines that the remains are not subject to his or her authority and recognizes or has reason to believe that they are those of a Native American, he or she shall contact the Native American Heritage Commission within 24 hours. The NAHC must immediately notify the Most Likely Descendant (MLD) of the deceased Native American. The MLD shall complete their inspection within 48 hours of being granted access to the site. The MLD would then determine, in consultation with the City, the disposition of the human remains. Compliance with existing regulations would ensure that impacts to human remains would be less than significant.

4.4.6 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are defined in CEQA as “two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts” (CEQA Guidelines Section 15355). Stated in another way, “a cumulative impact consists of an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing relating impacts” (CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 [a][1]).

Similar to the Proposed Project, ground-disturbing activities associated with cumulative projects would have the potential to uncover previously unknown archaeological resources and human remains. The Proposed Project, in combination with cumulative development, could contribute to the loss of undeveloped land, which could potentially contain cultural resources. Determinations regarding the significance of impacts of the related projects on cultural resources would be made on a case-by-case basis and, if necessary, the applicants of the related projects would be required to implement appropriate mitigation measures.

Although the Proposed Project site is located on an undeveloped hillside, the results of the records search indicate there are no previously recorded cultural resources within the Project site, and the steep slopes reduce the likelihood of intact subsurface deposits. With implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-1, potential impacts to previously undiscovered archaeological resources would be minimized. Therefore, the Project’s contribution to cumulative cultural resource impacts would be less than cumulatively considerable.

4.4.7 Mitigation Measures

In order to minimize potential impacts to cultural resources, the following mitigation measures shall be implemented:

CUL-1: If previously unidentified cultural resources are encountered during ground-disturbing activities, work within 100 feet of the find shall cease and the Director of Community Development shall be notified and an applicant-retained qualified archaeologist, defined as an archaeologist who meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualification Standards for archaeology, shall be contacted immediately to evaluate the find. If necessary, the evaluation may require preparation of a treatment plan and archaeological testing for the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) or National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility.

If the discovery proves to be significant under CEQA and cannot be avoided by the Project, additional work such as data recovery excavation may be warranted to mitigate any significant impacts. In the event an identified cultural resource is Native American in origin, the applicant-retained qualified archaeologist shall consult with the Project owner and the Director of Community Development, or designee, to implement Native American consultation procedures. Construction shall not resume in the area until appropriate protection and preservation measures are in place and have been approved by the

Director of Community Development, or designee, and the qualified archaeologist states in writing that the proposed construction activities would not significantly damage any archaeological resources.

CUL-2 Prior to the start of ground-disturbing activities, all construction personnel shall participate in a Workers Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) training conducted by a qualified archaeologist provided by the applicant. The training shall inform workers of the potential presence of unknown archaeological and cultural resources within the Project area; identify the types of materials that may be encountered; discuss regulatory requirements and penalties for intentionally disturbing cultural resources; and outline the procedures to follow if such resources are discovered.

4.4.8 Level of Significance after Mitigation

With incorporation of Mitigation Measures CUL-1 and CUL-2, impacts would be less than significant.

4.5 ENERGY

This section of the Draft EIR describes the source and consumption of energy resources associated with the Project. This section provides further information on applicable regulation, policies, and potential impacts of the Project. Information contained in this section is from the energy consumption modeling output prepared for the Project in the *Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Consumption Technical Memorandum,* dated November 14, 2025, prepared by Vista Environmental (Appendix B). This analysis follows the SCAQMD recommendations for preparing a energy consumption analysis under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

4.5.1 Background

According to the CEQA Guidelines, the goal of conserving energy implies the wise and efficient use of energy. The means of achieving this goal include:

- Decreasing overall per capita energy consumption
- Decreasing reliance on fossil fuels such as coal, natural gas and oil
- Increasing reliance on renewable energy sources

Energy conservation implies that a Project's cost effectiveness be reviewed not only in dollars but also in terms of energy requirements. For many Projects, cost effectiveness may be determined more by energy efficiency than by initial dollar costs. A lead agency may consider the extent to which an energy source serving the Project has already undergone environmental review that adequately analyzed and mitigated the effects of energy production.

Energy Consumption

Energy use, especially through fossil fuel consumption and combustion, relates directly to environmental quality since it can adversely affect air quality and generate GHG emissions that contribute to climate change. Electrical power is generated through a variety of sources, including fossil fuel combustion, hydropower, wind, solar, biofuels, and others. Natural gas is widely used to heat buildings, prepare food in restaurants and residences, and fuel vehicles, among other uses. Fuel use for transportation is related to the fuel efficiency of cars, trucks, and public transportation; choice of different travel modes such as auto, carpool, and public transit; and miles traveled by these modes and is generally based on petroleum-based fuels such as diesel and gasoline. Electric vehicles (EVs) may not have any direct emissions but do have indirect emissions via the source of electricity generated to power the vehicle. Construction and routine operation and maintenance of transportation infrastructure also consume energy.

Electricity, a consumptive utility, is a man-made resource. The production of electricity requires the consumption or conversion of energy resources, including water, wind, oil, gas, coal, solar, geothermal, and nuclear resources, into energy. The delivery of electricity involves a number of system components, including substations and transformers that lower transmission line power (voltage) to a level appropriate for on-site distribution and use. The electricity generated is distributed through a network of transmission and distribution lines commonly called a power grid. Conveyance of electricity through transmission lines is typically responsive to market demands. In 2024, Orange County consumed 19,225 Gigawatt-hours per year of electricity (Appendix B).

Natural gas is a combustible mixture of simple hydrocarbon compounds (primarily methane) that is used as a fuel source. Natural gas consumed in California is obtained from naturally occurring reservoirs, mainly located outside the State, and delivered through high-pressure transmission pipelines. The natural gas transportation system is a nationwide network and, therefore, resource availability is typically not an issue. Natural gas satisfies almost one-third of the State's total energy requirements and is used in electricity generation, space heating, cooking, water heating, industrial processes, and as a transportation fuel. Natural gas is measured in terms of cubic feet. In 2024, Orange County consumed 561.7 million Therms of natural gas (Appendix B).

Petroleum-based fuels currently account for a majority of California's transportation energy sources and primarily consist of diesel and gasoline types of fuels. However, the state has been working on developing strategies to reduce petroleum use. Over the last decade California has implemented several policies, rules, and regulations to improve vehicle efficiency, increase the development and use of alternative fuels, reduce air pollutants and GHG emissions from the transportation sector, and reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Accordingly, petroleum-based fuel consumption in California has declined. In 2023 1,150 million gallons of gasoline and 62 million gallons of diesel was sold in Orange County (Appendix B).

4.5.2 Regulatory Setting

Federal

Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978

Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 (PURPA) was passed in response to the unstable energy climate of the late 1970s. PURPA sought to promote conservation of electric energy. Additionally, PURPA created a new class of nonutility generators, small power producers from which, along with qualified co-generators, utilities are required to buy power. PURPA was in part intended to augment electric utility generation with more efficiently produced electricity and to provide equitable rates to electric consumers. Utility companies are required to buy all electricity from qualifying facilities (QFs) at avoided cost (avoided costs are the incremental savings associated with not having to produce additional units of electricity). PURPA expanded participation of nonutility generators in the electricity market and requires utilities to buy whatever power is produced by QFs (usually cogeneration or renewable energy). Utilities want these provisions repealed; critics argue that it will decrease competition and impede development of the renewable energy industry. The Fuel Use Act (FUA) of 1978 (repealed in 1987) also helped QFs become established. Under FUA, utilities were not allowed to use natural gas to fuel new generating technologies; but QFs, which were by definition not utilities, were able to take advantage of abundant natural gas and abundant new technologies (such as combined-cycle). The technologies lowered the financial threshold for entrance into the electricity generation business as well as shortened the lead time for constructing new plants.

Energy Policy Act of 2005

On August 8, 2005, President George W. Bush signed the National Energy Policy Act of 2005 into law. This comprehensive energy legislation contains several electricity-related provisions that aim to:

- Help ensure that consumers receive electricity over a dependable, modern infrastructure
- Remove outdated obstacles to investment in electricity transmission lines
- Make electric reliability standards mandatory instead of optional

- Give federal officials the authority to site new power lines in Department of Energy-designated national corridors in certain limited circumstances

State

Energy conservation management in the State was initiated by the 1974 Warren-Alquist State Energy Resources Conservation and Development Act that created the California Energy Resource Conservation and Development Commission (currently named California Energy Commission [CEC]), which was originally tasked with certifying new electric generating plants based on the need for the plant and the suitability of the site of the plant. In 1976 the Warren-Alquist Act was expanded to include new restrictions on nuclear generating plants, which effectively resulted in a moratorium on any new nuclear generating plants in the state. The following details specific regulations adopted by the State in order to reduce the consumption of energy.

California Code of Regulations Title 20

On November 3, 1976, the CEC adopted the Regulations for Appliance Efficiency Standards Relating to Refrigerators, Refrigerator-Freezers, and Freezers and Air Conditioners, which were the first energy-efficiency standards for appliances. The appliance efficiency regulations have been updated several times by the Commission. The most current version is the 2016 Appliance Efficiency Regulations, adopted January 2017, which now includes almost all types of appliances and lamps that use electricity and natural gas as well as plumbing fixtures. The authority for the CEC to control the energy efficiency of appliances is detailed in CCR, Title 20, Division 2, Chapter 4, Article 4, Sections 1601-1609.

California Code of Regulations Title 24, Part 6

The CEC is also responsible for implementing CCR Title 24, Part 6: California's Energy Efficiency Standards for Residential and Nonresidential Buildings (Title 24) that were first established in 1978 in response to a legislative mandate to reduce California's energy consumption. In 2008 the State set an energy-use reduction goal of zero-net-energy use of all new homes by 2020, and the CEC was mandated to meet this goal through revisions to the Title 24, Part 6 regulations.

The Title 24 standards are updated on a three-year schedule, and since 2008 the standards have been incrementally moving to the 2020 goal of the zero-net-energy use. Currently the 2016 Title 24 standards are in effect; and, on January 1, 2020, the 2019 standards will go into effect. These standards have been designed so that the average new home built in California will now use zero-net-energy and nonresidential buildings will use about 30 percent less energy than the 2016 standards due mainly to lighting upgrades. The 2019 standards also encourage the use of battery storage and heat pump water heaters and require the more widespread use of LED lighting as well as improve the building's thermal envelope through high-performance attics, walls, and windows. The 2019 standards also require improvements to ventilation systems by requiring highly efficient air filters to trap hazardous air particulates as well as requiring improvements to kitchen ventilation systems.

California Code of Regulations Title 24, Part 11

CCR Title 24, Part 11: California Green Building Standards (Title 24) was developed in response to continued efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with energy consumption. The California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen) are also updated every three years, and the current version is the 2016 CALGreen Code, which became effective on January 1, 2017. The 2019 CALGreen Code will become effective on January 1, 2020.

The CALGreen Code contains requirements for construction site selection; stormwater control during construction, construction waste reduction, indoor water use reduction, material selection, natural resource conservation, site irrigation conservation, and more. The code provides for design options allowing the designer to determine how best to achieve compliance for a given site or building condition. The code also requires building commissioning, which is a process for verifying that all building systems (e.g., heating and cooling equipment and lighting systems) are functioning at their maximum efficiency.

The CALGreen Code provides standards for bicycle parking, carpool/vanpool/electric vehicle spaces, light and glare reduction, grading and paving, energy efficient appliances, renewable energy, graywater systems, water-efficient plumbing fixtures, recycling and recycled materials, pollutant controls (including moisture control and indoor air quality), acoustical controls, stormwater management, building design, insulation, flooring, and framing, among others. Implementation of the CALGreen Code measures reduces energy consumption and vehicle trips and encourages the use of alternative-fuel vehicles, which reduces pollutant emissions.

Some of the notable changes in the 2019 CALGreen Code over the current 2016 CALGreen Code include: an alignment of building code engineering requirements with the national standards that include anchorage requirements for solar panels, provides design requirements for buildings in tsunami zones, increases Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV) for air filters from 8 to 13, increases electric vehicle charging requirements in parking areas, and sets minimum requirements for use of shade trees.

<u>Senate Bill 100</u>

Senate Bill 100 (SB 100) was adopted September 2018 and requires that 100 percent of retail sales of electricity be generated from renewable or zero-carbon emission sources of electricity by December 1, 2045. SB 100 supersedes the renewable energy requirements set by SB 350, SB 1078, SB 107, and SB X1-2. However, the interim renewable energy thresholds from the prior Bills of 44 percent by December 31, 2024, 52 percent by December 31, 2027, and 60 percent by December 31, 2030, will remain in effect.

<u>Executive Order B-48-18 and Assembly Bill 2127</u>

The California Governor issued Executive Order B-48-18 on January 26, 2018, that orders all State entities to work with the private sector to put at least five million zero-emission vehicles on California roads by 2030 and to install 200 hydrogen fueling stations and 250,000 electric vehicle chargers by 2025. Currently approximately 350,000 electric vehicles are operating in California, which represents approximately 1.5 percent of the 24 million vehicles total currently operating in California. Implementation of Executive Order B-48-18 would result in approximately 20 percent of all vehicles in California be zero emission electric vehicles. Assembly Bill 2127 (AB 2127) was codified into statute on September 13, 2018, and requires that the CEC work with the CARB to prepare biannual assessments of the statewide electric vehicle charging infrastructure needed to support the levels of zero emission vehicle adoption required for the State to meet its goals of putting at least 5 million zero-emission vehicles on California roads by 2030**.**

Assembly Bill 1109

California Assembly Bill 1109 (AB 1109), also known as the Lighting Efficiency and Toxics Reduction Act, was adopted October 2007 and prohibits the manufacturing of lights after January 1, 2010, that contain levels of hazardous substances prohibited by the European Union pursuant to the RoHS Directive. AB 1109 also requires reductions in energy usage for lighting and is structured to reduce lighting electrical consumption by: (1) at least 50-percent reduction from 2007 levels for indoor residential lighting; and (2) at least 25-percent reduction from 2007 levels for indoor commercial and all outdoor lighting by 2018. AB 1109 would reduce GHG emissions through reducing the amount of electricity required to be generated by fossil fuels in California.

Assembly Bill 1493

California Assembly Bill 1493 (also known as the Pavley Bill, in reference to its author Fran Pavley) was enacted on July 22, 2002, and required CARB to develop and adopt regulations that reduce GHGs emitted by passenger vehicles and light-duty trucks. In 2004, CARB approved the "Pavley I" regulations limiting the amount of GHGs that may be released from new passenger automobiles that are being phased in between model years 2009 through 2016. These regulations will reduce GHG emissions by 30 percent from 2002 levels by 2016. In June 2009, the USEPA granted California the authority to implement GHG emission reduction standards for light-duty vehicles; in September 2009, amendments to the Pavley I regulations were adopted by CARB, and implementation of the "Pavley I" regulations started in 2009.

The second set of regulations, "Pavley II," was developed in 2010 and is being phased in between model years 2017 through 2025 with the goal of reducing GHG emissions by 45 percent by the year 2020 as compared to the 2002 fleet. The Pavley II standards were developed by linking the GHG emissions and formerly separate toxic tailpipe emissions standards previously known as the "LEV III" (third stage of the Low Emission Vehicle standards) into a single regulatory framework. The new rules reduce emissions from gasoline-powered cars as well as promote zero-emissions auto technologies such as electricity and hydrogen and increase the infrastructure for fueling hydrogen vehicles. In 2009, the USEPA granted California the authority to implement the GHG standards for passenger cars, pickup trucks, and sport utility vehicles; and these GHG emissions standards are currently being implemented nationwide. However, USEPA has performed a midterm evaluation of the longer-term standards for model years 2022 through 2025; and, based on the findings of this midterm evaluation, the USEPA has proposed to amend the corporate average fuel economy (CAFE) and GHG emissions standards for light vehicles for model years 2021 through 2026. The USEPA's proposed amendments do not include any extension of the legal waiver granted to California by the 1970 Clean Air Act which has allowed the State to set tighter standards for vehicle pipe emissions than the USEPA standards. On September 20, 2019, California filed suit over the USEPA decision to revoke California's legal waiver; that suit has been joined by 22 other states.

Local

City of Laguna Beach Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP)

The City's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) is a strategic framework that outlines how a city, its residents, and businesses will reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and prepare for the impacts of climate change through targeted policies, programs, and actions. It typically includes two major components, including mitigation measures to reduce emissions and adaptation strategies to prepare and respond to climate-related hazards. The City's CAAP includes a greenhouse gas inventory, emissions reduction targets, and sector-based strategies (transportation, energy, waste, etc.), along with an implementation plan.

Laguna Beach General Plan

Relevant City General Plan policies related to energy are provided below. Table 4.5-1 discusses the Project's consistency with the City's General Plan policies.

Table 4.5-1: General Plan Consistency

General Plan Polices	Consistency with General Plan	Analysis
Topic 11: Air Quality		
Policy 11-A: Promote the establishment of effective regional, state, and federal standards and programs for control of all airborne pollutants and noxious odors, regardless of source.	Consistent	The City's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) outlines the City's greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions through mitigation measures and adaptation strategies. The Proposed Project demonstrates consistency with the City's CAAP, as it does not exceed SCAQMD established air quality and GHG thresholds and would not deplete energy resources during construction or operation.

4.5.3 Thresholds of Significance

In order to assist in determining whether a project would have a significant effect on the environment, the City utilizes the State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Guidelines. Appendix G states that a project may be deemed to have an energy impact if it would:

Threshold a) **Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation.**

Threshold b) **Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.**

Please refer to **Section 6.1: Effects Found Not to Be Significant** for an evaluation of those topics that were determined to be less than significant or have no impact and do not require further analysis in the EIR.

4.5.4 Methodology

The criteria pollutants and GHG emissions impacts created by the proposed project have been analyzed through use of the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) Version 2022.1.1.32 CalEEMod is a computer model published by the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) for estimating air pollutant and GHG emissions. The CalEEMod program uses the EMFAC2021 computer program to calculate the emission rates specific for Orange County for employee, vendor and haul truck vehicle trips and the OFFROAD2017-ORION v1.0.1 model to calculate emission rates for heavy equipment operations. The OFFROAD2007 and OFFROAD2011 models were also utilized to determine the "Horsepower" and "Load Factor" for the default construction equipment. EMFAC2021 and all versions of OFFROAD computer models are generated by CARB that calculates composite emission rates for vehicles. Emission rates are reported by the program in grams per trip and grams per mile or grams per running hour.

The project characteristics in the CalEEMod model were set to a project location of Orange County, utility companies of Southern California Edison and Southern California Gas (with 2027 forecast factors) and a project opening year of 2027.

4.5.5 Project Impact Analysis

Threshold a) **Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?**

Less than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project consists of the extension of Juanita Way by 18.5 linear feet of road surface to facilitate the creation of a new building site and the potential future construction of a new single-family residence at 2400 Juanita Way, which is a 7,174 square foot lot located adjacent to the northeast side of the current terminus of Juanita Way.

The proposed home would include 3,482 square feet of living area, 462 square feet of garage and mechanical space, approximately 1,430 square feet of hardscaped area, and 1,635 square feet of landscaped area. The proposed road extension is anticipated to disturb up to 1,500 square feet and would include demolition of the existing storm drain system at the road terminus, grading of the road extension area, installation of utilities, construction of a new road terminus storm drain system as well as paving the new road area and repaving the portion of the existing road that was disturbed.

Construction Energy Impacts

Construction of the Proposed Project would require demolition of the existing storm drain system-, site preparation, grading, building construction, architectural coating, and paving. Construction activities would require energy for the manufacture and transportation of building materials, preparation of the site (e.g., demolition, site clearing, and grading), and the actual construction of the building. Petroleum-based fuels such as diesel fuel and gasoline would be the primary sources of energy for these tasks.

Construction-Related Transportation Energy

The off-road construction equipment diesel fuel usage was calculated through use of the off-road equipment assumptions provided in the CalEEMod output files and CARB's off-road equipment fuel use assumptions. The off-road equipment diesel fuel calculations indicate that off-road equipment would consume 8,089 gallons of diesel fuel.

Fuel use associated with construction vehicle trips generated by the Proposed Project was also estimated; trips include construction worker trips, haul truck trips for material transport, and vendor trips for construction material deliveries. Fuel use from these vehicles traveling to the Project site was based on the following:

- The projected number of trips the Proposed Project would generate during construction;
- Average trip distances by trip type; and,
- Average miles per gallon rates estimated in the ARB Emission Factors (EMFAC) mobile source emission model, which found on-road construction-related vehicle trips would consume 771 gallons of gasoline and 625 gallons of diesel fuel during construction of the Proposed Project.

Construction activities associated with the Proposed Project would be required to adhere to all State and SCAQMD regulations for off-road equipment and on-road trucks, which provide minimum fuel efficiency standards. As such, construction activities for the Proposed Project would not result in the wasteful, inefficient, and unnecessary consumption of energy resources. Impacts regarding transportation energy would be less than significant.

Construction-Related Electricity

During construction, the Proposed Project would consume electricity to construct the new structures and infrastructure. Electricity would be supplied to the project site by Southern California Edison and would be obtained from the existing electrical lines in the vicinity of the Project site. The use of electricity from existing power lines rather than temporary diesel or gasoline powered generators would minimize impacts on energy use. Electricity consumed during Project construction would vary throughout the construction period based on the construction activities being performed. Various construction activities include electricity associated with the conveyance of water that would be used during Project construction for dust control (supply and conveyance) and electricity to power any necessary lighting during construction, electronic equipment, or other construction activities necessitating electrical power.

Such electricity demand would be temporary, nominal, and would cease upon the completion of construction. Overall, construction activities associated with the Proposed Project would require limited electricity consumption that would not be expected to have an adverse impact on available electricity supplies and infrastructure. Therefore, the use of electricity during Project construction would not be wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary.

<u>Operational Energy Impacts</u>

The ongoing operation of the Proposed Project would require the use of energy resources for multiple purposes including, but not limited to, heating/ventilating/air conditioning (HVAC), refrigeration, lighting, appliances, and electronics. Energy would also be consumed during operations related to water usage, solid waste disposal, landscape equipment, and vehicle trips.

Operations-Related Electricity

Operation of the Proposed Project would result in consumption of electricity at the Project site. According to the CalEEMod model, operation of the Proposed Project would consume 0.15 kilowatt-hours per year of electricity, which is based on conformance with the State's Title 24, Part 6 that require installation of a rooftop solar PV system and a battery energy storage system into the proposed home as well as enhanced insulation, use of energy efficient lighting and appliances as well as requiring a variety of other energy-efficiency measures to be incorporated into the proposed home.

Therefore, it is anticipated the Proposed Project will be designed and built to minimize electricity use and that existing and planned electricity capacity and electricity supplies would be sufficient to support the proposed project's electricity demand. Thus, impacts with regard to electrical supply and infrastructure capacity would be less than significant and no mitigation measures would be required.

Operations-Related Natural Gas

Operation of the Proposed Project would result in increased consumption of natural gas at the project site. According to the CalEEMod model, operation of the Proposed Project would utilize 38 million British thermal units (BTU) of natural gas per year. The proposed home will be required to meet the 2025 Title 24, Part 6 building energy efficiency standards that require enhanced insulation as well as use of efficient natural gas appliances and HVAC units.

Therefore, it is anticipated the Proposed Project will be designed and built to minimize natural gas use and that existing and planned natural gas capacity and natural gas supplies would be sufficient to support the proposed project's natural gas demand. Thus, impacts with regard to natural gas supply and infrastructure capacity would be less than significant and no mitigation measures would be required.

Operations-Related Transportation Energy

Operation of the Proposed Project would result in increased consumption of petroleum-based fuels related to vehicular travel to and from the Project site. According to the CalEEMod model, operation of the Proposed Project would generate 38,322 vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per year. The EMFAC2025 model shows a Fleet average rate of 22.8 miles per gallons for vehicles in Orange County. As such, operation of the Proposed Project would consume 1,681 gallons of petroleum fuel per year from vehicle travel.

The Proposed Project would comply with all Federal, State, and City requirements related to the consumption of transportation energy that includes California Code of Regulations Title 24, Part 10 California Green Building Standards that require that all new garages to install electrical panels of adequate size to support the installation of electric vehicle charging systems.

Therefore, it is anticipated the Proposed Project will be designed and built to minimize transportation energy through the promotion of the use of electric-powered vehicles and it is anticipated that existing and planned capacity and supplies of transportation fuels would be sufficient to support the Proposed Project's demand. Thus, impacts with regard transportation energy supply and infrastructure capacity would be less than significant and no mitigation measures would be required.

In conclusion, the Proposed Project would comply with regulatory compliance measures outlined by the State and County related to Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG), Transportation/Circulation, and Water Supply. Additionally, the Proposed Project would be constructed in accordance with all applicable

County Building and Fire Codes. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in the wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during project construction or operation. Impacts would be less than significant.

Threshold b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

Less than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project would not conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. The applicable energy-related plans for the Proposed Project include the CAAP and the California Energy Commission's (CEC) Integrated Energy Policy Reports that were prepared per Senate Bill 1389 requirements to provide annual assessments of the major energy trends of California's electricity, natural gas, and transportation fuel sectors.

In summary, the energy usage associated with the ongoing operations of the road extension would be nominal and the proposed single-family home will be required to be designed to meet the 2025 Title 24, Part 6 building energy standards, which require the installation of a solar PV system and battery energy storage system of adequate size to result in net zero energy usage as well as require the installation of an electrical panel of adequate size in the garage to support the installation of electric vehicle charging systems. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. Impacts would be less than significant.

4.5.6 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are defined in CEQA as "two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15355). Stated in another way, "a cumulative impact consists of an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the Project evaluated in the EIR together with other Projects causing relating impacts" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 [a][1]).

Construction-related energy impacts associated with construction-related transportation and electricity and operations-related transportation, electricity, and natural gas would be less than significant. Implementation of the Project would not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during construction or operation, and it would not conflict with a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. Given the Project's limited scope and that no cumulatively considerable construction projects are within one mile of the site, cumulative construction and operations-related energy impacts associated with the Proposed Project would be less than significant.

4.5.7 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required, as all Project impacts regarding air quality are less than significant.

4.5.8 Level of Significance After Mitigation

No mitigation measures are required; thus, impacts related to energy would remain less than significant.

4.6 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

This section addresses the potential for the proposed Project to impact geologic and soil conditions on the Project site. More specifically, this section evaluates impacts associated with the Project that may potentially affect public health and safety or degrade the environment. Issues analyzed in this section include the potential paleontological sensitivity of the Project site, as well as geologic and seismic hazards such as earthquakes, expansion, landform alteration, erosion, and liquefaction that could occur with implementation of the Project. Paleontological resources include vertebrate, invertebrate, and plant fossils. Information contained in this section is summarized from the Cultural Resources Record Search Results and the Geotechnical Report. These documents are included as Appendix D and Appendix E of this EIR, respectively.

4.6.1 Existing Environmental Setting

Regional Setting

The Project site is situated on the northwest flank of a ridgeline extending from the seaward margin of the San Joaquin Hills. The ridge and adjoining hillside has been uplifted over the past million years by tectonic forces acting on this region of southern California. Throughout this tectonic uplift, a succession of marine and non-marine erosional events eroded the adjoining rock and carved out the local canyons, forming the site. Recently, local road building and property development further modified the area to its present configuration and morphology.

Paleontological Significance

According to the Geotechnical Report, the Proposed Project lies on San Onofre Breccia bedrock (also known as Tsob). Previous archeological discoveries from this geological material have included fossil remains of nearshore foraminiferans, bivalve mollusks, reptiles, and mammals (Stuart 1979). Although this geologic material has only yielded sparse fossil remains, these previous discoveries of vertebrae fossils indicate the likely potential for additional discoveries. The paleontological sensitivity of this material is moderate.

Project Site

The Project site is underlain at shallow depths by bedrock strata assigned on the basis of regional mapping to the San Onofre Formation of Miocene Age. Where exposed in the test pits, the breccia member of the formation consists of gravel to cobble size metamorphic angular clasts suspended in a cemented sandstone matrix. The bedrock is mantled by residual soil consisting of dark brown sandy silt and clay.

Bedding within the San Onofre bedrock is often poorly developed and variably cross-bedded. Regional mapping of this portion of the Laguna Beach area indicates bedding typically strikes approximately east-west and dips at 20 to 40 degrees from horizontal to the south. Based on nearby field observations, according to the Geotechnical Report, bedrock strata in the vicinity of the site strikes northeasterly and dips gently to the southeast at approximately 30 degrees from horizontal, perpendicular into the topographic slope. This structural-topographic condition is referred to as “into-slope” or supported structure. This orientation is considered favorable, and generally promotes gross bedrock stability.

4.6.2 Regulatory Setting

Federal

Antiquities Act (16 USC 431–433)

The Antiquities Act of 1906 states, in part, the following:

> That any person who shall appropriate, excavate, injure or destroy any historic or prehistoric ruin or monument, or any object of antiquity, situated on lands owned or controlled by the Government of the United States, without the permission of the Secretary of the Department of the Government having jurisdiction over the lands on which said antiquities are situated, shall upon conviction, be fined in a sum of not more than five hundred dollars or be imprisoned for a period of not more than ninety days, or shall suffer both fine and imprisonment, in the discretion of the court.

Although there is no specific mention of natural or paleontological resources in the act itself or in the act's uniform rules and regulations (43 CFR 3), the term "objects of antiquity" has been interpreted to include fossils by the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, and other federal agencies. Permits to collect fossils on lands administered by federal agencies are authorized under this act. However, due to the large gray areas left open to interpretation due to the imprecision of the wording, agencies are hesitant to interpret this act as governing paleontological resources.

Society for Vertebrate Paleontology Standard Guidelines

The Society for Vertebrate Paleontology (SVP) has established standard guidelines that outline professional protocols and practices for conducting paleontological resource assessments and surveys, monitoring and mitigation, data and fossil recovery, sampling procedures, and specimen preparation, identification, analysis, and curation. The Paleontological Resources Preservation Act (PRPA) of 2009 calls for uniform policies and standards that apply to fossils on all federal public lands. All federal land management agencies are required to develop regulations that satisfy the stipulations of the PRPA. As defined by the SVP, significant nonrenewable paleontological resources are:

> Fossils and fossiliferous deposits here are restricted to vertebrate fossils and their taphonomic and associated environmental indicators. This definition excludes invertebrate or palaeobotanical fossils except when present within a given vertebrate assemblage. Certain invertebrate and plant fossils may be defined as significant by a project paleontologist, local paleontologist, specialists, or special interest groups, or by lead agencies or local governments.

As defined by SVP, significant fossiliferous deposits are:

> A rock unit or formation which contains significant nonrenewable palaeontologic resources, here defined as comprising one or more identifiable vertebrate fossils, large or small, and any associated invertebrate and plant fossils, traces and other data that provide taphonomic, taxonomic, phylogenetic, ecologic, and stratigraphic information (ichnites and trace fossils generated by vertebrate animals, e.g. trackways, or nests and middens which provide datable material and climatic information). Palaeontologic resources are considered to be older than recorded history and/or older than 5,000 years BP [before present].

State

Coastal Act – PRC Section 30253

PRC Section 30253 requires that new development shall do all of the following:

(a) Minimize risks to life and property in areas of high geologic, flood, and fire hazard.

(b) Assure stability and structural integrity, and neither create nor contribute significantly to erosion, geologic instability, or destruction of the site or surrounding area or in any way require the construction of protective devices that would substantially alter natural landforms along bluffs and cliffs.

(c) Be consistent with requirements imposed by an air pollution control district or the State Air Resources Board as to each particular development.

(d) Minimize energy consumption and vehicle miles traveled.

(e) Where appropriate, protect special communities and neighborhoods that, because of their unique characteristics, are popular visitor destination points for recreational uses.

California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 3, Chapter 1

California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 3, Chapter 1, prohibits any person from destroying, disturbing, or mutilating geological features including paleontological resources. This applies to excavation and grading activities that would be performed under the Project.

Public Resources Code, Chapter 1.7, Sections 5097.5

Several sections of the California PRC protect paleontological resources. Section 5097.5 prohibits "knowing and willful" excavation, removal, destruction, injury, and defacement of any paleontological feature on state lands (lands under state, county, city, district, or public authority jurisdiction, or the jurisdiction of a public corporation), except where the agency with jurisdiction has granted express permission.

Local

Laguna Beach General Plan

Relevant General Plan policies related to geology, soils, and seismicity are provided below. Table 4.6-1 discusses the Project's consistency with the General Plan policies.

Table 4.6-1: General Plan Consistency

General Plan Policies	Consistency with General Plan	Analysis
Open Space and Conservation Element		
Topic 12: Archaeology/Paleontology		

Table 4.6-1: General Plan Consistency

General Plan Policies	Consistency with General Plan	Analysis
12-A Promote the conservation of land having archaeological and/or paleontological importance, for its value to scientific research and to better understand the cultural history of Laguna Beach and environs.	Consistent	The Project site is paleontologically sensitive. However, implementation of MM PAL-1 would ensure that impact regarding paleontological resources are less than significant.

4.6.3 Thresholds of Significance

In order to assist in determining whether a project would have a significant effect on the environment, the Lead Agency utilizes the State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Checklist. Appendix G states that a project may be deemed to have impacts to geology and soils if it would:

Threshold f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geological feature?

Please refer to **Section 6.1: Effects Found Not to Be Significant** for an evaluation of **Thresholds a), b), c), d) and e)** that were determined to be less than significant or have no impact and do not require further analysis in the EIR**.**

4.6.4 Methodology

Chambers Group requested a paleontological records search from the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County (NHMLA) on January 28, 2025. This information was requested with the intent to provide further context related to the paleontological sensitivity of the area based on known fossil locations identified within the Project site and study area. The paleontological records provide insight into what associated geological formations are most likely to contain fossils as well as the associated depths and placement of the known fossil locations relative to the geological formations in the area.

On February 2, 2025, Chambers Group received the results of the paleontological records search. The results show that no fossil localities lie directly within the Project site, however, there are two fossil localities documented nearby from the same sedimentary deposits (San Onofre Breccia) that lie directly within the Project site.

4.6.5 Project Impact Analysis

Threshold f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geological feature?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. According to the Geotechnical Report, the Proposed Project lies on San Onofre Breccia bedrock (also known as Tsob). Previous archeological discoveries from this geological material have included fossil remains of nearshore foraminiferans, bivalve mollusks, reptiles, and mammals (Stuart 1979). Although this geologic material has only yielded sparse fossil remains, these previous discoveries of vertebrae fossils indicate the likely potential for additional discoveries.

As discussed in the Cultural Resources Records Search Results, on February 2, 2025, Chambers Group received the results of the paleontological records search. The results show that no fossil localities lie directly within the Project site, however, there are two fossil localities documented nearby from the same sedimentary deposits (San Onofre Breccia) that lie directly within the Project site. One fossil locality is located in Dana Point and the other is located in Laguna Hills.

According to the Orange County Resources Element, the Project site is located in the San Joaquin Hills District, which is considered a sensitive paleontological area (County 1993). The Project would require excavations up to approximately 30 feet for removal of undocumented fill. Deeper excavations could uncover significant fossil remains.

Given the potential for discovery of paleontological resources, MM PALEO-1 will be incorporated to reduce impacts to less than significant.

4.6.6 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are defined in CEQA as "two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15355). Stated in another way, "a cumulative impact consists of an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing relating impacts" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 [a][1]).

Paleontological Resources

Chapter 3.0, Environmental Setting, of this Draft EIR provides a list of related projects that would have the potential to be considered in a cumulative context with the Project's incremental contribution. These projects are summarized in **Table 3.0-1,** *Related Projects*.

Ongoing development and growth in the broader area and in the Project vicinity may result in a cumulatively significant impact to paleontological resources due to the continuing disturbance of undeveloped areas, which could potentially contain significant, buried paleontological resources.

Because there is always a potential to encounter undiscovered fossil or fossil-bearing deposits during construction activities, no matter the location or sensitivity of a particular site**, Mitigation Measure PAL-1** has been included and would serve to protect, preserve, and maintain the integrity and significance of paleontological resources in the event of the unanticipated discovery of a resource.

The individual, Project-level impacts were found to be less than significant with implementation of **Mitigation Measure PAL-1**, and the Project would be required by law to comply with all applicable federal, State, and local requirements related to paleontological resources. Other related cumulative projects would similarly be required to comply with all such requirements and regulations, to be consistent with the provisions set forth by CEQA, and to implement all feasible mitigation measures should a significant project-related or cumulative impact be identified. Impacts would be less than significant in this regard and additional mitigation is not required.

4.6.7 Mitigation Measures

In order to minimize potential impacts to paleontological resources, the following mitigation measures shall be implemented:

PALEO-1: If fossils or fossil-bearing deposits are encountered during ground-disturbing activities, work within a 25-foot radius of the find shall halt, the Director of Community Development shall be notified, and an applicant-retained professional vertebrate paleontologist (as defined by the Society for Vertebrate Paleontology) shall be contacted immediately to evaluate the find. The paleontologist shall have the authority to stop or divert construction, as necessary. Documentation and treatment of the discovery shall occur in accordance with Society of Vertebrate Paleontology standards. The significance of the find shall be evaluated pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines. If the discovery proves to be significant, before construction activities resume at the location of the find additional work such as data recovery excavation may be warranted, as deemed necessary by the paleontologist.

4.6.8 Level of Significance After Mitigation

Impacts regarding paleontological resources would be less than significant with incorporation of MM PAL-1.

4.7 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

This section provides information on potential impacts from the GHG emissions generated either directly or indirectly by the Project. This section also addresses the potential of the Project to conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHGs. Information contained in this section is from the GHG modeling parameter and output prepared for the Project in the *Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Consumption Technical Memorandum,* dated November 14, 2025, prepared by Vista Environmental (Appendix B). This analysis follows the SCAQMD recommendations for preparing a GHG emissions analysis under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

4.7.1 Background Information

Climate change is a recorded change in the Earth's average weather measured by variables such as wind patterns, storms, precipitation, and temperature. Global temperatures are moderated by naturally occurring atmospheric gases, including water vapor, carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), and nitrous oxide (N_2O), which are known as greenhouse gases (GHGs). Historical records show that global temperature changes have occurred naturally in the past, such as during previous ice ages. However, it has been shown that emissions from human activities, such as electricity production and vehicle use, have elevated the concentration of these gases in the atmosphere. The years 2016 and 2020 are tied for the Earth's warmest year since recordkeeping began in 1880, and 16 of the 17 warmest years in the instrumental record occurred since 2001. The average global temperature has risen more than 2.0 °F (1.2 °C) since 1880 (NASA 2021).

The global atmospheric concentration of CO_2 has increased from a pre-industrial (roughly 1750) value of about 280 ppm to a monthly mean value of 414 ppm in December 2020 (NOAA 2021). According to the Global Greenhouse Emissions Data website (USEPA 2014), the breakdown of global GHG emissions by sector consists of: 25 percent from electricity and heat production; 21 percent from industry; 24 percent from agriculture, forestry and other land use activities; 14 percent from transportation; 6 percent from building energy use; and 10 percent from all other sources of energy use.

According to Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks 1990-2018, prepared by USEPA, April 13, 2020, in 2018 total U.S. GHG emissions were 6,676.6 million metric tons (MMT) of CO_2 equivalent (CO_2e) emissions. Total U.S. emissions have increased by 3.7 percent between 1990 and 2018, which is down from a high of 15.2 percent above 1990 levels in 2007. Emissions increased by 2.9 percent or 188.4 $MMTCO_2e$ between 2017 and 2018. The recent increase in GHG emissions was largely driven by an increase in CO_2 emissions from fossil fuel combustion, a result of multiple factors including greater heating and cooling needs due to a colder winter and hotter summer in 2018 compared to 2017.

According to CARB (2020), the State of California created 425 $MMTCO_2e$ in 2018. The breakdown of California GHG emissions by sector consists of: 39.9 percent from transportation, 21.0 percent from industrial, 14.8 percent from electricity generation, 7.7 percent from agriculture, 6.1 percent from residential buildings, and 3.7 percent from commercial buildings. In 2018, GHG emissions were 0.8 $MMTCO_2e$ higher than 2017 levels and are 6 $MMTCO_2e$ below the 2020 GHG limit of 431 $MMTCO_2e$ established by AB 32.

4.7.2 Greenhouse Gases

GHGs are global pollutants and are therefore unlike criteria air pollutants such as ozone (O_3), particulate matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$), and toxic air contaminants (TACs), which are pollutants of regional and local concern (see Section 4.1, Air Quality, of this SEIR). While pollutants with localized air quality effects have relatively short atmospheric lifetimes (generally on the order of a few days), GHGs have relatively long atmospheric lifetimes, ranging from one year to several thousand years. Long atmospheric lifetimes allow GHGs to disperse around the globe. Therefore, GHG effects are global, as opposed to the local and/or regional air quality effects of criteria air pollutant and TAC emissions.

California AB 32 defines greenhouse gases as any of the following compounds: carbon dioxide (CO_2) methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs) and sulfur hexafluoride (SF_6) (California Health and Safety Code Section 38505[g]). CO_2, followed by CH_4 and N_2O, are the most common GHGs that result from human activity.

GHGs have varying global warming potential (GWP). The GWP is the potential of a gas or aerosol to trap heat in the atmosphere; it is the "cumulative radiative forcing effect of a gas over a specified time horizon resulting from the emission of a unit mass of gas relative to a reference gas" (USEPA 2018). The reference gas for GWP is CO_2; therefore, CO_2 has a GWP of 1. The other main greenhouse gases that have been attributed to human activity include CH_4, which has a GWP of 21, and N_2O, which has a GWP of 310. Table 4.7-1 presents the GWP and atmospheric lifetimes of common GHGs.

Table 4.7-1: Global Warming Potentials, Atmospheric Lifetimes, and Abundances of GHGs

Gas	Atmospheric Lifetime (year)[1]	Global Warming Potential (100 Year Horizon)[2]	Atmospheric Abundance
Carbon Dioxide (CO_2)	50-200	1	379 ppm
Methane (CH_4)	9-15	25	1,774 ppb
Nitrous Oxide (N_2O)	114	298	319 ppb
HFC-23	270	14,800	18 ppt
HFC-134a	14	1,430	35 ppt
HFC-152a	1.4	124	3.9 ppt
PFC: Tetrafluoromethane (CF_4)	50,000	7,390	74 ppt
PFC: Hexafluoroethane (C_2F_6)	10,000	12,200	2.9 ppt
Sulfur Hexafluoride (SF_6)	3,200	22,800	5.6 ppt

Notes:
[1] Defined as the half-life of the gas.
[2] Compared to the same quantity of CO_2 emissions and is based on the Intergovernmental Panel On Climate Change (IPCC) 2007 standard, which is utilized in CalEEMod (Version 2016.3.2),that is used in this report (CalEEMod user guide: Appendix A).
Definitions: ppm = parts per million; ppb = parts per billion; ppt = parts per trillion
Source: CAPCOA, 2017

Human-caused sources of CO_2 include combustion of fossil fuels (coal, oil, natural gas, gasoline and wood). Data from ice cores indicate that CO_2 concentrations remained steady prior to the current period for approximately 10,000 years. Concentrations of CO_2 have increased in the atmosphere since the industrial revolution. CH_4 is the main component of natural gas and also arises naturally from anaerobic decay of organic matter. Human-caused sources of natural gas include landfills, fermentation of manure, and cattle farming. Human-caused sources of N_2O include combustion of fossil fuels and industrial processes such as nylon production and production of nitric acid.

Other GHGs are present in trace amounts in the atmosphere and are generated from various industrial or other uses. The sources of GHG emissions, GWP, and atmospheric lifetime of GHGs are all important variables to be considered in the process of calculating CO_2e for discretionary land use projects that require a climate change analysis.

4.7.3 Regulatory Setting

The regulatory setting related to global climate change is addressed through the efforts of various international, federal, State, regional, and local government agencies. These agencies work jointly, as well as individually, to reduce GHG emissions through legislation, regulations, planning, policy-making, education, and a variety of programs. The agencies responsible for global climate change regulations are discussed below.

Federal

The USEPA is responsible for implementing federal policy to address global climate change. The federal government administers a wide array of public-private partnerships to reduce U.S. GHG intensity. These programs focus on energy efficiency, renewable energy, methane and other non-CO_2 gases, agricultural practices, and implementation of technologies to achieve GHG reductions. USEPA implements several voluntary programs that substantially contribute to the reduction of GHG emissions. On December 7, 2009, the USEPA Administrator signed two distinct findings regarding GHGs under section 202(a) of the Clean Air Act. The findings state:

- **Endangerment Finding:** The Administrator finds that the current and projected concentrations of the six key well-mixed greenhouse gases: carbon dioxide (CO_2); methane (CH_4); nitrous oxide (N_2O); hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs); perfluorocarbons (PFCs); and sulfur hexafluoride (SF_6), into the atmosphere, threaten the public health and welfare of current and future generations.

- **Cause or Contribute Finding**: The Administrator finds that the combined emissions of these well-mixed greenhouse gases from new motor vehicles and new motor vehicle engines contribute to the greenhouse gas pollution which threatens public health and welfare.

These findings did not impose any requirements on industry or other entities; however, since 2009 the USEPA has been providing GHG emission standards for vehicles and other stationary sources of GHG emissions that are regulated by the USEPA. On September 13, 2013, the USEPA Administrator signed 40 CFR Part 60, that limits emissions from new sources to 1,100 pounds of CO_2 per MWh for fossil fuel-fired utility boilers and 1,000 pounds of CO_2 per MWh for large natural gas-fired combustion units.

On August 3, 2015, the USEPA announced the Clean Power Plan, emissions guidelines for U.S. states to follow in developing plans to reduce GHG emissions from existing fossil fuel-fired power plants (Federal Register Vol. 80, No. 205, October 23, 2015). On February 9, 2016, the Supreme Court stayed implementation of the Clean Power Plan due to a legal challenge from 29 states; and, in April 2017, the Supreme Court put the case on a 60-day hold and directed both sides to make arguments for whether it should keep the case on hold indefinitely or close it and remand the issue to the USEPA. On October 11, 2017, the USEPA issued a formal proposal to repeal the Clean Power Plan; however, the repeal of the Plan will require following the same rule-making system used to create regulations and will likely result in court challenges.

State

CARB has the primary responsibility for implementing state policy to address global climate change; however, State regulations related to global climate change affect a variety of State agencies. CARB, which is a part of the California Environmental Protection Agency, is responsible for the coordination and administration of both the federal and State air pollution control programs within California. In this capacity, the CARB conducts research, sets CAAQS, compiles emission inventories, develops suggested control measures, provides oversight of local programs, and prepares the SIP. In addition, the CARB establishes emission standards for motor vehicles sold in California, consumer products (e.g., hairspray, aerosol paints, and barbeque lighter fluid), and various types of commercial equipment. It also sets fuel specifications to further reduce vehicular emissions.

In 2008, CARB approved a Climate Change Scoping Plan that proposes a "comprehensive set of actions designed to reduce overall carbon GHG emissions in California, improve our environment, reduce our dependence on oil, diversify our energy sources, save energy, create new jobs, and enhance public health" (CARB 2008). The Climate Change Scoping Plan has a range of GHG reduction actions which include direct regulations; alternative compliance mechanisms; monetary and nonmonetary incentives; voluntary actions; and market-based mechanisms such as a cap-and-trade system. In 2014, CARB approved the First Update to the Climate Change Scoping Plan that identifies additional strategies moving beyond the 2020 targets to the year 2050. On December 14, 2017, CARB adopted California's 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan (CARB 2017) that provides specific statewide policies and measures to achieve the 2030 GHG reduction target of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 and the aspirational 2050 GHG reduction target of 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. On December 15, 2022, CARB adopted the 2022 Scoping Plan, which lays out how California can reduce GHG emissions by 85 percent below 1990 levels and achieve carbon neutrality by 2045. In addition, the State has passed the following laws directing CARB to develop actions to reduce GHG emissions, which are listed below in chronological order, with the most current first.

<u>Executive Order N-79-20</u>

The California Governor issued Executive Order (EO) N-79-20 on September 23, 2020, that requires all new passenger cars and trucks and commercial drayage trucks sold in California to be zero-emissions by the year 2035 and all medium-heavy-duty vehicles (commercial trucks) sold in the state to be zero-emissions by 2045 for all operations where feasible. EO N-79-20 also requires all off-road vehicles and equipment to transition to 100 percent zero-emission equipment, where feasible, by 2035.

<u>Title 24, Part 6, Energy Efficiency Standards</u>

California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 24, Part 6: California's Energy Efficiency Standards for Residential and Nonresidential Buildings (Title 24) was first established in 1978 in response to a legislative mandate to reduce California's energy consumption. The standards are updated periodically to allow consideration and possible incorporation of new energy efficiency technologies and methods. Although it was not originally intended to reduce GHG emissions, electricity production by fossil fuels results in GHG emissions; and energy efficient buildings require less electricity. Therefore, increased energy efficiency results in decreased GHG emissions.

Title 24 standards are updated on a three-year schedule, and the most current 2019 standards went into effect on January 1, 2020. The Title 24 standards now require that the average new home built in California will now use zero-net-energy and that nonresidential buildings will use about 30 percent less energy than the 2016 standards due mainly to lighting upgrades. The 2019 standards also encourage the use of battery storage and heat pump water heaters and require the more widespread use of LED lighting as well as improve a building's thermal envelope through high performance attics, walls, and windows. The 2019 standards also require improvements to ventilation systems by requiring highly efficient air filters to trap hazardous air particulates as well as improvements to kitchen ventilation systems.

Title 24, Part 11, California Green Building Standards

CCR Title 24, Part 11: California Green Building Standards (Title 24) was developed in response to continued efforts to reduce GHG emissions associated with energy consumption. The most current version is the 2019 CALGreen Code, which became effective on January 1, 2020, and replaced the 2016 CALGreen Code.

The CALGreen Code contains requirements for construction site selection, storm water control during construction, construction waste reduction, indoor water use reduction, material selection, natural resource conservation, site irrigation conservation, and more. The code provides for design options that allow the designer to determine how best to achieve compliance for a given site or building condition. The code also requires building commissioning, which is a process for verifying that all building systems (e.g., heating and cooling equipment and lighting systems) are functioning at their maximum efficiency.

The CALGreen Code provides standards for bicycle parking, carpool/vanpool/electric vehicle spaces, light and glare reduction, grading and paving, energy-efficient appliances, renewable energy, graywater systems, water-efficient plumbing fixtures, recycling and recycled materials, pollutant controls (including moisture control and indoor air quality), acoustical controls, storm water management, building design, insulation, flooring, and framing, among others. Implementation of the CALGreen Code measures reduced energy consumption and vehicle trips and encourages the use of alternative-fuel vehicles, which reduces pollutant emissions.

Some of the notable changes in the 2019 CALGreen Code over the prior 2016 CALGreen Code include: an alignment of building code engineering requirements with the national standards that include anchorage requirements for solar panels, provide design requirements for buildings in tsunami zones, increase MERV for air filters from 8 to 13, increase electric vehicle charging requirements in parking areas, and set minimum requirements for use of shade trees.

Renewable Portfolio Standards

The State of California requires that utility providers provide renewable energy to their customers. Senate Bill (SB) 100 was adopted September 2018 and requires that by December 1, 2045, 100 percent of retail sales of electricity be generated from renewable or zero-carbon emission sources of electricity. SB 100 supersedes the renewable energy requirements set by SB 350, SB 1078, SB 107, and SB X1-2. SB 100 codified the interim renewable energy thresholds from the prior Bills of: 33 percent by 2020; 40 percent by December 31, 2024; 45 percent by December 31, 2027; and 50 percent by December 31, 2030.

Executive Order B-30-15, Senate Bill 32 & Assembly Bill 197 (Statewide Year 2030 GHG Targets)

California EO B-30-15 (April 29, 2015) set an "interim" statewide emission target to reduce greenhouse emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 and directed State agencies with jurisdiction over greenhouse gas emissions to implement measures pursuant to statutory authority to achieve this 2030 target and the 2050 target of 80 percent below 1990 levels. Specifically, the EO directed CARB to update the Scoping Plan to express this 2030 target in metric tons. Assembly Bill 197 (AB 197) (September 8, 2016) and SB 32 (September 8, 2016) codified into statute the GHG emissions reduction targets of at least 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 as detailed in EO B-30-15. AB 197 also requires additional GHG emissions reporting to CARB from stationary sources and requires CARB to provide sources of GHG emissions on its website that is broken down to sub-county levels. AB 197 requires CARB to consider the social costs of emissions impacting disadvantaged communities.

Executive Order B-29-15 and Senate Bill X7-7, Water Conservation Measures

The Water Conservation Act of 2009 sets an overall goal of reducing per-capita urban water use by 20 percent by December 31, 2020. The state is required to make incremental progress toward this goal by reducing per-capita water use by at least 10 percent by December 31, 2015. This is an implementing measure of the Water Sector of the AB 32 Scoping Plan. Reduction in water consumption directly reduces the energy necessary and the associated emissions to convene, treat, and distribute the water; it also reduces emissions from wastewater treatment.

The Department of Water Resources adopted a regulation on February 16, 2011, that sets forth criteria and methods for exclusion of industrial process water from the calculation of gross water use for purposes of urban water management planning. The regulation would apply to all urban retail water suppliers required to submit an Urban Water Management Plan, as set forth in the Water Code, Division 6, Part 2.6, Sections 10617 and 10620.

On April 1, 2015, the California Governor issued Executive Order B-29-15 that directed the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to impose restrictions to achieve a statewide 25-percent reduction in urban water usage and directed the Department of Water Resources to replace 50 million square feet of lawn with drought-tolerant landscaping through an update to the State's Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance. The Ordinance also requires installation of more efficient irrigation systems, promotes usage of greywater and onsite stormwater capture, and limits the turf planted in new residential landscapes to 25 percent of the total area and restricts turf from being planted in median strips or in parkways unless the parkway is next to a parking strip where a flat surface is required to enter and exit vehicles. EO B-29-15 and SB X7-7 would reduce GHG emissions associated with the energy used to transport and filter water.

Senate Bill 97 and Amendments to the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines

SB 97 directed the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) to adopt amendments to the CEQA Guidelines that require evaluation of GHG emissions or the effects of GHG emissions by January 1, 2010. The CNRA has done so, and the amendments to the CEQA Guidelines, in a new Section 15064.4, entitled Determining the Significance of Impacts from Greenhouse Gas Emissions, provide that:

a) The determination of the significance of greenhouse gas emissions calls for a careful judgment by the lead agency consistent with the provisions in Section 15064. A lead agency should make a good-faith effort, based to the extent possible on scientific and factual data, to describe, calculate, or estimate the amount of greenhouse gas emissions resulting from a project.

b) A lead agency should consider the following factors, among others, when assessing the significance of impacts from greenhouse gas emissions on the environment.

   1) The extent to which the project may increase or reduce greenhouse gas emissions as compared to the existing environmental setting;

   2) Whether the project emissions exceed a threshold of significance that the lead agency determines applies to the project; and

   3) The extent to which the project complies with regulations or requirements adopted to implement a statewide, regional, or local plan for the reduction or mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions. Such requirements must be adopted by the relevant public agency through a public review process and must reduce or mitigate the project's incremental contribution of greenhouse gas emissions.

The amendments also add a new Section 15126.4(c), Mitigation Measures Related to Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Generally, this State CEQA Guidelines section requires lead agencies to consider feasible means—supported by substantial evidence and subject to monitoring or reporting—of mitigating the significant effects of GHG emissions. Potential measures to mitigate the significant effects of GHG emissions are identified, including those outlined in Appendix F, Energy Conservation, of the State CEQA Guidelines.

Senate Bill 375

SB 375 was adopted September 2008 in order to support the State's climate action goals to reduce GHG emissions through coordinated regional transportation planning efforts, regional GHG emission reduction targets, and land use and housing allocation. SB 375 requires CARB to set regional targets for GHG emissions reductions from passenger vehicle use. In 2010, CARB established targets for 2020 and 2035 for each Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) within the state. It was up to each MPO to adopt a sustainable communities strategy (SCS) that will prescribe land use allocation in that MPO's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) to meet CARB's 2020 and 2035 GHG emission reduction targets. These reduction targets are required to be updated every eight years; and in June 2017 CARB released Staff Report Proposed Update to the SB 375 Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Target, which provided recommended GHG emissions reduction targets for Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) of 8 percent by 2020 and 21 percent by 2035.

The 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS), adopted by SCAG April 7, 2016, provides a 2020 GHG emission reduction target of 8 percent and a 2035 GHG emission reduction target of 18 percent. SCAG will need to develop additional strategies in its next revision of the RTP/SCS in order to meet CARB's new 21-percent GHG emission reduction target for 2035. CARB is also charged with reviewing SCAG's RTP/SCS for consistency with its assigned targets.

Assembly Bill 32, The California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006

The California Legislature adopted the public policy position that global warming is "a serious threat to the economic well-being, public health, natural resources, and the environment of California" (California Health and Safety Code, Section 38501). Further, the State Legislature has determined that:

> "…the potential adverse impacts of global warming include the exacerbation of air quality problems, a reduction in the quality and supply of water to the state from the Sierra Nevada snowpack, a rise in sea levels resulting in the displacement of thousands of coastal businesses and residences, damage to marine ecosystems and the natural environment, and an increase in the incidences of infectious disease, asthma, and other human health-related problems."

The State Legislature also states that:

> "Global warming will have detrimental effects on some of California's largest industries, including agriculture, wine, tourism, skiing, recreational and commercial fishing, and forestry. It will also increase the strain on electricity supplies necessary to meet the demand for summer air-conditioning in the hottest parts of the State (California Health and Safety Code, Section 38501)."

These public policy statements became law with the enactment of AB 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, signed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in September 2006. AB 32 is now codified as Sections 38500 through 38599 of the California Health and Safety Code.

AB 32 requires that statewide GHG emissions be reduced to 1990 levels by 2020. This reduction is to be accomplished through an enforceable statewide cap on GHG emissions to be phased in starting in 2012. AB 32 directs CARB to establish this statewide cap based on 1990 GHG emissions levels; to disclose how it arrived at the cap; to institute a schedule to meet the emissions cap; and to develop tracking, reporting, and enforcement mechanisms. Emissions reductions under AB 32 are to include carbon sequestration projects and best management practices that are technologically feasible and cost effective. As of the date of this Draft SEIR, CARB has not promulgated GHG emissions or reporting standards that are directly applicable to the Project.

Executive Order S-3-05

On June 1, 2005, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed EO S-3-05, which proclaims that California is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. It declares that increased temperatures could reduce snowpack in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, could further exacerbate California's air quality problems, and could potentially cause a rise in sea levels. In an effort to avoid or reduce the impacts of climate change, EO S-3-05 calls for a reduction in GHG emissions to the year 2000 level by 2010, to year 1990 levels by 2020, and to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. It should be noted that the 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050 is currently an aspirational goal by EO S-3-05 but has not yet been codified into law.

Assembly Bill 1493, Clean Car Standards

AB 1493, adopted September 2002, also known as Pavley I, requires the development and adoption of regulations to achieve the maximum feasible reduction of GHGs emitted by noncommercial passenger vehicles, light-duty trucks, and other vehicles used primarily for personal transportation in the state.

Although setting emissions standards on automobiles is solely the responsibility of the USEPA, the federal Clean Air Act allows California to set state-specific emission standards on automobiles if the State first obtains a waiver from the USEPA. The USEPA granted California that waiver on July 1, 2009. The emission standards become increasingly more stringent through the 2016 model year. California is also committed to further strengthening these standards beginning in 2017 to obtain a 45-percent GHG reduction from 2020 model year vehicles (CARB 2009).

The second set of regulations, "Pavley II," was developed in 2010 and is being phased in between model years 2017 through 2025 with the goal of reducing GHG emissions by 45 percent by the year 2020 as compared to the 2002 fleet. The Pavley II standards were developed by linking the GHG emissions and formerly separate toxic tailpipe emissions standards previously known as the "LEV III" (third stage of the Low Emission Vehicle standards) into a single regulatory framework. The new rules reduce emissions from gasoline-powered cars as well as promote zero-emissions auto technologies such as electricity and hydrogen through increasing the infrastructure for fueling hydrogen vehicles. In 2009, the USEPA granted California the authority to implement the GHG standards for passenger cars, pickup trucks, and sport utility vehicles; and these GHG emissions standards are currently being implemented nationwide. However, USEPA has performed a midterm evaluation of the longer-term standards for model years 2022-2025; and, based on the findings of this midterm evaluation, the USEPA has proposed to amend the CAFE and GHG emissions standards for light vehicles for model years 2021 through 2026. The USEPA's proposed amendments do not include any extension of the legal waiver granted to California by the 1970 Clean Air Act which has allowed the State to set tighter standards for vehicle pipe emissions than the USEPA standards. On September 20, 2019, California filed suit over the USEPA decision to revoke California's legal waiver that has been joined by 22 other states.

2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality

The 2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality (2022 Scoping Plan), adopted by California Air Resources Board (CARB) on November 16, 2022 lays out a path to achieve targets for carbon neutrality and reduce anthropogenic GHG emissions by 85 percent below 1990 levels no later than 2045, as directed by Assembly Bill 1279.

Regional

South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD)

The South Coast Air Quality Management District is the agency principally responsible for comprehensive air pollution control in the Air Basin. To that end, as a regional agency, the SCAQMD works directly with the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), county transportation commissions, and local governments and cooperates actively with all federal and state agencies. SCAQMD develops rules and regulations, establishes permitting requirements for stationary sources, inspects emission sources, and enforces such measures through educational programs or fines, when necessary. SCAQMD is directly responsible for reducing emissions from stationary, mobile, and indirect sources.

Local

City of Laguna Beach Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP)

The City's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) is a strategic framework that outlines how a city, its residents, and businesses will reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and prepare for the impacts of climate change through targeted policies, programs, and actions. It typically includes two major components, including mitigation plans to reduce emissions and adaptation strategies to prepare and respond to climate-related hazards. The City's CAAP includes a greenhouse gas inventory, emissions reduction targets, and sector-based strategies (transportation, energy, waste, etc.), along with an implementation plan.

Applicable CAAP Implementation Actions for new residential development include:

- Action 3.1: Requires the preparation of an energy efficient audit
- Action 8.2: Requires new residential buildings to install solar PV systems and battery energy storage systems

The City's CAAP that was prepared in 2025 has incorporated all of the most current State Plans and Regulations, including the 2022 Scoping Plan. Since the CAAP was prepared to allow for streamlining of a project's GHG analysis, it is not necessary for individual projects in the City to also show consistency with the Statewide Plans.

Laguna Beach General Plan

Relevant City General Plan policies related to greenhouse gases are provided below. Table 4.7-2 discusses the Project's consistency with the City's General Plan policies.

Table 4.7-2: General Plan Consistency

General Plan Polices	Consistency with General Plan	Analysis
Topic 11: Air Quality		
Policy 11-A: Promote the establishment of effective regional, state, and federal standards and programs for control of all airborne pollutants and noxious odors, regardless of source.	Consistent	The City's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) outlines the City's greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions through mitigation measures and adaptation strategies. The Proposed Project demonstrates consistency with the City's CAAP, as it does not exceed SCAQMD established air quality and GHG thresholds and would not deplete energy resources during construction or operation.

Thresholds of Significance

In order to assist in determining whether a project would have a significant effect on the environment, the City utilizes the State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Guidelines. Appendix G states that a project may be deemed to have greenhouse gas impacts if it would:

Threshold a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment.

Threshold b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases.

4.7.4 Methodology

The criteria pollutants and GHG emissions impacts created by the proposed project have been analyzed through use of the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) Version 2022.1.1.32 CalEEMod is a computer model published by the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) for estimating air pollutant and GHG emissions. The CalEEMod program uses the EMFAC2021 computer program to calculate the emission rates specific for Orange County for employee, vendor and haul truck vehicle trips and the OFFROAD2017-ORION v1.0.1 model to calculate emission rates for heavy equipment operations. The OFFROAD2007 and OFFROAD2011 models were also utilized to determine the “Horsepower” and “Load Factor” for the default construction equipment. EMFAC2021 and all versions of OFFROAD computer models are generated by CARB that calculates composite emission rates for vehicles. Emission rates are reported by the program in grams per trip and grams per mile or grams per running hour.

The Project characteristics in the CalEEMod model were set to a project location of Orange County, utility companies of Southern California Edison and Southern California Gas (with 2027 forecast factors) and a Project opening year of 2027.

The analysis presented below covers all anticipated impacts resulting from development of the proposed road and potential single-family residence.

4.7.5 Project Impact Analysis

Threshold a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

Less than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project consists of the extension of Juanita Way by 18.5 linear feet of road surface to facilitate the creation of a new building site and the potential future construction of a new single-family residence at 2400 Juanita Way, which is a 7,174 square foot lot located adjacent to the northeast side of the current terminus of Juanita Way. The proposed home would include 3,482 square feet of living area, 462 square feet of garage and mechanical space, approximately 1,430 square feet of hardscaped area, and 1,635 square feet of landscaped area. The proposed road extension is anticipated to disturb up to 1,500 square feet and would include demolition of the existing storm drain system at the road terminus, grading of the road extension area, installation of utilities, construction of a new road terminus storm drain system as well as paving the new road area and repaving the portion of the existing road that was disturbed.

The Proposed Project would not generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment. The City has adopted a qualified Climate Action & Adaptation Plan (CAAP) that requires all new development projects in the City to streamline their GHG impact analysis by demonstrating compliance with the CAAP. In order to show compliance with the CAAP, quantification of the Proposed Project’s GHG emissions are not required. As such, the Proposed Project’s GHG emissions have been provided for informational purposes only.

The Proposed Project is anticipated to generate GHG emissions from mobile sources, area sources, energy usage, waste disposal, water usage, refrigeration, and construction equipment. The Project's GHG emissions have been calculated with the CalEEMod model and the results is shown below in 4.7-3.

Table 4.7-3: Project Related Greenhouse Gas Annual Emissions

Category	Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Metric Tons per Year)			
	CO_2	CH_4	N_2O	CO_2e
Mobile Sources[1]	13.0	<0.01	<0.01	13.0
Area Sources[2]	0.26	<0.01	<0.01	0.26
Energy Usage[3]	2.00	<0.01	<0.01	2.00
Water and Wastewater[4]	0.10	<0.01	<0.01	2.00
Solid Waste[5]	0.07	0.01	0.00	0.25
Refrigeration[6]	--	--	--	<0.01
Construction[7]	3.03	<0.01	<0.01	3.03
Proposed Project Total GHG Emissions	**18.5**	**0.01**	**<0.01**	**18.7**
SCAQMD Draft Threshold of Significance				**3,000**

Notes:
[1] Mobile sources consist of GHG emissions from vehicles.
[2] Area sources consist of GHG emissions from consumer products, architectural coatings, hearths and landscaping equipment.
[3] Energy usage consists of GHG emissions from electricity and natural gas usage.
[4] Water includes GHG emissions from electricity used for transport of water and processing of wastewater.
[5] Solid Waste includes the CO_2 and CH_4 emissions created from the solid waste placed in landfills.
[6] Refrigeration includes GHG emissions from refrigerants in air conditioning units.
[7] Construction emissions amortized over 30 years as recommended in the SCAQMD GHG Working Group on November 19, 2009.
Source: CalEEMod Version 2022.1.

The data provided in Table 4.7-3 above shows that the Proposed Project would create 18.7 $MTCO_2e$ per year. For reference purposes, Table 4.7-3 also shows the SCAQMD's draft threshold of significance (3,000 $MTCO_2e$ emissions), which the Proposed Project is well below this threshold. Therefore, a less than significant generation of GHG emissions would occur from development of the Proposed Project. Impacts would be less than significant.

Threshold b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

Less than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project would not conflict with any applicable plan, policy or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions. As detailed above, the applicable plan for the Proposed Project is the CAAP. The CAAP was prepared to reduce GHG emissions 85 percent below estimated 1990 levels and achieve carbon neutrality by 2045, which meets the State reduction targets that were codified in AB 1279.

As discussed in Threshold a), the Proposed Project would be well below the SCAQMD threshold for GHG emissions. The Proposed Project would not impede the implementation of any Strategy Actions identified in the CAAP. Implementation of the CAAP is primarily conducted by the City. However, the CAAP provides Implementation Actions for new residential development, including:

- Action 3.1: Requires the preparation of an energy efficient audit

- Action 8.2: Requires new residential buildings to install solar PV systems and battery energy storage systems.

CAAP action items will be enforced through the City's building permit plan check and review process. During plan review, project plans are evaluated for compliance with applicable building and energy codes, including State and local energy standards that implement the CAAP. Approval of building permits is contingent upon demonstrating consistency with these requirements, thereby ensuring that applicable CAAP measures are incorporated into the final project design and construction. Through implementation of the Action items in the CAAP for new residential development, the Proposed Project would be consistent with the CAAP.

The City's CAAP that was prepared in 2025 has incorporated all of the most current State Plans and Regulations, including the 2022 Scoping Plan. Since the CAAP was prepared to allow for streamlining of a project's GHG analysis, and the Project is consistent with the CAAP, the Project is therefore consistent with the Statewide Plans. Impacts are less than significant.

4.7.6 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are defined in CEQA as "two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15355). Stated in another way, "a cumulative impact consists of an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing relating impacts" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 [a][1]).

The California Air Pollution Control Officers Association's (CAPCOA's) *CEQA and Climate Change Report* states, "GHG impacts are exclusively cumulative impacts; there are no non-cumulative GHG emission impacts from a climate change perspective" (CAPCOA 2008). Because the magnitude of global GHG emissions is extremely large compared with the emissions of typical development projects, it is accepted as very unlikely that any individual development project would have GHG emissions of a magnitude to directly impact global climate change.

As detailed above, the GHG emissions created from the Proposed Project would not exceed either the SCAQMD 3,000 $MTCO_2e$ emissions threshold and would be consistent with all applicable plans for reducing GHG emissions. Cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

4.7.7 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required, as all Project impacts regarding greenhouse gases are less than significant.

4.7.8 Level of Significance After Mitigation

Impacts related to GHGs would be less than significant. No mitigation measures would be required.

4.8 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

This section discusses the potential hazards and hazardous materials impacts that would occur in association with implementation of the Proposed Project. The discussion focuses on hazardous materials and hazards requiring remediation or mechanisms to prevent accidental release.

4.8.1 Existing Environmental Setting

Regional Setting

Located east from the Project site, the existing residential neighborhood generally consists of dead-end streets bisected by Alta Vista Way and terraced across the steep hillside slope. The hillside neighborhood is characterized by dense single-family development with surrounding open space. Surrounding land uses around the Project site include single-family residences to the south and east, with open space area to the north that separates this R-1 neighborhood from the developed portions of the Diamond/Crestview and Arch Beach Heights neighborhoods. Land use in the broader region is predominantly open space and residential, with limited industrial or commercial activity.

According to the City's General Plan 2025 updated Safety Element, the City is vulnerable to wildfire and urban fire events, earthquakes, instability from geologic conditions, and flooding from both stormwater runoff or tidal conditions. The region is served by the Laguna Beach Fire Department and is subject to periodic wildfire risk due to its topography, dry climate, and native vegetation.

Project Site

The Project site is not located within a designated Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone or within a known hazardous waste site according to the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) EnviroStor database and State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Geotracker database. Due to the steep hillside topography and dry brush of the area, the Project site is located in a Local Responsibility Area (LRA), and in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) (CalFire2025).

Federal and State Database Review

The primary reason for defining potentially hazardous sites is to protect health and safety and to minimize the public's exposure to hazardous materials during Project construction and waste handling. Exposure can occur during normal use, handling, storage, transportation, and disposal of hazardous materials. Exposure may also occur due to hazardous compounds existing in the environment, such as fuels in underground storage tanks, pipelines, or areas where chemicals have leaked into the soil or groundwater. If encountered, contaminated soil may qualify as hazardous waste, thus requiring handling and disposal according to local, State, and federal regulations. Table 4.8-1 below lists the contaminated sites identified within 5 miles of the Project site.

Table 4.8-1: Contaminated Sites within 5 Miles of the Project Site

Site Name	Address	City	Site/Facility Type	Cleanup Status	Distance from Project Site
San Clemente Rad Station X-40	3300 Alta Laguna Blvd	Laguna Beach, CA 92651	Military Evaluation	Inactive – Needs Evaluation	2.02 miles

Michel's Cleaners	21 Monarch Bay Plaza	Dana Point, CA 92629	Evaluation	Refer: 1248 Local Agency	3.55 miles
Abalone Point FC Station	2565 Riviera Drive	Laguna Beach, CA 92651	Military Evaluation	Inactive – Needs Evaluation	3.62 miles
Elementary School	Aliso Creek Road/Niguel Heights Blvd	Laguna Niguel, CA 92656	School Investigation	No Action Required	4.02 miles
Proposed Community School #8	Paseo De Colinas	Laguna Niguel, CA 92677	School Investigation	No Action Required	4.57 miles
Laguna Niguel Elementary School	Moulton Parkway/Aliso Niguel	Laguna Niguel, CA 92656	School Investigation	Inactive – Needs Evaluation	4.62 miles
Dana Hills High School Performing Arts Theatre	33333 Golden Lantern	Dana Point, CA 92626	School Investigation	No Further Action	5.09 miles
Source: DTSC Envirostor 2025					

EnviroStor, which is administered by the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), provides existing information on permits and corrective action at hazardous waste facilities, as well as site cleanup projects. Review of EnviroStor indicates the Project site is not on a hazardous waste cleanup site. The nearest hazardous waste cleanup site is the San Clemente Rad Station X-40 located 2.02 miles northeast.

GeoTracker, which is administered by the SWRCB, is used to track and archive compliance data from authorized or unauthorized discharges of waste to land, or unauthorized releases of hazardous substances from underground storage tanks (UST). GeoTracker indicates the Project is not on a hazardous waste cleanup site. The nearest hazardous waste cleanup sites consist of five Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) Cleanup sites situated along South Coast Highway, including Unocal 76 (0.66 miles southwest), M.B.M Auto (0.44 miles northwest), Texaco (0.48 miles northwest), Laguna Auto Service (0.52 miles northwest), and Tices Rentals (0.56 miles northwest). According to the GeoTracker database, all five sites have a status of "Completed – Case Closed," indicating that no further action is required.

EnviroMapper, which is administered by the USEPA, includes geographic information, such as locations of federal Superfund sites and other hazardous materials sites. Review of EnviroMapper indicates there are no hazardous waste sites within a 2-mile radius of the Project site.

According to the California Department of Conservation Geologic Energy Management Division's (CalGEM) Well Finder database, there is one idle well 0.57 miles northeast of the Project site.

Sensitive Receptors

Sensitive receptors are generally defined as facilities that house or attract groups of children, the elderly, people with illnesses, or others who are especially sensitive to health and safety impacts. Schools, hospitals, residential areas, and convalescent facilities are examples of sensitive receptors. As the Proposed Project is located in a residential neighborhood, the closest sensitive receptors are homes located immediately adjacent to the Project site. Additionally, the Project site is not located within 0.25-mile of an existing or proposed school.

4.8.2 Regulatory Setting

Federal

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act

Enacted in 1976, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) grants authority to the USEPA to control hazardous waste from start to finish. This covers the production, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste. The RCRA also sets forth a framework for the management of non-hazardous solid waste. The 1984 Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments (HSWA) enabled the USEPA to address environmental problems that could result from underground tanks storing petroleum and other hazardous substances.

Hazardous Materials Transport Regulations

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) regulates transportation of hazardous materials between states. The USDOT Federal Railroad Administration enforces the hazardous materials regulations, which are promulgated by the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration for rail transportation. These regulations include requirements that railroads and other transporters of hazardous materials, as well as shippers, have and adhere to security plans and also train employees involved in offering, accepting, or transporting hazardous materials on both safety and security matters. Additionally, the Federal Hazardous Materials Transportation Law is enforced by the USDOT's Federal Highway Administration with the purpose of protecting risks to life, property, and the environment resulting from the transportation of hazardous materials.

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) is a program created to implement the Clean Water Act. The SWRCB and the nine regional water boards administer NPDES to regulate and monitor discharged waters and to ensure they meet water quality standards.

Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA)

Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) ensures safe working conditions for America's workers by reducing hazards in the workplace. OSHA sets specific safety and health standards for the workplace, offering trainings, education, and outreach to workers. The Project would be subject to OSHA requirements during construction, operation, and maintenance.

Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act

The Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) of 1986 (42 USC Section 11001, et seq.) was created to help communities plan for chemical emergencies. It requires facilities to report on the storage, use, and releases of hazardous substances to federal, state, and local governments. The Community Right-to-Know provisions help increase the public's knowledge and access to information on chemicals at individual facilities, their uses, and releases into the environment

State

Coastal Act – PRC Section 30232

PRC Section mandates that protection against the spillage of crude oil, gas, petroleum products, or hazardous substances shall be provided in relation to any development or transportation of such materials. Effective containment and cleanup facilities and procedures shall be provided for accidental spills that do occur.

Coastal Act – PRC Section 30253

PRC Section 30253 requires that new development shall do all of the following:

(a) Minimize risks to life and property in areas of high geologic, flood, and fire hazard.

(b) Assure stability and structural integrity, and neither create nor contribute significantly to erosion, geologic instability, or destruction of the site or surrounding area or in any way require the construction of protective devices that would substantially alter natural landforms along bluffs and cliffs.

(c) Be consistent with requirements imposed by an air pollution control district or the State Air Resources Board as to each particular development.

(d) Minimize energy consumption and vehicle miles traveled.

(e) Where appropriate, protect special communities and neighborhoods that, because of their unique characteristics, are popular visitor destination points for recreational uses.

Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations

Hazardous Materials Defined

A material is considered hazardous if it appears on a list of hazardous materials prepared by a federal, state, or local agency or if it has characteristics defined as hazardous by such an agency. According to Title 22, Section 66260.10, of the CCR, a hazardous material is defined as:

> …A substance or combination of substances which, because of its quantity, concentration, or physical, chemical or infectious characteristics, may either (1) cause, or significantly contribute to an increase in mortality or an increase in serious irreversible, or incapacitating reversible, illness; or, (2) pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or environment when improperly treated, stored, transported or disposed of or otherwise managed.

Chemical and physical properties that cause a substance to be considered hazardous include the properties of toxicity, ignitability, corrosivity, and reactivity (Title 22, Sections 66261.20 through 66261.24). Factors that influence the health effects of exposure to hazardous materials include dosage, frequency, the exposure pathway, and individual susceptibility. The Proposed Project would require use of small amounts of hazardous materials (such as diesel fuel, oil, and grease for heavy equipment) during construction, operation, and reclamation.

California Environmental Protection Agency

The CalEPA and the SWRCB establish rules governing the use of hazardous materials and the management of hazardous waste. Applicable State and local laws include the following:

- Public Safety/Fire Regulations/Building Codes
- Hazardous Waste Control Law
- Hazardous Substances Information and Training Act
- Air Toxics Hot Spots and Emissions Inventory Law
- Underground Storage of Hazardous Substances Act
- Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

Small quantities of hazardous materials will be used and stored on site for miscellaneous, general maintenance activities that would be subject to State and local laws.

California/Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA)

The Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH), better known as Cal/OSHA, protects workers from health and safety hazards on the job in almost every workplace in California through its research and standards, enforcement, and consultation programs.

Hazardous Materials Management Plans

In January 1996, CalEPA adopted regulations implementing a Unified Hazardous Waste and Hazardous Materials Management Regulatory Program (Unified Program). The six program elements of the Unified Program are hazardous waste generators and hazardous waste onsite treatment, underground storage tanks, aboveground storage tanks, hazardous material release response plans and inventories, risk management and prevention program, and Uniform Fire Code hazardous materials management plans and inventories. The program is implemented at the local level by a local agency—the Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA). The CUPA is responsible for consolidating the administration of the six program elements within its jurisdiction.

State and federal laws require detailed planning to ensure that hazardous materials are properly handled, used, stored, and disposed of, and, in the event that such materials are accidentally released, to prevent or to mitigate injury to health or the environment.

Hazardous Materials Disclosure Program

The Hazardous Materials Disclosure Program is found within the provisions of the California Health and Safety Code, Division 20, Chapter 6.95, Article 1. CUPAs are required to implement this Hazardous Materials Disclosure Program by reporting and disclosing the storage, use, or handling of hazardous materials on a site as a strategic measure to minimize loss of life and property. In addition, Hazardous Materials Business Plans must be submitted by all businesses that handle more than a threshold quantity of hazardous materials.

California Accidental Release Prevention Program

The California Accidental Release Prevention Program (CalARP) is found within the provisions of the California Health and Safety Code, Division 2, Chapter 4.5. CalARP is implemented at the local level by

CUPAs as a strategy to minimize the accidental releases of stationary substances that can cause harm to the general public and the environment. Businesses are required to develop risk management plans if more than a threshold quantity of regulated substances is handled.

California Hazardous Materials Release Response Plans and Inventory Law

The California Hazardous Materials Release Response Plans and Inventory Law of 1985 (Business Plan Act) requires hazardous materials business plans to be prepared and inventories of hazardous materials to be disclosed. A business plan includes an inventory of the hazardous materials handled, facility floor plans showing where hazardous materials are stored, an emergency response plan, and provisions for employee safety and emergency response training (Health and Safety Code, Division 20, Chapter 6.95, Article 1.).

Department of Toxic Substances Control

The DTSC has primary regulatory responsibility for the management of hazardous materials and the generation, transport, and disposal of hazardous waste under the authority of the Hazardous Waste Control Law (HWCL). Enforcement is delegated to local jurisdictions that enter into agreements with DTSC.

California's Secretary of Environmental Protection established a unified hazardous waste and hazardous materials management regulatory program as required by Health and Safety Code Chapter 6.11. The unified program consolidates, coordinates, and makes consistent portions of the following six existing programs:

- Hazardous Waste Generations and Hazardous Waste Onsite Treatment
- Underground Storage Tanks
- Hazardous Material Release Response Plans and Inventories
- California Accidental Release Prevention Program
- Aboveground Storage Tanks (spill control and countermeasure plan only)
- Uniform Fire Code Hazardous Material Management Plans and Inventories

The statute requires all counties to apply to the CalEPA Secretary for the certification of a local unified program agency. Qualified cities are also permitted to apply for certification. The local CUPA is required to consolidate, coordinate, and make consistent the administrative requirements, permits, fee structures, and inspection and enforcement activities for these six program elements within the county. Most CUPAs have been established as a function of a local environmental health or fire department.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal participates in all levels of the CUPA program including regulatory oversight, CUPA certifications, evaluations of the approved CUPAs, training, and education. The DTSC serves as the CUPA in Imperial County.

Small quantities of hazardous materials will be transported to and from the Project area and used and stored on site for miscellaneous general operations and maintenance activities.

Government Code Section 65962.5 (Cortese List)

The provisions of Government Code Section 65962.5 are commonly referred to as the Cortese List. The Cortese List is a planning document used by State and local agencies to provide information about hazardous materials release sites. Government Code Section 65962.5 requires CalEPA to develop an updated Cortese List annually, at minimum. DTSC is responsible for a portion of the information contained in the Cortese List. Other State and local government agencies are required to provide additional hazardous material release information for the Cortese List.

California Emergency Response Plan

California has developed an emergency response plan to coordinate emergency services provided by federal, State, and local governments and private agencies. Response to hazardous material incidents is one part of this plan. The plan is managed by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, which coordinates the responses of other agencies, including CalEPA, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) and the RWQCB.

Local

Laguna Beach General Plan

The City of Laguna Beach General Plan is a policy document that establishes the goals, policies, and directions the City will take to achieve the vision of the community and guide the future development of the City. The City of Laguna Beach General Plan contains a Safety Element, updated in 2025, outlining goals and policies related to fire hazards, seismic and geologic hazards, flood hazards, climate adaptation, shoreline protection, and hazardous materials and wastes. The City's General Plan Transportation, Circulation, and Growth Management Element "Emergency Response and Street Design" section describes street conditions necessary to maintain adequate access for fire trucks, ambulances, and other emergency vehicles. Emergency vehicle access may be constrained by inadequate width, overcrowded parking conditions, or insufficient pavement and excessive street grade. Criteria to determine effective street design may differ throughout the City due to its diverse landscape. Table 4.8-2 identifies the General Plan goals, policies, objectives, and programs that are relevant to the City's General Plan Safety Element and Transportation, Circulation, and Growth Management Element and summarizes the Project's consistency.

The City's General Plan Safety Element describes the City's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), which includes a range of emergency management strategies such as mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. The EOP and Local Hazard Management Plan (LHMP) aim to identify and proactively mitigate human-caused hazards through policies and procedural actions.

Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

The City of Laguna Beach Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP), adopted December 12, 2023, is a planning document that identifies local threats such as wildfires, flooding, landslides, and seismic activity, evaluates the community's vulnerabilities, and outlines mitigation strategies to minimize potential impacts. Aligned with FEMA requirements, the LHMP also helps the City qualify for federal funding to implement hazard reduction projects. The LHMP integrates with other city planning efforts, including the Safety Element of the General Plan, the Wildfire Mitigation and Fire Safety Report (City 2025c), and the ongoing Evacuation Time Estimate Study. Given that approximately 87 percent of Laguna Beach lies within Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ), the LHMP emphasizes wildfire risk reduction through vegetation management, defensible space requirements, and fuel modification programs.

Fuel Modification Zone Program

The City's Fuel Modification Zone Program was created by LBFD in 1991 post-Oakland Hills fire. The citywide fuel break – an area where vegetation is reduced by 50-90% to create a buffer between the wildland and development – covers approximately 363 total acres, with 285 acres maintained by goat grazing and hand crews. The citywide fuel break varies in width from 100- to 200-feet, depending on location and terrain, and will continue to be expanded to offer greater protection within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI).

<u>Laguna Beach Municipal Code</u>

The City's Municipal Code (LBMC) serves to implement policies outlined in the City's General plan. The Proposed Project is subject to multiple provisions of the LBMC, including the following:

- **LBMC Section 15.01.045: Amendment to Chapter 49 of the Fire Code.** The Fire Protection Plan (FPP) and Landscape Plan shall contain the requirements set forth in the 2019 City of Laguna Beach Fire Department Landscape/Fuel Modification Standards and Maintenance Program (FMSMP), which includes LBFD's Plant Palette of fire-resistant and drought-tolerant vegetation, and adherence to the Defensible Space Guidelines for structures within the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ).
- **LBMC Section 25.05.040(2)(u): Design Review – Fuel Modification.** Plans consisting solely of a new or modified fuel modification shall be reviewed and approved by the Director of Community Development or designee to evaluate landscape design, and by the Fire Chief or designee for compliance with fuel modification regulations. Such plans may qualify as development requiring a coastal development permit that is subject to the provisions of Chapter 25.07, including instances when such a plan constitutes development that is not exempt pursuant to Section 25.07.008 because it would impact environmentally sensitive habitat areas.
- **LBMC Section 25.05.040(C)(4): Fire Department Review and Approval.** Prior to deliberation and action on a design review application for new construction and alterations involving 50% or more of an existing structure, the Fire Department shall review and approve or conditionally approve applications, including proposed fuel modification programs. Fuel modification programs or Alternative Materials and Methods (AM&Ms) requests, when determined necessary by the Fire Department, are required for any parcel having an "FM"—Fuel Modification designation or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone on the City's Geographic Information Mapping system. The Cal Fire-designated Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone is an overlay zone, and does not change the underlying zoning of Title 25. The Fire Department conditions of approval relating to public safety may not subsequently be modified by the approval authority without the Fire Department's review and approval.

Table 4.8-2: General Plan Consistency

General Plan Policies	Consistency Determination	Analysis
Safety Element		
GOAL S-2: Reduce the threat of wildfire hazards for Laguna Beach residents, businesses, and visitors.		
Policy S-2.4: Promote development outside of the VHFHSZ, where applicable and allow for transfer of development into lower risk areas, if feasible.	Consistent	The Proposed Project is located entirely within a VHFHSZ; however, given site constraints and the nature of the existing neighborhood, development outside the VHFHSZ is not feasible. The majority of Laguna Beach is within

Table 4.8-2: General Plan Consistency

General Plan Policies	Consistency Determination	Analysis
		a VHFHSZ. The Project is consistent with the policy to the extent practicable, as required design measures minimize wildfire risk within the high-hazard area. Required design measures from LBMC Title 15 include establishing a fuel modification zone and utilizing fire-resistant building materials.
Policy S-2.5: Require development within the VHFHSZ's to incorporate fire-resistive construction and defensible space management strategies consistent with State requirements, municipal regulations, and requirements identified in Policy S-2.3.	Consistent	The Project incorporates fire-resistive construction materials, maintains defensible space around structures, and complies with all applicable State and municipal fire regulations. As required under Chapter 49 of California Fire Code and Title 15 of the LBMC, the Project will prepare a Fire Protection Plan (FPP) approved by the Fire Code Official, including fuel modification zones, recorded deed restrictions, and long-term maintenance obligations. The Project's landscaping plan incorporates fire-safe plant species, irrigation, and spacing standards in accordance with City guidelines.
Fire Protection Plans: A Fire Protection Plan (FPP) approved by the fire code official is required for all new development within the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. FPPs are required to include mitigation strategies that take into consideration location, topography, geology, flammable vegetation, sensitive habitats/species, and climate of the proposed site. FPPs must address water supply, access, building ignition and fire resistance, fire protection systems and equipment, proper street signage, defensible space, vegetation management, and long-term maintenance. All required FPPs must be consistent with the requirements of the current adopted versions of the California Building Code Chapter 7A, California Fire Safe Regulations, and the City of Laguna Beach Fire Code.	Consistent	As required under Chapter 49 of California Fire Code and Title 15 of the LBMC , the Project will prepare a Fire Protection Plan (FPP) approved by the Fire Code Official, including fuel modification zones, recorded deed restrictions, and long-term maintenance obligations.
Policy S-2.7: Ensure that existing and new developments have adequate water supplies and conveyance capacity to meet daily demands and firefighting requirements.	Consistent	The Project will utilize existing water infrastructure, which provides adequate supply and pressure to meet daily and firefighting needs.
GOAL S-3: Reduce the threat of geologic hazards for Laguna Beach residents, businesses, and visitors.		

Table 4.8-2: General Plan Consistency

General Plan Policies	Consistency Determination	Analysis
Policy S-3.4: Ensure all drainage facilities are free of obstructions, maintained adequately, and mitigate storm flows on hillsides and bluffs.	Consistent / Pending jurisdictional delineation	According to the 2025 BTR, the Project site is located with the Laguna Coastal Streams Watershed and contains one (1) NWI-mapped riverine feature that potentially runs through the northern corner of the Project site. Additionally, a covered culvert was observed inside of the Project boundary off Juanita Way, but is not expected to have a direct impact on the Project. While the Proposed Project plans avoid encroachment near adjacent drainage courses and tributaries, a formal jurisdictional delineation shall confirm regulatory oversite (e.g., USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW) and determine whether additional environmental permits will be required.
Policy S-3.5: Require drought-resistant vegetation with deep root systems where appropriate in new developments and major remodels to reduce over-irrigation in areas of the City prone to slope instability.	Consistent	The Project will comply with the LBFD Plant Palette, which includes drought- and fire-resistant vegetation both in and out of the irrigated zones outlined in Landscape/Fuel Modification Standards and Maintenance Program (LFMSMP).
Transportation, Circulation, and Growth Management Element		
Policy 10A: Improve and maintain the transportation system to further enhance adequate emergency access to all developed areas.	Consistent	The southern route along Alta Vista Way is the closest evacuation route to the Project site, connecting to the primary evacuation route via South Coast Highway located approximately 0.30 miles southwest of the Project site. Solana Way to Alta Vista Way provides access to the Project site, located at the terminus of Juanita Way. The Project would utilize existing public roadways and would not alter, obstruct, or reduce the capacity of these routes. Therefore, the Project maintains adequate emergency access consistent with the intent of Policy 10A to improve and maintain transportation infrastructure that supports emergency response and evacuation for developed areas.

4.8.3 Thresholds of Significance

In order to assist in determining whether a project would have a significant effect on the environment, the City of Laguna Beach utilizes the State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Checklist. Appendix G states that a project may be deemed to have an impact on hazards and hazardous materials if it would:

Threshold f) **Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.**

Threshold g) **Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires.**

Please refer to **Section 6.1: Effects Found Not to Be Significant** for an evaluation of those topics that were determined to be less than significant or have no impact and do not require further analysis in the EIR**.**

4.8.4 Methodology

The assessment of Project-related impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials involved reviewing applicable state, regional, and local regulations, including state planning and zoning laws (California Government Code Section 65300 et seq. and California Government Code Section 65800 et seq.). An in-depth analysis of the Project's consistency with the City's General Plan Safety Element is provided in Table 4.8-2.

4.8.5 Project Impact Analysis

Threshold f) **Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.**

Less than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project consists of the construction of an 18.5 linear foot of road surface at the terminus of Juanita Way and would facilitate the creation of a new building site and the potential future construction of a single-family home. This section analyzes the Proposed Project's compliance with Laguna Beach Fire Department requirements, the City's emergency response and evacuation plans, and its potential to block evacuation routes or create road closures during construction.

Fire Hazards and LBFD Compliance. While the Proposed Project is not located within or near a fire hazard severity zone in a State Responsibility Area, it is located in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) within a Local Responsibility Area (LRA) (CalFire 2024). Because the Proposed Project is located in a VHFHSZ, compliance with Laguna Beach Fire Department (LBFD) protocol is required under Title 15 of LBMC. This includes LBFD site inspections to ensure adequate firefighter access is maintained around the Project site and approval of the site plan. Additionally, a licensed architect shall prepare a Landscape/Fuel Modification Plan (LFMP) compliant with LBFD Landscape/Fuel Modification Standards and Maintenance Program (L/FMSMP) to integrate fire-resistant, drought-tolerant landscaping.

LHMP/EOP Compliance. As described above in Section 4.7.2 Regulatory Setting, the City has adopted a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP), Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), evacuation plan, and Wildfire Mitigation and Fire Safety Report. The City's LHMP works in conjunction with the EOP to identify and proactively mitigates local hazards, including wildfire, evacuation, and emergency response (City 2023). However, the majority of these action items are directed toward citywide planning efforts and agency-level responsibilities rather than individual development projects.

The southern route along Alta Vista Way is the closest evacuation route to the Project site, connecting to the primary evacuation route via South Coast Highway located approximately 0.30 miles southwest of the Project site. Solana Way to Alta Vista Way provides access to the Project site, located at the terminus of Juanita Way. The Project would utilize existing public roadways and would not alter, obstruct, or reduce the capacity of these routes. Furthermore, the Project requires discretionary approval from the LBFD to ensure adequate emergency access and ensure adequacy of the LFMP. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not conflict with, hinder, or otherwise impede the implementation of any LHMP strategies or mitigation measures.

Ingress/Egress Points. The City of Laguna Beach Evacuation Management Zone map illustrates the southern route along Alta Vista Way as the closest evacuation route to the Project site, which connects to the primary evacuation route via South Coast Highway located approximately 0.30 miles southwest of the Project site (City 2019a). Solana Way to Alta Vista Way provides access to the Project site, located at the terminus of Juanita Way. Construction associated with the Proposed Project may introduce temporary traffic delays associated with vehicles entering and exiting the site. However, these activities would be limited to the construction phase and therefore would not result in blocked evacuation routes or road closures for neighboring residences. A construction staging plan will be required during the design review process and will be included as a condition of approval (City 2014). The construction staging plan must be approved by the Building Official prior to the issuance of a building or grading permit. Further, any proposed storage of materials within the public right-of-way would require an encroachment permit from the Department of Public Works.

During operations, the proposed road extension and potential single-family residence will have adequate ingress and egress, as required by the LBFD. In summary, the Proposed Project would comply with LBFD requirements (e.g., site inspections and appropriate landscaping), would not result in a conflict with the implementation of the City's LHMP or EOP, and would not result in blocked evacuation routes or road closures. Implementation of the Proposed Project would result in a less than significant impact.

Threshold g) **Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires.**

Less than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project consists of the construction of an 18.5 linear foot of road surface at the terminus of Juanita Way and would facilitate the creation of a new building site and the potential future construction of a single-family home. The Project site is located at the terminus of Juanita Way on a Fuel Modification Zone (FMZ) (City 2025a). A FMZ is an area of land where combustible vegetation is removed or modified with drought-tolerant, fire-resistant plants that are adequately spaced to provide a reasonable level of protection to structures from wildland fires. Any development adjacent to or within an undeveloped vegetated area, known as the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), requires modification of natural vegetation and an integrated landscape plan (City 2019b).

As described in Section f) above, a licensed architect shall prepare a Landscape/Fuel Modification Plan (LFMP) compliant with LBFD Landscape/Fuel Modification Standards and Maintenance Program (L/FMSMP) to integrate fire-resistant, drought-tolerant landscaping. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the Proposed Project would be required to develop a comprehensive L/FMSMP including zone delineations (described below) and identification of vegetation that is compatible with a fire-resistant, drought-tolerant LBFD Plant Palette. It is important to note that no combustible construction is permitted in any of these zones (i.e., gazebos, trellis, shade covers, etc):

- Zone A: Setback Irrigated Zone (minimum 20-foot zone)
    - Provides immediate defensible space with irrigated vegetation, pruning to reduce fuel load, and removal of vegetation within the LBFD Fire Prone Plant Species List.

- Zone B: Irrigated Zone (minimum 50-foot zone)
    - Extends beyond Zone A to maintain irrigation supporting high moisture plants and removal of vegetation within the LBFD Fire Prone Plant Species List.

- Zones C and D: Thinning Zones – Non-Irrigated (additional 125-foot minimum)
    - Extends beyond Zone B to thin dead and dying vegetation and remove undesirable species, up to 50% thinning in Zone C and 30% thinning in Zone D.

If a property is not able to meet the L/FMSMP requirements, alternative plans may be considered by the Fire Chief and Design Review Board (DRB) through a Fire Protection Plan (CFC Section 4902). Post-implementation of the L/FMSP, the LBFD conducts annual inspections to ensure proper maintenance of vegetation corresponding to each zone (e.g., irrigation and removal of dead and dying vegetation and undesirable species).

As the Proposed Project is located in a VHFHSZ within an LRA, it would be required to develop and implement L/FMSMP consistent with the above zoning delineations, subject to LBFD approval and subsequent inspections. Compliance with the L/FMSMP will reduce direct or indirect risk of wildland fires to people or structures through fuel load reduction, planting of fire-resistant and drought-tolerant vegetation, and proper maintenance of defensible space. Impacts would be less than significant.

4.8.6 <u>Cumulative Impacts</u>

Cumulative impacts are defined in CEQA as "two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15355). Stated in another way, "a cumulative impact consists of an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing relating impacts" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 [a][1]).

The geographic scope of the cumulative setting for hazards and hazardous materials is a five-mile radius from the Project site. Based on Table 3.0-1: Related Projects in Chapter 3.0, Environmental Setting, no other projects from the cumulative projects list are within the geographic scope.

As described in Sections f) and g), the Proposed Project is located within a VHFHSZ in an LRA. The City's Resolution 89.104, Fuel Modification Guidelines, notes the increase in cumulative wildfire hazard risk associated with natural environmental factors, including slopes over 30-percent (with 40- to 70-percent average slopes across the Project site), heavy fuel load, and frequent fire hazard weather conditions.

However, given the Proposed Project's limited scope and isolated nature, the Project is not expected to make a cumulatively considerable contribution to any significant environmental impacts associated with hazards. Additionally, the Proposed Project would be required to comply with the following emergency response plans and Landscape/Fuel Modification Plans (LFMP), including:

- Implementation of an LBFD-approved L/FMSMP, including fire-resistant and drought-tolerant landscaping, regular fuel load reductions, proper irrigation, and removal of dead, dying, and undesirable vegetation; and,
- Compliance with the City's LHMP to mitigate city-wide hazards, including maintaining proper defensible space, established in the L/FMSMP zone delineations, and evacuation routes.
- Accessible evacuation routes during construction activities, specifically the southern route along Alta Vista Way which connects to the primary evacuation route via South Coast Highway.

In summary, the limited scope of the Proposed Project, compliance with appropriate landscaping, and adherence to emergency response and evacuation plans would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to wildfire-related hazards. Impacts would remain less than significant.

4.8.7 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required, as all Project impacts regarding hazards and hazardous materials are less than significant.

4.8.8 Level of Significance After Mitigation

No mitigation measures would be required.

4.9 LAND USE AND PLANNING

This section discusses the potential land use and planning impacts that would occur in association with implementation of the Proposed Project. This analysis describes the current land use, land use designations, and land use policies in the Project area.

4.9.1 Existing Environmental Setting

Regional Setting

Located east from the Project site, the existing residential neighborhood generally consists of dead-end streets bisected by Alta Vista Way and terraced across the steep hillside slope. The hillside neighborhood is characterized by dense single-family development with surrounding open space. Surrounding land uses around the Project site include single-family residences to the south and east, with open space area to the north that separates this R-1 neighborhood from the developed portions of the Diamond/Crestview and Arch Beach Heights communities. The property currently fronts unimproved segments of Juanita and Iris Way, and shares a property line with the single-family dwelling located at 2470 Juanita Way.

Project Site

The Project site is located on a vegetated, undeveloped parcel of land that is designated as an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) due to its classification under drainage, Open Space Preserve (OSP), and High-Value Habitat (HVH). The site is in the Fuel Modification Zone (FM) and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ). The property is located within the coastal zone on a hillside with a significant grade, characterized by rugged terrain typical of the coastal foothills in the region. The proposed driveway along the southern end of the Project site features slopes ranging from 2% to 30.9%. The remainder of the Project site features slopes ranging from 30.9% to 66%.

4.9.2 Regulatory Setting

State

California Coastal Act – PRC Section 30250 (a)

New residential, commercial, or industrial development shall be located within, contiguous with, or in close proximity to, existing developed areas able to accommodate it or, where such areas are not able to accommodate it, in other areas with adequate public services and where it will not have significant adverse effects, either individually or cumulatively, on coastal resources. In addition, land divisions, other than leases for agricultural uses, outside existing developed areas shall be permitted only where 50 percent of the usable parcels in the area have been developed and the created parcels would be no smaller than the average size of surrounding parcels.

State Planning and Zoning Laws

California Government Code Section 65300 et seq. requires cities and counties to adopt and implement a General Plan, which serves as a comprehensive, long-range policy document guiding the physical development and land use character of a community over a 20-year horizon or longer. To carry out the goals and policies of the General Plan, the State Zoning Law (Government Code Section 65800 et seq.) requires jurisdictions adopt zoning ordinances – legal tools that define allowable land uses and development standards within designated zoning districts. Zoning ordinances must be consistent with the General Plan and ultimately serve as the primary mechanisms to implement the community's long-term planning vision.

Regional

Regional Water Quality Control Board

The Proposed Project is within the jurisdiction of the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), which regulates impacts to water quality associated with construction activities. The proposed road extension and single-family residence necessitates compliance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit (Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ). Pre- and post-construction Best Management Practices would be implemented, including various erosion and sediment control measures to minimize pollutant discharges to nearby receiving waters.

Local

City of Laguna Local Coastal Program

In 1993, the City's Local Coastal Program (LCP) was certified by the California Coastal Commission, granting the City permitting authority over most coastal development within its jurisdiction (City 2025d). The LCP incorporates specific design guidelines for residential and hillside development, identifies LCP exclusion areas, and establishes the framework for the City's review and issuance of Coastal Development Permits (CDPs). The LCP integrates relevant policies from the City's General Plan and corresponding sections of the Municipal Code, ensuring that local land use regulations are consistent with the California Coastal Act.

City of Laguna Beach General Plan

The City's General Plan addresses a range of topics relevant to the Proposed Project, including the Land Use Element, Open Space Conservation Element, and Transportation, Circulation, and Growth Management Element. These elements establish goals, objectives, and policies that reflect and support the City's long-term planning vision.

Table 4.9-1 identifies the General Plan goals, objectives, policies, and programs land use and planning that are relevant to the Project and summarizes the Project's consistency with the General Plan.

Laguna Beach Municipal Code

The City's Municipal Code (LBMC) serves to implement policies outlined in the City's General Plan. The Proposed Project is subject to multiple provisions of the LBMC. Table 4.9-2 identifies LMBC sections that are relevant to the Project and summarizes the Project's compliance with the LBMC.

To ensure alignment with previously documented planning, the "Analysis" columns in Table 4.9-1 and Table 4.9-2 incorporate relevant concerns and recommendations identified in the City's 2019 Planning Commission Staff Report..

Table 4.9-1: General Plan Consistency

General Plan Policies	Consistency Determination	Analysis
Land Use Element		
Policy 2.7: Evaluate the impact of proposed development on hillsides and along ridgelines and require building design, location, and arrangement to avoid continuous and intrusive impacts on hillside view areas and skyline profiles.	Consistent	The proposed single-family residence would be terraced into the existing hillside, minimizing its visual mass and enhancing integration with the natural topography. This building design approach helps to reduce the intrusive impacts on hillside view areas from surrounding public vantage points. See Analyses for *Policy 7A* regarding viewshed preservation (page 4-8).
Policy 10.8: Avoid creation of building sites that will result in significant adverse impacts on the community.	Consistent	The Project site is currently vacant, undeveloped, and designated with R-1 (Single-Family Residential) zoning. The proposed development, including the road extension and construction of a single-family residence, is consistent with the site's existing land use and zoning designations. The Project would not physically divide an established community, nor would it introduce incompatible land uses.
Open Space and Conservation Element		
Policy 7A: Preserve to the maximum extent feasible the quality of public views from the hillsides and along the City's shoreline.	Consistent	The Proposed Project is situated near the top of a canyon wall, within areas characterized by average slopes of approximately 40 to 70 percent. Given the Proposed Project's distance from scenic vistas, lower elevation, and compliance with applicable R-1 zoning and height limits, public views from the hillside would not be impaired.
Policy 7K: Preserve as much as possible the natural character of the landscape (including coastal bluffs, hillsides and ridgelines) by requiring proposed development plans to preserve and enhance scenic and conservation values to the maximum extent possible, to minimize impacts on soil mantle, vegetation cover, water resources, physiographic features, erosion problems, and require recontouring and replanting where the natural landscape has been disturbed.	Inconsistent	The City's General Plan OSCE notes that close to one-third of the City consists of undeveloped hillside lands that contribute to a "great diversity of visual resources," particularly hillsides with "noticeably steep slopes." The Project's proposed fill and road extension would collectively alter the existing steep hillside topography, resulting in a significant disruption to its natural character.
Policy 8K: Prohibit intrusion of fuel modification programs into environmentally sensitive areas, including chaparral and coastal sage scrub.	Inconsistent	Due to the Project site's location within a wildland-urban interface, the proposed road extension and

Table 4.9-1: General Plan Consistency

General Plan Policies	Consistency Determination	Analysis
		residential development would necessitate the creation of a fuel modification zone (FMZ), which would extend into a mapped open space preserve area. The 2025 BTR notes that fuel break maintenance may potentially threaten one special status plant species, including thread-leaved brodiaea which has a moderate potential to occur within the Project site and big-leaved crownbeard, that has a high potential to occur within the Project site. MM BIO-1 through MM BIO-3 would mitigate impacts to special-status species and nesting birds within the FMZ area. Although impacts would be mitigated to less than significant levels, the Project would be inconsistent with this policy due to the FMZ intrusion into environmentally sensitive areas.
Policy 14A: Require construction and grading to be concentrated on slopes of 30% or less.	Inconsistent	The site plan illustrates a 40- to 70-percent grade transition, well above the 30-percent or less slope requirement. See Analysis for *Policy 14B* below regarding grading on slopes of 45% or greater.
Policy 14B: Prohibit construction and grading on slopes of 45% or greater except on properties previously approved by the subdivision map process and located adjacent to a dedicated accepted right-of-way that has been or can be improved to the City's access standards.	Inconsistent	The conceptual plans for the single-family residence propose a design consisting of 3,743 square feet of habitable area, primarily on the lower and middle levels. The lower and middle levels are designed to step with the hillside, encroaching significantly into a greater-than-45-percent slope. The proposed single-family development would wholly occur within a slope exceeding 45-percent. This project site was created by a subdivision map however it is not located adjacent to a dedicated accepted right of way that has been improved to the City's access standards. A dedicated accepted right-

Table 4.9-1: General Plan Consistency

General Plan Policies	Consistency Determination	Analysis
		of-way cannot be improved to the City's access standards due to the infeasibility of a required turnaround under LBMC Chapter 21.12.
Policy 14C: Discourage the creation of new building sites that would require construction of a new street or a street extension of more than 12% in grade. Prohibit the creation of new building sites that would require construction of a new street or a street extension of more than 14% in grade.	Inconsistent	The proposed road extension would exceed the maximum 14-percent street grade. The road extension slope conditions beyond the exiting road barrier include slopes of 16-, 20-, and 30-percent.
Policy 14F: Require grading projects to minimize earth-moving operations and encourage preservation for the natural topographic land features.	Inconsistent	The conceptual plans for the single-family dwelling convey an intent to step the multi-level residence with the slope in order to preserve to the extent feasible the natural topographic land features, as intended by OSCE *Policy 14F*. The terraced design of the multi-level residence would reduce the appearance of mass and better integrate the structure with the surrounding open space. However, implementation of the Project would require approximately 1,038.56 cubic yards of cut and 0.47 cubic yards of fill, resulting in substantial earth-moving activities. The extent of grading necessary to accommodate the development would significantly alter existing landforms on a hillside with slopes exceeding 45 percent. These grading activities would exceed what could be considered minimal earth-moving and would result in a notable modification of the site's natural topography.
Policy 14G: Prohibit the dumping of excess fill within hillside areas, unless necessary for the public's health and safety.	Inconsistent	As noted in the Analysis for *Policy 14C*, the proposed road extension would exceed the maximum allowable street grade of 14-percent. The proposed single-family residence would be built on slopes ranging from 30-70 pecent. This will require significant quantities of fill, which would alter the slope condition in a highly visible hillside area.

Table 4.9-1: General Plan Consistency

General Plan Policies	Consistency Determination	Analysis
Policy 14I: Discourage new roads or extensions of existing roads into currently inaccessible areas.	Inconsistent	The proposed road extension would extend into a vegetated and undisturbed area that is currently inaccessible.
Policy 8A: Preserve the canyon wilderness throughout the City for its multiple benefits to the community, protecting critical areas adjacent to canyon wilderness, particularly stream beds whose loss would destroy valuable resources.	Consistent	According to the 2025 BTR, the Project site is located with the Laguna Coastal Streams Watershed and contains one (1) NWI-mapped riverine feature that potentially runs through the northern corner of the Project site. While the Proposed Project plans to avoid encroachment near adjacent drainage courses and tributaries, a formal jurisdictional delineation will be required by the applicant if impacts are unavoidable. See BIO MM-4: Jurisdictional Delineation.
Policy 8J(3): When development for any type of construction, including grading, is proposed on an existing subdivided parcel that is not a legal building site and the development is consistent with all other policies of the Land Use Plan except for its location entirely within an identified ESA as confirmed by a site-specific assessment, the following shall apply: a) Resource Management uses including estuaries, nature centers and other similar scientific or recreational uses are permitted subject to a Conditional Use Permit to assure that uses are sited and designed to prevent degradation of the resource value; b) No new building sites shall be created which are entirely within a Coastal ESA or which do not contain a site where development can occur consistent with the ESA policies of this Plan. c) Very high value habitats shall be preserved and high value habitat shall be preserved to the greatest extent possible; and mitigation measures for immediately adjacent areas shall also be required.	Inconsistent	The Project site is not yet a legal building site and its location within an ESA is the primary reason for noncompliance with the City's Land Use plan. Thus, the provisions of Policy 8J(3) apply. The Project site is entirely within Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) due to its Drainage, Open Space Preserve (OSP), and High-Value Habitat (HVH) classifications, thus the proposed road and residential development would directly conflict with Policy 8J(3)(b) and 8J(3)(c).

Table 4.9-1: General Plan Consistency

General Plan Policies	Consistency Determination	Analysis
Policy 13A: Preserve the function of ridgelines, hillsides and canyons as a link between adjoining open space areas.	Inconsistent	The Proposed Project would disturb a previously undisturbed area that is identified as an Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA) and is located in an Open Space Preservation designation. The Project would extend roadway infrastructure and introduce development onto an undeveloped hillside that currently functions as part of a continuous ridgeline and canyon open space system. Grading, road construction, and associated improvements would alter the natural hillside and reduce contiguous open space, diminishing its role as a connective corridor. Although surrounded by residential development, the Project site is only loosely linked to the CDFW Orange County Central-Coast Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP)/Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) through proximity, as the nearest reserves are located approximately 2-4 miles away.
Policy 14K: The conversion of vacant hillside land into various types of urban development creates inescapable side effects that can potentially damage the natural environment. Loss of valuable habitat, increased runoff and erosion, intrusion into the public viewshed and introduction of man-made chemical compounds are often the undesirable by-products of new development. In order to minimize such effects, new construction and grading should not create undesirable encroachments into undeveloped hillside areas.	Inconsistent	The Proposed Project is located on an existing steep hillside within a wildland-urban interface. According to the 2025 BTR, the proposed driveway along the southern end of the site features slopes ranging from 2 percent to 30.9 percent, with the remainder of the site featuring slopes ranging from 30.9 percent to 66 percent. Given the proposed road extension and single-family development would encroach into undeveloped hillside area and remove High-Value Habitat, the Project is inherently inconsistent with this policy.
Transportation, Circulation, and Growth Element		

Table 4.9-1: General Plan Consistency

General Plan Policies	Consistency Determination	Analysis
Policy 2M: Avoid extending roads and utilities to identified Environmentally Sensitive Areas and unincorporated County lands.	Inconsistent	The proposed road extension and single-family home are located on a vegetated, undeveloped parcel. The Project site is designated as an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) due to its classification as drainage, Open Space Preserve (OSP), and High-Value Habitat (HVH). The site is in the Fuel Modification Zone (FMZ) and a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ). Thus, the road extension will extend into the ESA.

Table 4.9-2: Laguna Beach Municipal Code Compliance

Municipal Codes	Compliance Determination	Analysis
Title 25: Zoning		
Chapter 25.10: R-1 Residential Low-Density Zone This zone is intended for low-density, single-family residential areas, which will provide a suitable environment for family life for residents. The zone is intended to provide a quiet living environment free from rooming and boarding houses, commercial and industrial activities, and, to the greatest degree possible, free from other than local vehicular traffic. All new development in this zone shall be compatible with the immediate residential neighborhood with respect to scale, mass and height. The purpose of this zone is to allow low-profile, single-family residences that preserve existing public and private views and minimize building mass and bulk in a manner that is sensitive to their terrain and to environmental constraints.	Consistent	The Project site is currently vacant and designated with R-1 (Single-Family Residential) zoning. The proposed development, including the road extension and future construction of a single-family residence, is consistent with the site's existing land use and zoning designations once the property is designated as a legal building site.
Section 25.08.004: "Building Site" "Building site" means a parcel or contiguous parcels of land which was established in compliance with the building site requirements of this code. No building permit and no certificate of use and occupancy shall be issued for a building or use of land until the director of community development has verified that the parcel of land upon which such building or use	Inconsistent	The Proposed Project does not currently meet the City's definition of a building site because it has not been established as a building site by either recordation of a tract map, a parcel map, a record of survey recorded pursuant to a city-approved division of land, or a certificate of compliance, or by a deed of conveyance or contract for

Municipal Codes	Compliance Determination	Analysis
of land is to be established is a building site which may be used for the uses permitted in the zone in which it is located. Two or more lots whose common lot line is crossed by a structure or a setback requirements from an adjoining structure shall be deemed to be one building site until such time as the structure is removed and the line is unencumbered. To qualify as a building site, the parcel must be under one ownership and must meet the requirements of either subsection (A) or section (B) below: (A) Any parcel of land that was established as a building site by either the recordation of a tract map, a parcel map, a record of survey recorded pursuant to a city-approved division of land, or a certificate of compliance, or by a deed of conveyance or contract of sale or in any other legal manner recorded prior to July 19, 1958 (or effective date of annexation to the city if such occurred thereafter), and which complied with all of the requirements of the zoning regulations in effect at the time of recordation in the office of the county recorder of Orange County or Los Angeles County, and: (1) Contains the minimum area and dimensions required by this title for the zone in which the parcel is located. However, parcels under one ownership on the effective date of the ordinance codified in this section which constituted legal building sites under the terms of this title, as amended, but which do not comply with the minimum area and dimension standards of the zone are deemed to be building sites provided they meet all other requirements in this definition. Such sites may not be further reduced in area; and (2) Furnishes, in addition to the space occupied or to be occupied by buildings and structures, sufficient area to provide the yards and open spaces required by this title for the zone in which the parcel is located; and (3) Abuts for a minimum frontage of ten feet measured longitudinally in relationship to the paved street section and has the right to the use of a street improved to the subdivision street design standards of the city, or of a usable vehicular right-of-way of record, or of a street that does not meet the minimum		sale or in any other legal manner recorded prior to July 19, 1958, nor has approval as a building site been secured by the City's Planning Commission. To establish a legal building site and proceed with development, the Project requires a Planning Commission recommendation to the City Council for the following discretionary approvals: (1) approval of the proposed road extension; (2) issuance of a Coastal Development Permit; (3) approval of a variance; and (4) approval of a parcel map to merge two legal lots into one lot for purposes of establishing a building site for future residential development, pursuant to LBMC Section 25.08.004: "Building Site"(B)(3), and subject to the findings in Government Code Section 66474.

Municipal Codes	Compliance Determination	Analysis
standards but has been approved by means of a variance, or of a street of less than standard width as specifically approved for access by the city. (B) A building site may be created by the recordation of a tract map or parcel map after approval has been secured from the city planning commission. The creation of any building site shall conform to the following minimum requirements: (1) Each building site shall be shown on the recorded document as a numbered lot or parcel; and (2) Each building site shall be of sufficient area, width and depth to comply with the minimum requirements of the zoning district in which the site is located; and (3) Each building site shall abut a public or private street, having a right of access for vehicles and pedestrians, and enjoy practical and physical access to such street, for its continuous frontage along the front lot line. Such access road shall be constructed and maintained at a minimum unobstructed width (as described in subsection (A)(3) above) to a length as necessary to connect with existing roads of equal or greater width, shall be designed and maintained to support the imposed loads of fire apparatus and shall be provided with a surface such as asphaltic concrete, Portland cement concrete, or similar approved materials, so as to provide all-weather driving. A parcel of land that does not meet the foregoing requirements is not a building site unless otherwise validated in accordance with Section 25.56.020 of this code;		
Section 25.53.006(c): Access and street improvements To provide proper access for the users and to prevent congestion and other hazards related to the use of the land permitted in the applicable zones, the following improvements are deemed necessary and must be provided by the property owner prior to the public utilities being authorized permanent connection and occupancy being permitted:	Consistent	The final Project plans shall meet all standards approved by the city engineer. The plans shall be subject to design review. One public parking space would be required for each 50 feet of lot frontage of the proposed road extension. The Proposed Project will have approximately 18.5 linear_feet of improved lot frontage, and therefore,

Municipal Codes	Compliance Determination	Analysis
(c) Street base and pavement along the full street frontage of the subject building site to the standards approved by the city engineer shall be provided from the gutter at the subject property side of the street to the centerline of the right-of-way. The width of pavement shall meet the dimensions prescribed in Title 21 of this code, and shall provide adequate on-street parking areas at the minimum rate of one parking space per fifty feet of lot frontage. The design and location of such parking areas is subject to design review.		will not be required to provide a public parking space on Juanita Way. The lot frontage along Iris Way will not be improved, therefore, a public parking space will not be required on Iris Way..
Sections 25.10.008(A), (C) and (K): Property development standards The following property development standards shall apply to all land and structures in the R-1 zone: (A) Lot Area. Each lot shall have a minimum area of six thousand square feet. Also see (K) of this section modified minimum lot area and minimum population density standards. (C) Population Density. There shall be a minimum of six thousand square feet of lot area for each dwelling unit; provided, however, that, subject to the conditional use permit provisions of Section 25.05.030, there shall be no more than one dwelling on any one lot. Also see (K) of this section. (K) Modified Minimum Lot Area and Maximum Population Density Standards. (1) The minimum lot area and maximum population density as set forth in this section have been modified where, on the official zone map, a number greater than six thousand follows and is connected with a hyphen with the zone symbol. Such number shall designate the minimum lot area required in square feet. (2) Where a number less than one hundred and the word "acre" or "acres" follows and is connected with a hyphen with the zone symbol, such number shall	Consistent	The Project's lot area is 7,174 square feet. The proposed road extension is consistent with the minimum lot area requirement established in the LBMC, and the Project meets the zoning standard for lot size under current regulations.

Municipal Codes	Compliance Determination	Analysis
designate the minimum allowable acreage of the lot.		
Section 25.10.008(B)(2): Property development standards – Lot Dimensions (Depth) The following property development standards shall apply to all land and structures in the R-1 zone: (B) Lot Dimensions. (2) Depth – Each lot shall have a minimum depth of eighty feet.	Consistent	The proposed road configuration has a proposed lot depth of 89'-11", which is in compliance with the 80-foot depth minimum.
Section 25.05.025(A): Variances – Intent and Purpose The intent and purpose of this section is to establish procedures whereby parcels or development projects may vary from the provisions of Title 25. Variances may be granted when there are special circumstances applicable to the property involved, including size, shape, topography, location and surroundings, that would cause the strict application of the zoning ordinance to deprive the property of the privileges enjoyed by other property in the vicinity and zone.	Inconsistent	Title 25 variance provisions may only be applied to the standards and regulations of Title 25 of the Zoning Code and with limited discretion. Unless a Municipal Code provision in Titles 21 or 22 incorporates the variance provisions by specific reference, an applicant may not request a variance to deviate from those requirements. Consequently, several of the proposed Municipal Code inconsistencies are ineligible for variance consideration. Specifically, the proposed road extension would exceed the maximum allowable street grade of 14-percent (thus violating LBMC Section 21.12.250). Therefore, unless the Project can be designed to eliminate any such inconsistency, the Project would not qualify for any variances here.
Title 11: Streets and Sidewalks		
Section 11.40.020: Street opening or extension – Defined A street opening or extension consists of the design process, review procedure and approval necessary to construct an improved street or driveway as defined in Titles 21 and 25 of this code, consisting of graded earth, gravel, asphalt, concrete or other surfacing and appurtenant improvements, where such improvements did not previously exist within a platted and recorded public or private street, alley, way, court or other property within the corporate limits of the city, the purpose thereof	Inconsistent	A street extension requires entitlement approvals, including, not limited to a variance. Title 25 variance provisions may only be applied to the standards and regulations of Title 25 of the Zoning Code and with limited discretion. Unless a Municipal Code provision in Titles 21 or 22 incorporates the variance provisions by specific reference, an applicant may not request a variance to deviate from those requirements.

Municipal Codes	Compliance Determination	Analysis
being to provide new access to new or existing building sites, or lots, as defined in Title 25 of this code.		Specifically, the proposed road extension would exceed the maximum allowable street grade of 14-percent (thus violating LBMC Section 21.12.250). Section 11.40.020 links street extensions to both Titles 21 (subdivision/street) and 25 (zoning). However, the Proposed Project violates standards in Titles 21 and 22. Title 25 variances cannot override these provisions, creating an inconsistency between the proposed development and the Municipal Code.
Title 22: Excavating, Grading, and Filling		
Section 22.06.010(a)(7): Design standards It is the purpose of this section to quantify methods by which the overall shape, height and grade of any cut or fill slopes may be developed, such that they are responsive and suitable with respect to the existing natural terrain of a particular site. Interpretations of any standards herein will be subject to the review and final decision of the appropriate discretionary review body for concept plans. (a) General Design Standards. All cut and fill slopes shall conform to the following standards: (7) No cut for fill slope shall exceed twenty-five feet vertical height.	Consistent	The proposed single family residence involves the creation of terraced fill slopes – each with 10 feet maximum in vertical height.
Title 21: Plats and Subdivisions		
*Section 21.08.060 To require parcel maps wherever possible: A parcel map shall be filed and recorded for any subdivision for which a tentative and final map is to be required by the Subdivision Map Act except for subdivisions created by short term leases (terminable by either party on not more than thirty days' notice in writing) of a portion of an operating right-of-way of a railroad corporation defined as such by Section **230** of the Public Utilities Code; provided, however, that upon a showing made to the planning commission, based upon substantial evidence, that public policy necessitates such a map, this exception shall not apply.*	Consistent	The existing parcel consists of two lots (Tract 26, Block 14, Lots 7 and 8). A Tentative Parcel Map will be required to consolidate the two existing lots into one lot to allow construction of the potential future single family residence across the existing common lot line prior to issuance of grading or building permits. The parcel map shall be subject to the findings in Government Code Section 66474. Once of the findings for the parcel map under Government Code Section 66474 is general plan compliance, which is otherwise discussed in this document.

Municipal Codes	Compliance Determination	Analysis
Such maps shall meet all the requirements of the Subdivision Map Act and of this chapter and shall show all dedications or offers of dedication thereon. The planning commission may require that such dedications or offers of dedication be made by deed in lieu of or in addition to appearing on the map. *Section 21.08.090 Filing of Tentative Map: Tentative maps shall be filed with the planning department and shall be processed in accordance with the Subdivision Map Act and the provisions of this chapter. The subdivider shall file as many copies of the tentative map as may be required by the planning department.*		
Section 21.12.220: Dead-end streets – Length The maximum length of a dead-end street shall not serve more than twenty-four building sites, shall not exceed seven hundred fifty feet in length and shall be terminated by a turnaround.	Inconsistent	Juanita Way is a dead-end street which currently serves 28 building sites. The road measures approximately 525 feet in length (measured from Alta Vista Way) and does not terminate with a turnaround. The proposed road extension does not include a turn around.
Section 21.12.250: Street grades (a) Minimum. Minimum grades for new streets and street extensions shall be not less than one-half of one percent. (b) Ten to Twelve Percent Grades. Grades for new streets and street extensions between ten percent and twelve percent will be approved only for such distances as topographical conditions make a lesser grade impractical. (c) Variance. Grades for new streets or street extensions exceeding twelve percent, but not in excess of fourteen percent, are allowed only upon the approval of a variance in accordance with Section 25.05.025 of this title. (d) Maximum Grades. Grades exceeding fourteen percent are prohibited for new streets and street extensions. (e) Transitions. Grade breaks shall be transitioned by vertical curves in accordance with accepted and prevailing engineering practice.	Inconsistent	Grades for street extensions between 10- and 20-percent are approved only for such distances as topographical conditions make a lesser grade impractical. Grades for street extensions exceeding 12-percent, but not in excess of 14-percent, are allowed only upon the approval of a variance. The grade for the proposed road extension would be about 30%, which would exceed the maximum allowable street grade of 14-percent, making it inconsistent with LBMC.
Section 21.12.360: Lots – Size and area The minimum size of lots shall conform to the requirements of Title 25 provided, that in determining such compliance, each building	Consistent	The proposed project conforms to the dimension requirements within Title 25 (Zoning):

Municipal Codes	Compliance Determination	Analysis
site has sufficient dimensions to encompass an imaginary rectangle the width and depth of which is equivalent to the minimum standards of the zone. *Section 25.10.008 Property development standards.* (A) Lot Area. Each lot shall have a minimum area of six thousand square feet. (B) Lot Dimensions. (1) Width—Each lot shall have a minimum width of seventy feet; Exception: Cul-de-sac lots shall have a minimum lot width at the front property line of forty feet, (2) Depth—Each lot shall have a minimum depth of eighty feet.		• Proposed lot width (79'-9" > 70' minimum); • Proposed lot depth (89'-11" > 80' minimum); and • Proposed lot area (7,174 square feet > 6,000 square foot minimum) The lot width, depth, and area requirements are a prerequisite to the establishment of a legal building (See LBMC Section 25.08.004 analysis above).
Section 21.12.090 Width of hillside local streets. Hillside local streets shall be forty feet wide (minimum right-of-way). The minimum pavement width shall be twenty feet for two travel lanes, excluding parking lanes.	Inconsistent	The proposed road width is 16 feet.
Section 21.12.120 Hillside turnaround areas. A hillside turnaround shall be fifty-eight feet diameter (minimum) and fifty feet diameter paving (minimum). A hammerhead turnaround may be substituted if designed and constructed to fire department standards.	Inconsistent	The Project does not include a turnaround area.
Section 21.12.180 Greater width for on-street parking. The basic travel lane widths set forth herein may be increased as necessary to provide parallel street parking at a rate of not less than one space per fifty feet of frontage per residential lot. On curbed streets, such spaces shall be at least six feet wide where an adjoining walkway exists; all other spaces shall be at least eight feet wide. The planning commission may, based on the type of land use, terrain constraints, or other considerations, increase the basic requirement as it deems necessary provided, however, that spaces shall not be decreased unless adequate and accessible provisions are made for a like quantity and quality of parking.	Inconsistent	The Project does not include a parallel street parking space.
California Streets and Highways Code		

Municipal Codes	Compliance Determination	Analysis
Division 9: Change of Grade and Vacation Division 9 of the California Streets and Highways Code establishes the legal authority and procedural requirements by which a city or county may change the grade of, or vacate, abandon, or discontinue a public street, highway, or portion thereof. The division governs actions that remove or alter existing public rights-of-way and requires formal public proceedings, including notice, hearings, and adoption of findings to ensure that streets are no longer needed for present or prospective public use and that access and utility rights are preserved. Division 9 is procedural in nature and does not establish roadway design standards; rather, it applies only when an existing public street is proposed to be vacated or its officially established grade is modified.	Consistent	The proposed road extension includes a curb cut within the existing public right-of-way to provide site access. The curb cut would not vacate, abandon, or change the grade of any public street and would not remove any portion of the right-of-way from public use. The proposed road extension application is consistent with the Streets and Highways Code and would not require a waiver of grade.

4.9.3 Thresholds of Significance

In order to assist in determining whether a project would have a significant effect on the environment, the City utilizes the State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Checklist.

Appendix G states that a project may be deemed to have land use and planning impacts if it would:

Threshold a) **Physically divide an established community.**

Threshold 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.**

Please refer to **Section 6.1: Effects Found Not to Be Significant** for an evaluation of those topics that were determined to be less than significant or have no impact and do not require further analysis in the EIR**.**

4.9.4 Methodology

The assessment of Project-related land use and planning impacts involved reviewing applicable state, regional, and local regulations, including state planning and zoning laws (California Government Code Section 65300 et seq. and California Government Code Section 65800 et seq.). An in-depth analysis of the Project's consistency with the City's General Plan Elements – Land Use, Open Space Conservation, and Transportation, Circulation, and Growth Management – is provided in Table 4.9-1. Compliance with Laguna Beach Municipal Code (LBMC) is detailed in Table 4.9-2.

4.9.5 Project Impact Analysis

Threshold b) Would the Project 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?

Significant and Unavoidable Impact. As noted above, the Proposed Project may conflict with several key policies and regulations of the City of Laguna Beach General Plan and Municipal Code. Although the Project is located within the R-1 (Single-Family Residential) zone, and incorporates design features (i.e., terracing) intended to minimize visual impacts, several elements raise concern regarding land use compatibility and regulatory compliance.

The following summarizes areas of potential conflict between the Proposed Project and applicable General Plan policies and/or provisions of the LBMC. Each category identifies the relevant policies and/or code sections that may be affected:

- ***Building Site Definition*****:** The Project site does not meet the City's definition of a legal building site. While the Project demonstrates compliance with dimensional standards – such as lot area, depth, and width – the parcel lacks legal access and has not been formally established as a legal building site. Therefore, it is considered "unbuildable" under existing Municipal Code provisions unless validated through formal findings or variances.
    - Applicable Municipal Codes: LBMC Section 25.08.004; LBMC Section 25.10.008(A), (C), and (K); Section 25.10.008(2); Section 21.12.360; LBMC Section 25.53.006(c)

- ***Scenic Vistas and Visual Resources*****:** The Project would be sited on a steep canyon wall and would introduce new development into a largely undeveloped natural hillside. As such, it has the potential to conflict with General Plan policies designed to preserve visual resources.
    - Applicable Policies: LUE Policy 2.7; OSCE Policy 7A; OSCE Policy 7K; OSCE Policy 14F; OSCE Policy 14K

- ***Biological Resource Impacts*****:** The Project site lies within a designated Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) and would require a fuel modification zone, which could result in removal or degradation of sensitive habitat. These activities may conflict with General Plan conservation goals.
    - Applicable Policies: OSCE Policy 8K**;** OSCE Policy 8A; OSCE Policy 13A; OSCE Policy 14K; TCGE Policy 2M

- ***Standards of Design*****:** The Project proposes grading on slopes averaging 40 to 70 percent, which extends the City's typical maximum allowable slope threshold of 30 percent. The Project also proposes a 16-feet-wide driveway, which is less than minimum 20-foot width. The Project does not include a required turnaround for hillsides nor the minimum number of one parallel street parking space per fifty feet of frontage per residential lot.
    - Applicable Policies and Municipal Codes: OSCE Policies 14A-C; OSCE Policy 14G; OSCE Policy 14I; LBMC Section 21.12.250, LBMC Section 21.12.090, LBMC Section 21.12.120, , LBMC Section 21.12.180, LBMC Section 21.12.220

Despite these concerns, the Project does exhibit partial consistency and/or compliance with certain land use and zoning regulations:

- It is located in a zone that permits single-family residential use (R-1).
- The Project includes a terraced, multi-level design, which is intended to reduce massing and better integrate with the hillside topography.
- The Project adheres to the minimum lot area, depth, and width requirements outlined in Municipal Code.
- Project plans avoid encroachment near adjacent drainage courses and tributaries, consistent with the City's General Plan Policy 8A regarding streambed preservation.

While the Project aligns with the intended land use designation, meets dimensional requirements, and includes certain design features that address visual and environmental concerns, it raises substantial inconsistencies with established Municipal Code provisions and General Plan policies. The inconsistencies identified above could result in potentially significant environmental impacts because they undermine the regulatory frameworks specifically adopted to avoid or reduce adverse effects related to hillside stability, visual resources, habitat protection, and orderly land use development. Development on a site that does not qualify as a legal building site introduces uncertainty regarding access, emergency response, and long-term land use compatibility, which cannot be fully mitigated through project design alone without formal code compliance actions. Similarly, conflicts with scenic vista, grading, and environmentally sensitive area policies increase the likelihood of permanent and irreversible changes to visual character, slope integrity, and biological resources, which are central concerns of the City's General Plan.

Inconsistencies related to steep-slope grading, ESA disturbance, and building site eligibility require discretionary approvals or variances that go beyond standard mitigation measures. As a result, the Project could result in significant land use and environmental impacts under CEQA. Impacts are therefore significant and unavoidable.

4.9.6 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are defined in CEQA as "two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15355). Stated in another way, "a cumulative impact consists of an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing relating impacts" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 [a][1]).

The Proposed Project consists of an 18.5-linear-foot road extension to facilitate creation of a new building site and potential future construction of a single-family residence. Given its limited scope and isolated nature, the Project is not expected to make a cumulatively considerable contribution to any significant environmental impacts.

4.9.7 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are proposed.

4.9.8 Level of Significance After Mitigation

As noted in Threshold b), the Proposed Project conflicts with the City's General Plan policies, resulting in potentially significant and unavoidable impacts related to land use and planning.

4.10 NOISE

This section defines technical terminology used in the analysis of noise; identifies federal, state, and local regulations applicable to noise; and describes the environmental setting with regard to existing ambient noise levels. This section also analyzes potential noise impacts associated with construction and operation of the Project. The information in this section is based on the Project's *Noise Technical Memorandum*. This document is provided as Appendix F of this EIR.

4.10.1 Background Information

Noise Terminology

Noise Fundamentals

Noise is defined as unwanted or objectionable sound. The effects of noise on people can include general annoyance, interference with speech communication, sleep disturbance and, in the extreme, hearing impairment. The unit of measurement used to describe a noise level is the decibel (dB). The human ear is not equally sensitive to all frequencies within the sound spectrum. Therefore, the "A-weighted" noise scale, which weights the frequencies to which humans are sensitive, is used for measurements. Noise levels using A-weighted measurements are written dB(A) or dBA. Decibels are measured on a logarithmic scale, which quantifies sound intensity in a manner similar to the Richter scale used for earthquake magnitudes. Thus, a doubling of the energy of a noise source, such as doubling a traffic volume, would increase the noise level by 3dBA; a halving of the energy would result in a 3 dBA decrease.

A given level of noise may be more or less tolerable depending on the duration of exposure experienced by an individual. A number of measures of noise exposure consider not only the A-level variation of noise, but also the duration of the disturbance. The Day-Night Average Level (Ldn) is the weighted average of the intensity of a sound, with corrections for time of day, and averaged over 24 hours. The time-of-day corrections require the addition of ten decibels to sound levels at night between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. The Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) is similar to the Ldn except that it reflects the addition of 4.77 decibels to sound levels during the evening hours between 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. These additions are made to the sound levels at these time periods because during the evening and nighttime hours, when compared to daytime hours, there is a decrease in the ambient noise levels, which creates an increased sensitivity to sounds. For this reason, the sound appears louder in the evening and nighttime hours and is weighted accordingly. The City of La Puente Noise Element uses the Community Noise Equivalent (CNEL).

It is widely accepted that the average healthy ear can barely perceive changes of 3 dBA, increases or decreases, that a change of 5 dBA is readily perceptible, and that an increase (or decrease) of 10 dBA sounds twice (half) as loud (Caltrans 2013).

Ground-Bourne Vibration Fundamentals

Ground-borne vibrations consist of rapidly fluctuating motions within the ground that have an average motion of zero. The effects of ground-borne vibrations typically only cause a nuisance to people, but at extreme vibration levels damage to buildings may occur. Although ground-borne vibration can be felt outdoors, it is typically only an annoyance to people indoors where the associated effects of the shaking of a building can be notable. Ground-borne noise is an effect of ground-borne vibration and only exists indoors, since it is produced from noise radiated from the motion of the walls and floors of a room and may also consist of the rattling of windows or dishes on shelves.

Several different methods are used to quantify vibration amplitude, such as the maximum instantaneous peak in the vibrations velocity, which is known as the peak particle velocity (PPV) or the root mean square (rms) amplitude of the vibration velocity. Due to the typically small amplitudes of vibrations, vibration velocity is often expressed in decibels and is denoted as (Lv) and is based on the rms velocity amplitude. A commonly used abbreviation is “Vd8”, which in this text, is when Lv is based on the reference quantity of 1 micro inch per second.

Typically, developed areas are continuously affected by vibration velocities of 50 VdB or lower. These continuous vibrations are not noticeable to humans whose threshold of perception is around 65 VdB. Offsite sources that may produce perceptible vibrations are usually caused by construction equipment, steel-wheeled trains, and traffic on rough roads, while smooth roads rarely produce perceptible ground borne noise or vibration.

Existing Noise Conditions

Ambient Noise Levels

In order to determine the existing noise levels, two short-term (15 minute) ambient noise measurements were taken in the vicinity of the Project site between 11:26 a.m. and 12:08 p.m. on Thursday, November 6, 2025. The results of the noise level measurements are presented in Table 4.10-1.

Table 4.10-1: Existing (Ambient) Noise Measurement Results

Site No.	Description	Primary Noise Sources	Start Time of Measurement	Measured Noise Level	
				dBA Leq	dBA Lmax
1	Located at the existing terminus of Juanita Way.	Construction, landscaping, and vehicles on Coast Hwy	11:26 a.m.	48.0	59.6
2	Located northwest of the project site on the road easement on the southwest side of the home at 2280 Fern Street.	Water feature and construction	11:53 a.m.	49.8	64.6

4.10.2 Regulatory Setting

Federal

The Noise Control Act of 1972 (P.L. 92-574)

The Noise Control Act and several other federal laws require the federal government to set and enforce uniform noise standards for aircraft and airports, interstate motor carriers and railroads, workplace activities, medium and heavy-duty trucks. Most federal noise standards focus on preventing hearing loss by limiting exposure to sounds of 90 dBA and higher. However, some are stricter and focus on limiting exposure to quieter levels that are annoying to most individuals and can diminish one’s quality of life.

Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970

The Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulates onsite noise levels and protects workers from occupational noise exposure. To protect hearing, worker noise exposure is limited to 90 decibels with A-weighting (dBA) over an 8-hour work shift (29 Code of Regulations [CFR] 1910.95). Employers are required to develop a hearing conservation program when employees are exposed to noise levels exceeding 85 dBA. These programs include provision of hearing protection devices testing employees for hearing loss on a periodic basis.

State

Noise Standards

<u>California Department of Health Services Office of Noise Control</u>

Established in 1973, the California Department of Health Services Office of Noise Control (ONC) was instrumental in developing regularity tools to control and abate noise for use by local agencies. One significant model is the "Land Use Compatibility for Community Noise Environments Matrix," which allows the local jurisdiction to clearly delineate compatibility of sensitive uses with various incremental levels of noise.

<u>California Noise Insulation Standards</u>

Title 24, Chapter 1, Article 4 of the California Administrative Code (California Noise Insulation Standards) requires noise insulation in new hotels, motels, apartment houses, and dwellings (other than single-family detached housing) that provides an annual average noise level of no more than 45 dBA CNEL. When such structures are located within a 60-dBA CNEL (or greater) noise contour, an acoustical analysis is required to ensure that interior levels do not exceed the 45-dBA CNEL annual threshold.

In addition, Title 21, Chapter 6, Article 1 of the California Administrative Code requires that all habitable rooms, hospitals, convalescent homes, and places of worship shall have an interior CNEL of 45 dB or less due to aircraft noise.

<u>Government Code Section 65302</u>

Government Code Section 65302 mandates that the legislative body of each county and city in California adopt a noise element as part of its comprehensive general plan. The local noise element must recognize the land use compatibility guidelines published by the State Department of Health Services. The guidelines rank noise land use compatibility in terms of normally acceptable, conditionally acceptable, normally unacceptable, and clearly unacceptable.

<u>California Vehicle Code Section 27200-27207 – On-Road Vehicle Noise</u>

California Vehicle Code Section 27200-27207 provides noise limits for vehicles operated in California. For vehicles over 10,000 pounds noise is limited to 88 dB for vehicles manufactured before 1973, 86 dB for vehicles manufactured before 1975, 83 dB for vehicles manufactured before 1988, and 80 dB for vehicles manufactured after 1987. All measurements are based at 50 feet from the vehicle.

California Vehicle Section 38365-38380 – Off-Road Vehicle Noise

California Vehicle Code Section 38365-38380 provides noise limits for off-highway motor vehicles operated in California. 92 dBA for vehicles manufactured before 1973, 88 dBA for vehicles manufactured before 1975, 86 dBA for vehicles manufactured before 1986, and 82 dBA for vehicles manufactured after December 31, 1985. All measurements are based at 50 feet from the vehicle.

Vibration Standards

Title 14 of the California Administrative Code Section 15000 requires that all state and local agencies implement the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, which requires the analysis of exposure of persons to excessive groundborne vibration. However, no statute has been adopted by the state that quantifies the level at which excessive groundborne vibration occurs.

Caltrans issued the *Transportation and Construction Vibration Guidance Manual*, April 2020. The Manual provides practical guidance to Caltrans engineers, planners, and consultants who must address vibration issues associated with the construction, operation, and maintenance of Caltrans projects. However, this manual is also used as a reference point by many lead agencies and CEQA practitioners throughout California, as it provides numeric thresholds for vibration impacts. Thresholds are established for continuous (construction-related) and transient (transportation-related) sources of vibration, which found that the human response becomes distinctly perceptible at 0.25 inch per second PPV for transient sources and 0.04 inch per second PPV for continuous sources.

Local

Laguna Beach Municipal Code

The City of Laguna Beach Municipal Code establishes the following applicable standards related to noise:

Section 7.25.040 Exterior Noise Standards.

- (A) The following exterior noise standards, unless otherwise specifically indicated, shall apply to all properties within a designated noise zone.
- (B) It is unlawful for any person at any location within the incorporated area of the city to create noise, or to allow the creation of any noise on property owned, leased, occupied or otherwise controlled by such person, which causes the noise level when measured on any other property, to exceed either of the following:
  - (1) The noise standard for the applicable zone for any fifteen-minute period;
  - (2) A maximum instantaneous (single instance) noise level equal to the value of the noise standard plus twenty dBA for any period of time (measured using A-weighted slow response).
- (C) In the event the ambient noise level exceeds the noise standard, the maximum allowable noise level under such category shall be increased to reflect the maximum ambient noise level.

Table 4.10-2. City of Laguna Beach Exterior Noise Standards

Allowable Exterior Noise Level(1)			
		Allowed Equivalent Noise Level, Leq(2)	
Noise Zone	Type of Land Use	7 a.m. to 10 p.m.	10 p.m. to 7 a.m.
I	Residential	60 dBA	50 dBA

(1) If the ambient noise level exceeds the resulting standard, the ambient noise level shall be the standard.
(2) Measurements for compliance are made on the affected property (see Section 7.25.150 for details.)
Source: City of Laguna Beach Municipal Code Section 7.25.040.

Section 7.25.050 Exemptions.

The following activities shall be exempted from the provisions of this chapter:

(D) Noise sources associated with the maintenance of real property. Such noise generating activities are subject to the provisions of Section 7.25.070 of this chapter;

(E) Noise sources associated with construction, repair, remodeling, demolition or grading of any real property. Such noise generating activities are subject to the provisions of Section 7.25.080 of this chapter.

(G) Noise sources associated with construction, repair, remodeling, demolition or grading of public right-of-way or during authorized seismic surveys.

Section 7.25.070 Real Property Maintenance Noise Regulations.

(A) No person, while engaged in maintenance of real property, shall operate any tool, equipment or machine in a manner which produces loud noise that disturbs a person of normal sensitivity who works or resides in the vicinity, or a peace or code enforcement officer, except between the hours of eight a.m. and six p.m.

(B) Trimming or pruning which requires the use of chainsaws or mulching machines shall only be allowed between the hours of eight a.m. and six p.m. on a weekday, which is not a federal holiday and between the hours of ten a.m. and five p.m. on a Saturday. Trimming or pruning which requires the use of chainsaws or mulching machines shall not be allowed on Sundays.

(C) No landowner, gardener, property maintenance service, contractor, subcontractor or employer shall permit or allow any person or persons working under their direction and control to operate any tool, equipment or machine in violation of the provisions of this section.

Section 7.25.080 Construction Activity Noise Regulations.

(A) Weekdays. No person, while engaged in construction, remodeling, digging, grading, demolition or any other related building activity, shall operate any tool, equipment or machine in a manner which produces loud noise that disturbs a person of normal sensitivity who works or resides in the vicinity, or a peace or code enforcement officer, on any weekday except between the hours of seven-thirty a.m. and six p.m.

(B) Weekends and Holidays. No person, while engaged in construction, remodeling, grading, demolition or other related building activity, shall operate any tool, equipment or machine in a manner which produces loud noise that disturbs a person of normal sensitivity who works or resides in the vicinity, or a peace or code enforcement officer, on any weekend day or any federal holiday.

(C) No landowner, construction company owner, contractor, subcontractor, or employer shall permit or allow any person or persons working under their direction and control to operate any tool, equipment or machine in violation of the provisions of this section.

Section 7.25.130 Heating, Venting, Pool/Spa and Air Conditioning – Special Provisions.

(A) Permits for heating, venting and air conditioning (HVAC), and pool/spa equipment in or adjacent to residential areas shall be issued only after the installation contractor signs an acknowledgment that the installation will meet the noise limits established in Section 7.25.040 of this chapter.

<u>Laguna Beach General Plan</u>

The City's General Plan Noise Element establishes the following applicable policies related to noise and vibration.

Policy 4.1: Consider incorporating the following provisions into the Noise Ordinance to address the problems of construction noise:

Action 4.3: During the environmental review of all projects requiring extensive construction, determine the proximity of the site to the established residential areas. If the project will involve pile driving, night time truck hauling, blasting, 24 hour pumping (important in coastal excavations), or any other very high noise equipment, the environmental review shall include a construction noise alternative analysis. From this analysis specific mitigation measures shall be developed to mitigate potential noise impacts. This may include but not be limited to:

- Requirements to use quieter, potentially costlier construction techniques.
- Notification of adjacent residents (homeowner and renters) of time, duration, and location of construction;
- Relocation of residents to hotels during noisy construction period.
- Developer reimbursement to City for 24 hour on-site inspection to verify compliance with required mitigation;
- Limit hours of operation of equipment 15 dB above noise ordinance limits to the hours of 10 am to 4 pm.

Application of the foregoing measures should be determined on a project-by-project basis depending on the type of noise generation proposed and the source proximity to established residential areas. It should also be recognized sufficient data may not be available to determine the extent of construction noise mitigation required until preparation of construction drawings. In this case, the construction noise mitigation analysis must be submitted for review as part of building permit, plan check procedures.

4.10.3 Thresholds of Significance

In order to assist in determining whether a project would have a significant effect on the environment, the City utilizes the State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Guidelines. Appendix G states that a project may be deemed to have noise impacts if it would result in:

Threshold 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.**

Threshold b) **Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels.**

4.10.4 Methodology

The noise impacts from construction of the Proposed Project have been analyzed through use of the FHWA's Roadway Construction Noise Model (RCNM). The FHWA compiled noise measurement data regarding the noise generating characteristics of several different types of construction equipment used during the Central Artery/Tunnel project in Boston. Table 4.10-3 below provides a list of the construction equipment anticipated to be used for each phase of construction as detailed in the CalEEMod model output files from the air quality modeling prepared for the Proposed Project.

Table 4.10-3 also shows the associated measured noise emissions for each piece of equipment from the RCNM model and measured percentage of typical equipment use per day. Construction noise impacts to the nearby sensitive receptors have been calculated according to the equipment noise levels and usage factors listed in Table 4.10-3 and through use of the RCNM. For each phase of construction, the two noisiest pieces of construction equipment were analyzed based on being placed in the middle of the Project site, which is based on the analysis methodology detailed in FTA Manual for a General Assessment.

Table 4.10-3. Construction Equipment Noise Emissions and Usage Factors

Equipment Description	Number of Equipment	Acoustical Use Factor[1] (percent)	Spec 721.560 Lmax at 50 feet[2] (dBA, slow[3])	Actual Measured Lmax at 50 feet[4] (dBA, slow[3])
Demolition				
Concrete/Industrial Saw	1	20	90	90
Backhoe	1	40	80	78
Tractor	1	40	84	N/A
Site Preparation				
Excavator	1	40	85	81
Tractor/Loader/Backhoe	1	40	84	N/A
Grading				
Excavator	1	40	85	81
Rubber Tired Dozer	1	40	85	82
Tractor/Loader/Backhoe	1	40	84	N/A
Building Construction				
Crane	1	16	85	81
Forklift (Gradall)	2	40	85	83
Tractor/Loader/Backhoe	1	40	84	N/A
Paving				

Table 4.10-3. Construction Equipment Noise Emissions and Usage Factors

Equipment Description	Number of Equipment	Acoustical Use Factor[1] (percent)	Spec 721.560 Lmax at 50 feet[2] (dBA, slow[3])	Actual Measured Lmax at 50 feet[4] (dBA, slow[3])
Cement and Mortar Mixer	4	40	85	79
Paver	1	50	85	77
Roller	1	20	85	80
Tractor/Loader/Backhoe	1	40	84	N/A
Architectural Coating				
Air Compressor	1	40	80	78

Notes:
[1] Acoustical use factor is the percentage of time each piece of equipment is operational during a typical workday.
[2] Spec 721.560 is the equipment noise level utilized by the RCNM program.
[3] The "slow" response averages sound levels over 1-second increments. A "fast" response averages sound levels over 0.125-second increments.
[4] Actual Measured is the average noise level measured of each piece of equipment during the Central Artery/Tunnel project in Boston, Massachusetts primarily during the 1990s.
Source: Federal Highway Administration, 2006.

4.10.5 Project Impact Analysis

Threshold a) **Would the Project result in 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?**

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation. The Proposed Project consists of the extension of Juanita Way by 18.5 linear feet of road surface to facilitate the creation of a new building site and the potential future construction of a new single-family residence at 2400 Juanita Way, which is a 7,174 square foot lot located adjacent to the northeast side of the current terminus of Juanita Way. The proposed home would include 3,482 square feet of living area, 462 square feet of garage and mechanical space, approximately 1,430 square feet of hardscaped area, and 1,635 square feet of landscaped area. The proposed road extension is anticipated to disturb up to 1,500 square feet and would include demolition of the existing storm drain system at the road terminus, grading of the road extension area, installation of utilities, construction of a new road terminus storm drain system as well as paving the new road area and repaving the portion of the existing road that was disturbed.

Construction-Related Noise Impacts

Sections 7.25.050(E) and 7.25.080 of the City's Municipal Code exempt construction noise that occurs between 7:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on weekdays from the daytime stationary noise standard of 60 dB at the nearby residential property lines. All construction activities associated with the Proposed Project would occur during the allowable hours for construction activities as detailed in Section 7.25.080 of the Municipal Code. Since the Municipal Code construction noise standards do not provide any limits to the noise levels that may be created from construction activities during the allowable hours, the construction noise controls provided in Action 4.3 of the General Plan Noise Element has been utilized, which limits the operation of equipment that creates a noise level 15 dB above the noise ordinance limit of 60 dB (above 75 dB) to the more restrictive hours of 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The City of Laguna Beach has analyzed the impacts of construction noise in the General Plan and has adopted Action 4.3 of the General Plan Noise Element that identifies acceptable limits for construction noise based on the requirements notification of neighbors, use of quieter equipment and limits of time of day of activities, the use of the above 75 dB noise limit from Action 4.3 has been utilized here as a threshold of significance in order to provide a conservative analysis.

Construction noise levels to the nearby sensitive receptors have been calculated through use of the RCNM and the parameters and assumptions detailed above. The results are shown below in Table 4.10-4 below.

Table 4.10-4: Construction Noise Levels at the Nearby Homes Prior to Mitigation

Construction Phase	Construction Noise Level (dBA Leq) at:		
	Home to Northwest[1]	Home to Southeast[2]	Home to Southwest[3]
Demolition	73	86	81
Site Preparation	70	84	78
Grading	68	82	77
Building Construction	68	82	77
Paving	65	79	74
Painting	62	76	70
City Construction Noise Not to Exceed Recommendation[4]	**Above 75**	**Above 75**	**Above 75**
Exceed Thresholds?	No	**Yes**	**Yes**

Notes:
[1] The home to northwest is located at 2280 Fern Street and was analyzed at 200 feet from the center of the project site.
[2] The home to southeast is located at 2470 Juanita Way and was analyzed at 40 feet from the center of the project site.
[3] The home to southwest is located at 2457 Juanita Way and was analyzed at 75 feet from the center of the project site.
[4] The City Construction Noise Threshold obtained from Action 4.3 of the General Plan Noise Element.
Source: RCNM, Federal Highway Administration, 2006

Table 4.10-4 shows that the greatest noise impacts would occur during the demolition phase, with noise levels as high as 73 dBA Leq at the home to the northwest, 86 dBA Leq at the home to the southeast, and 81 dBA Leq at the home to the southwest. The calculated construction noise levels for all phases of construction at the home to the northwest are within the City's construction noise recommended limit of above 75 dBA. However, Table 4.10-4 shows that construction activities would exceed the City's construction noise recommended limit of above 75 dBA at the home to the southeast and home to the southwest. This would be considered a significant impact.

Mitigation Measure NOISE-1 (MM NOISE-1) has been provided that would require the installation of a temporary noise barrier that extends a minimum of 6 feet above grade adjacent to the northwest property line at 2470 Juanita Way (home to southeast) and adjacent to the northeast property line (from edge of driveway to north corner) at 2457 Juanita Way (home to southwest). The proposed locations for the temporary noise barriers are shown in Figure 1 in the Noise Technical Memorandum.

Caltrans research has found that sound walls provide 5 dB of noise shielding when the wall reaches the height of line of sight between source and receiver and then an additional 0.9 dBA of noise shielding for each foot above the line of sight. The RCNM model was re-run and calculated mitigated construction-related noise levels are shown in Table 4.10-5. Implementation of the temporary sound walls required in MM NOISE-1 would lower the construction-related noise levels at homes to the southeast and southwest to within the City's construction noise recommended limit of above 75 dBA.

Therefore, with implementation of MM NOISE-1 and through adherence to allowable construction times provided in the City Municipal Code and General Plan, the Proposed Project's construction-related noise would be reduced to less than significant.

Table 4.10-5: Mitigated Construction Noise Levels at the Nearby Homes

Construction Phase	Construction Noise Level (dBA Leq) at:		
	Home to Northwest[1]	Home to Southeast[2]	Home to Southwest[3]
Demolition	73	75	75
Site Preparation	70	72	72
Grading	68	71	71
Building Construction	68	71	71
Paving	65	68	68
Painting	62	64	64
City Construction Noise Not to Exceed Recommendation[4]	**Above 75**	**Above 75**	**Above 75**
Exceed Thresholds?	No	No	No

Notes:
[1] The home to northwest is located at 2280 Fern Street and was analyzed at 200 feet from the center of the project site.
[2] The home to southeast is located at 2470 Juanita Way and was analyzed at 40 feet from the center of the project site.
[3] The home to southwest is located at 2457 Juanita Way and was analyzed at 75 feet from the center of the project site.
[4] The City Construction Noise Threshold obtained from Action 4.3 of the General Plan Noise Element.
Source: RCNM, Federal Highway Administration, 2006

Operational-Related Noise Impacts

Potential noise impacts would be from project-generated vehicular traffic on the nearby roadways and from onsite activities, which have been analyzed separately below.

Roadway Vehicular Noise

Vehicle noise is a combination of the noise produced by the engine, exhaust and tires. The level of traffic noise depends on three primary factors (1) the volume of traffic, (2) the speed of traffic, and (3) the number of trucks in the flow of traffic. The Proposed Project does not propose any uses that would require a substantial number of truck trips and would not alter the speed limit on any existing roadway, so the potential offsite noise impacts focus on the noise impacts associated with the change of volume of traffic that would occur with development.

According to Appendix 2: Noise Effects Information within the City's General Plan Noise Element:

"A five-decibel change is readily noticeable, while a 10 decibel change is judged by most people as a doubling or a halving of the loudness of the sound. It is typical in environmental documents to consider a 3 dB change as potentially discernible."

As such, a project generated 3 dBA increase in roadway noise has been utilized as the threshold of significance in this analysis. The *Noise Technical Memorandum* prepared for the Proposed Project found that the proposed single-family home would generate 9.4 daily trips on weekdays. There are approximately 21 single-family homes that utilize Juanita Way for access to their homes. Based on the above trip generation rate, there is currently approximately 197 daily trips on Juanita Way. Based on the logarithmic rules of addition, in order for project-generated vehicular traffic to increase the noise level on a roadway by 3 dB, the daily trips would have to double. Operation of the Proposed Project would generate an increase in roadway traffic of up to 4.8 percent on Juanita Way. This minimal increase in roadway traffic would not exceed the noise level by 3 dBA CNEL. Therefore, operational roadway noise impacts from the Proposed Project would be less than significant.

Onsite Noise Impacts

The primary sources of onsite noise would be from landscaping and maintenance activities as well as from the operation of an air conditioner unit. All landscaping and maintenance activities will be required to adhere to the noise regulations in Section 7.25.070 of the Municipal Code that limits these activities to between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on weekdays and between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays as well as restricts the use of blowers. The current project plans do not specify the location or type of air conditioning unit that will be installed at the proposed home, however any future air conditioner unit will be required to adhere to the regulations in Section 7.25.130 of the Municipal Code that controls the allowed locations on the property for the placement of air conditioning units as well as requirements to verify that the air conditioning unit noise will not exceed City noise standards at the adjacent properties. Therefore, with compliance with the Municipal Code regulations, operational onsite noise impacts would be less than significant.

Threshold b) Would the Project result in generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Less than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project would not expose persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels.

Construction-Related Vibration Impacts

Vibration impacts from construction activities associated with the Proposed Project would typically be created from the operation of heavy off-road equipment. The nearest vibration sensitive receptor to the Project site is a single-family home located as near as three feet southeast of the Project site.

Since neither the City's General Plan nor the Municipal Code provide a quantifiable vibration threshold for construction equipment, Caltrans guidance has been utilized, which defines the threshold of perception from transient sources at 0.25 inch per second PPV.

The primary source of vibration during construction would be from the operation of a small bulldozer. From the FTA Manual, a small bulldozer creates a vibration level of 0.003 inch per second PPV at 25 feet. Based on typical propagation rates, the vibration level at the nearest home (3 feet away) would be 0.03 inch per second PPV. The vibration level at the nearest home would be below the 0.25 inch per second threshold detailed above. Impacts would be less than significant.

Operational-Related Vibration Impacts

The on-going operation of the Proposed Project would not include the operation of any known vibration sources. Therefore, a less than significant vibration impact is anticipated from operation of the Proposed Project.

4.10.6 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are defined in CEQA as "two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15355). Stated in another way, "a cumulative impact consists of an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing relating impacts" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 [a][1]).

Construction noise would be periodic and temporary noise impacts that would cease upon completion of construction activities. The Project would contribute to other proximate construction project noise impacts if construction activities were conducted concurrently. Based on the noise analysis above, the Project's construction activities would exceed the City's construction noise recommended limit of above 75 dBA to nearby sensitive receptors, specifically the home southeast and home to the southwest. Implementation of NOISE MM-1 and adherence to allowable construction times provided in the City's Municipal Code and General Plan Noise Element would reduce construction-related to less than significant. Operational roadway noise, onsite noise impacts, and construction and operational vibration impacts would be less than significant.

The combination of the Project together with other related present and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the Project vicinity could involve actions with the potential to result in noise impacts. However, construction noise impacts for each cumulative project would be mitigated through compliance with the City's standards and ordinances, and any necessary mitigation measures identified through the City's development review process. Thus, construction noise impacts would not be cumulatively considerable, and impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

4.10.7 Mitigation Measures

In order to minimize potential impacts regarding noise, the following mitigation measures should be implemented:

NOISE-1: Temporary Noise Barrier Installation

Prior to any construction activities, the Project applicant shall install minimum 6-foot-high temporary noise barriers that are located adjacent to the northwest property line at 2470 Junita Way (home to southeast) and adjacent to the northeast property line (from edge of driveway to north corner) at 2457 Juanita Way (home to southwest). The temporary noise barriers shall be constructed with either minimum 1/2" thick plywood or oriented strand board (OSB) or sound blankets that have a minimum Sound Transmission Class (STC) rating of 12 STC. Refer to Figure 1 in the *Noise Technical Memorandum* for the proposed locations for the temporary noise barriers.

4.10.8 Level of Significance After Mitigation

Implementation of NOISE-1 would reduce construction-related noise impacts to less than significant.

4.11 PUBLIC SERVICES

This section discusses the potential impacts for public services that would occur in association with implementation of the Proposed Project. Public services typically include fire protection, law enforcement, schools, and other public facilities such as parks, libraries, and post offices. A project would impact a public service if it would result in an increased demand for that service, or if the project would result in a hindrance to that service. This analysis describes the public services in the Project area, specifically related to fire protection provided by the Laguna Beach Fire Department (LBFD).

4.11.1 Existing Environmental Setting

Regional Setting

Located east from the Project site, the existing residential neighborhood generally consists of dead-end streets bisected by Alta Vista Way and terraced across the steep hillside slope. The hillside neighborhood is characterized by dense single-family development with surrounding open space. Surrounding land uses around the Project site include single-family residences to the south and east, with open space area to the north that separates this R-1 neighborhood from the developed portions of the Diamond/Crestview and Arch Beach Heights communities. Land use in the broader region is predominantly open space and residential, with limited industrial or commercial activity.

According to the City's General Plan 2025 updated Safety Element, the City is vulnerable to wildfire and urban fire events, earthquakes, instability from geologic conditions, and flooding from both stormwater runoff or tidal conditions. The region is served by the Laguna Beach Fire Department and is subject to periodic wildfire risk due to its topography, dry climate, and native vegetation.

Project Site

The Project site is located in the City of Laguna Beach and is within the Laguna Beach Fire Department (LBFD), Laguna Beach Police Department's (LBPD), and Laguna Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) areas of service.

Fire Protection Services

The Project site is located within the LBFD area of service, which has four fire stations within Laguna Beach. Fire Station 2 is closest to the Project site and is the largest station in the city, located approximately 0.5-mile northwest at 285 Agate Street. Station 2 is staffed with a Captain, Engineer, and Firefighter and has a two-person ambulance crew.

Police Protection Services

LBPD is responsible for police protection services in the City, located approximately 1.6 miles northwest of the Project site at 505 Forest Avenue. The patrol function is organized under the Field Services Division, which is its primary uniformed operation branch responsible for law enforcement and community safety.

School Districts

The City, including the Project site, is served by the Laguna Beach Unified School District (LBUSD). LBUSD serves approximately 2,500 students across its four schools: Laguna Beach High School (located 1.28 miles north), Thurston Middle School (located 1.59 miles northeast), and two elementary schools, El Morro Elementary School (located 4.38 miles northwest) and Top of the World Elementary School (located 1.47 miles northeast).

Parks

According to the General Plan Land Use Element (LUE), the City maintains 29 oceanfront parks and viewing areas, totaling approximately 24.7 acres (City 2022). In addition, the City's 6.2 miles of coastline provide recreational beach opportunities, with public access to approximately 82 acres of sandy beaches.

Community recreational needs are further supplemented by 13 neighborhood parks, totaling 11.3 acres and 25 acres of outdoor recreational facilities provided by LBUSD. Combined with public beaches, total public recreational acreage in Laguna Beach is approximately 143 acres.

4.11.2 Regulatory Setting

This section identifies and summarizes federal, state, and local laws, policies, and regulations that are applicable to the Proposed Project.

State

Fire Codes and Guidelines

The California Fire Code (Title 24, Part 9 of the CCR) establishes regulations to safeguard against hazards of fire, explosion, or dangerous conditions in new and existing buildings, structures, and premises. The Fire Code also establishes requirements intended to provide safety and assistance to firefighters and emergency responders during emergency operations.

The provisions of the Fire Code apply to the construction, alteration, movement, enlargement, replacement, repair, equipment, use and occupancy, location, maintenance, removal, and demolition of every building or structure throughout the State of California. The Fire Code includes regulations regarding fire resistance-rated construction, fire protection systems such as alarm and sprinkler systems, fire services features such as fire apparatus access roads, means of egress, fire safety during construction and demolition, and wildland-urban interface areas.

Regional

Regional Water Quality Control Board

The Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) regulates potential impacts to water quality that can result from wildfire events and vegetation clearing associated with fire prevention measures. When projects involve fuel modification, grading, or vegetation removal within a VHFHSZ, applicants may need to comply with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit under Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ, as amended by 2012-0006-DWQ. This requires implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) to prevent erosion, sedimentation, and pollutant runoff into local waterways during and after construction or fuel modification activities.

Additionally, following wildfire events, the RWQCB enforces post-fire watershed protection strategies under the Clean Water Act Sections 401 and 402, which include requirements for stabilizing soils, protecting coastal lagoons, and preventing sediment-laden flows from entering creeks, streams, and the ocean.

Local

Laguna Beach General Plan

The City of Laguna Beach General Plan is a policy document that establishes the goals, policies, and directions the City will take to achieve the vision of the community and guide the future development of the City. The City of Laguna Beach General Plan contains a Safety Element, updated in 2025, outlining goals and policies related to fire hazards, seismic and geologic hazards, flood hazards, climate adaptation, shoreline protection, and hazardous materials and wastes. Table 4.11-1 identifies the General Plan goals, policies, objectives, and programs that are relevant to the City's General Plan Safety Element and summarizes the Project's consistency.

The City's General Plan Safety Element describes the City's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), which includes a range of emergency management strategies such as mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. The EOP and Local Hazard Management Plan (LHMP) aim to identify and proactively mitigate human-caused hazards through policies and procedural actions.

Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

The City of Laguna Beach Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP), adopted December 12, 2023, is a planning document that identifies local threats such as wildfires, flooding, landslides, and seismic activity, evaluates the community's vulnerabilities, and outlines mitigation strategies to minimize potential impacts. Aligned with FEMA requirements, the LHMP also helps the City qualify for federal funding to implement hazard reduction projects. The LHMP integrates with other city planning efforts, including the Safety Element of the General Plan, the Wildfire Mitigation and Fire Safety Report (City 2025c), and the ongoing Evacuation Time Estimate Study. Given that approximately 87 percent of Laguna Beach lies within Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ), the LHMP emphasizes wildfire risk reduction through vegetation management, defensible space requirements, and fuel modification programs.

Laguna Beach Fire Department (LBFD) Strategic Plan

The Laguna Beach Fire Department (LBFD)'s Strategic Plan outlines several multi-year goals for 2019-2022 to ensure:

- Effective fire operations, prevention, and emergency medical services;
- Reliable and efficient facilities and equipment;
- Effective administration, organizational sustainability, and professional development; and,
- Fire prevention education and community risk fire reduction.

These goals encompass a wide range of initiatives, including the establishment of a citywide fuel break system within the wildland urban interface (WUI) to increase ignition resistance improvements. See details on the City's Fuel Modification Zone Program below.

Fuel Modification Zone Program

The City's Fuel Modification Zone Program was created by LBFD in 1991 post-Oakland Hills fire. The citywide fuel break – an area where vegetation is reduced by 50-90% to create a buffer between the wildland and development – covers approximately 363 total acres, with 285 acres maintained by goat grazing and hand crews. The citywide fuel break varies in width from 100- to 200-feet, depending on location and terrain, and will continue to be expanded to offer greater protection within the WUI.

Laguna Beach Municipal Code

The Proposed Project is subject to multiple provisions of the City's Municipal Code (LBMC), including the following:

- **LBMC Section 15.01.045: Amendment to Chapter 49 of the Fire Code.** The Fire Protection Plan (FPP) and Landscape Plan shall contain the requirements set forth in the 2019 City of Laguna Beach Fire Department Landscape/Fuel Modification Standards and Maintenance Program (FMSMP), which includes LBFD's Plant Palette of fire-resistant and drought-tolerant vegetation, and adherence to the Defensible Space Guidelines for structures within the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ).
- **LBMC Section 25.05.040(2)(u): Design Review – Fuel Modification.** Plans consisting solely of a new or modified fuel modification shall be reviewed and approved by the Director of Community Development or designee to evaluate landscape design, and by the Fire Chief or designee for compliance with fuel modification regulations. Such plans may qualify as development requiring a coastal development permit that is subject to the provisions of Chapter 25.07, including instances when such a plan constitutes development that is not exempt pursuant to Section 25.07.008 because it would impact environmentally sensitive habitat areas.
- **LBMC Section 25.15.004(A)(7) Design Criteria – Fuel Modification.** The development proposal should address the required fuel modification as part of the initial application and should integrate fuel modification provisions into the site plan in such a way as to minimize impact on existing native vegetation and areas of visual prominence. Alternative means to thinning and/or removal of native vegetation for fire hazard management such as minimizing the building envelope, and/or siting of the structure(s) away from hazard areas, and/or use of fire retardant design and materials are preferred where feasible. The fuel modification plan shall be in compliance with all Fire Department fuel modification requirements, and may qualify as development requiring a coastal development permit that is subject to the provisions of Chapter 25.07, including instances when such a plan constitutes development that is not exempt pursuant to Section 25.07.008 because it would impact environmentally sensitive habitat areas.
- **LBMC Section 25.05.040(C)(4): Fire Department Review and Approval.** Prior to deliberation and action on a design review application for new construction and alterations involving 50% or more of an existing structure, the Fire Department shall review and approve or conditionally approve applications, including proposed fuel modification programs. Fuel modification programs or Alternative Materials and Methods (AM&Ms) requests, when determined necessary by the Fire Department, are required for any parcel having an "FM"—Fuel Modification designation or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone on the City's Geographic Information Mapping system. The Cal Fire-designated Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone is an overlay zone, and does not change the underlying zoning of Title 25. The Fire Department conditions of approval relating to public safety may not subsequently be modified by the approval authority without the Fire Department's review and approval.

Table 4.11-1: General Plan Consistency

General Plan Policies	Consistency Determination	Analysis
GOAL S-2: Reduce the threat of wildfire hazards for Laguna Beach residents, businesses, and visitors.		
Policy S-2.4: Promote development outside of the VHFHSZ, where applicable and allow for transfer of development into lower risk areas, if feasible.	Consistent	The Proposed Project is located entirely within a VHFHSZ; however, given site constraints and the nature of the existing neighborhood, development outside the VHFHSZ is not feasible. The majority of Laguna Beach is within a VHFHSZ. The Project is consistent with the policy to the extent practicable, as required design measures minimize wildfire risk within the high-hazard area.
Policy S-2.5: Require development within the VHFHSZ's to incorporate fire-resistive construction and defensible space management strategies consistent with State requirements, municipal regulations, and requirements identified in Policy S-2.3.	Consistent	The Project incorporates fire-resistive construction materials, maintains 100 feet of defensible space around the single family residence, and complies with all applicable State and municipal fire regulations. As required by the City's Municipal Code, the Project will prepare a Fire Protection Plan (FPP) approved by the Fire Code Official, including fuel modification zones, recorded deed restrictions, and long-term maintenance obligations. As required by the City's Municipal Code, the Project's landscaping plan incorporates fire-safe plant species, irrigation, and spacing standards in accordance with City guidelines.
Fire Protection Plans: A Fire Protection Plan (FPP) approved by the fire code official is required for all new development within the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. FPPs are required to include mitigation strategies that take into consideration location, topography, geology, flammable vegetation, sensitive habitats/species, and climate of the proposed site. FPPs must address water supply, access, building ignition and fire resistance, fire protection systems and equipment, proper street signage, defensible space, vegetation management, and long-term maintenance. All required FPPs must be consistent with the requirements of the current adopted versions of the California Building Code Chapter 7A, California Fire Safe Regulations, and the City of Laguna Beach Fire Code.	Consistent	As required by the City's Municipal Code, the Project will prepare a Fire Protection Plan (FPP) approved by the Fire Code Official, including fuel modification zones, recorded deed restrictions, and long-term maintenance obligations.
Policy S-2.7: Ensure that existing and new developments have adequate water supplies and	Consistent	The Project will utilize existing water infrastructure, which provides adequate

Table 4.11-1: General Plan Consistency

General Plan Policies	Consistency Determination	Analysis
conveyance capacity to meet daily demands and firefighting requirements.		supply and pressure to meet daily and firefighting needs.

4.11.3 Thresholds of Significance

In order to assist in determining whether a project would have a significant effect on the environment, the City utilizes the State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Checklist. Appendix G states that a project may be deemed to have land use and planning impacts if it would:

Threshold 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:**

i) Fire Protection?

Please refer to **Section 6.1: Effects Found Not to Be Significant** for an evaluation of those topics that were determined to be less than significant or have no impact and do not require further analysis in the EIR**.**

4.11.4 Methodology

The assessment of Project-related impacts related to public services (specifically fire protection) involved reviewing applicable state, regional, and local regulations, including state planning and zoning laws (California Government Code Section 65300 et seq. and California Government Code Section 65800 et seq.). An in-depth analysis of the Project's consistency with the City's General Plan Safety Element is provided in Table 4.11-1.

4.11.5 Project Impact Analysis

Threshold 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:**

i) Fire Protection?

Less than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project consists of the construction of an 18.5 linear foot of road surface at the terminus of Juanita Way and would facilitate the construction of a single-family residence. Under LBMC Chapter 15.01, Fire Code, the Laguna Beach Fire Department (LBFD) is identified as the fire authority having jurisdiction (FAHJ), providing fire protection and emergency response services to the City. The City has four fire stations in total, with Fire Station 2 located approximately 0.5-mile northwest of the Project site at 285 Agate St. Fire Station 2 is the largest station in the city, staffed with a Captain, Engineer, and Firefighter, in addition to a two-person ambulance crew. According to the 2019 LBFD Strategic Plan, LBFD responds to approximately 3,800 requests for emergency service each year from each of its four fire stations, including the following call and response types:

- Emergency medical services (60%);
- Fire in buildings, vehicles, or wildland (15%);
- Trapped persons (due to vehicle accidents, falls, construction accidents, weather, etc.);
- Miscellaneous (i.e., hazardous spills, public service (10%).

Service to the Project site would continue to be provided by LBFD . Given the Proposed Project is consistent with the R-1 (Single-Family Residential) zone, the proposed road extension and single-family residence would not lead to an increase in calls for service, alter response times, or hinder other LBFD performance objectives. The proposed addition of one single-family home would generate a very nominal increase in demand for fire protection services. Therefore, construction of new or substantially-altered LBFD facilities would not be required to maintain acceptable service ratios and response times. Additionally, the Proposed Project would be required to comply with the California Fire Code, as noted in 4.11.2 Regulatory Setting in accordance with LBMC Chapter 15.01, which would reduce the need for LBFD response by requiring fire-resistant construction, adequate emergency access, and on-site fire safety measures designed to minimize wildfire risk. Implementation of Fire Code requirements would further reduce potential impacts concerning fire protection services.

As noted in the Initial Study, the Project site is located in a VHFHSZ within an LRA. Therefore, the City's Municipal Code requires the Project to develop and implement an LBFD-approved Landscape/Fuel Modification Standards and Maintenance Program (L/FMSMP), which involves specific zone delineations related to defensible space, adequate irrigation, and fuel load management. Additionally, the Proposed Project would comply with the City's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) and maintain accessible evacuation routes during construction activities (see Section 4.8.5 and Section 4.14.5).

Given the Proposed Project adherence to appropriate LBFD fire-resistant landscaping and compliance with City's LHMP, implementation of the Proposed Project would not result in the alteration of or need for new or physically altered fire protection facilities. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not adversely impact LBFD service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives. Impacts would be less than significant.

4.11.6 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are defined in CEQA as "two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15355). Stated in another way, "a cumulative impact consists of an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing relating impacts" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 [a][1]).

The Proposed Project consists of an 18.5-linear-foot road extension to facilitate creation of a new building site and potential future construction of a single-family residence. Given the Proposed Project's limited scope and isolated nature, the Project is not expected to make a cumulatively considerable contribution to any significant environmental impacts related to public services, specifically fire protection.

Additionally, the Proposed Project would comply with appropriate landscaping and adhere to emergency response and evacuation plans, which would prevent wildfire hazards and therefore would not hinder LBFD's ability to provide adequate services to the City. Impacts would remain less than significant.

4.11.7 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required, as all Project impacts regarding public services are less than significant.

4.11.8 Level of Significance After Mitigation

Project impacts would be less than significant and no mitigation is required.

4.12 TRANSPORTATION

This section discusses the potential traffic impacts that would occur in association with implementation of the proposed Project due to Project construction and operational traffic.

4.12.1 Existing Environmental Setting

Regional Setting

Regional access to Laguna Beach is provided via Pacific Coast Highway, Laguna Canyon Road, El Toro Road and Crown Valley Parkway. Within the community, circulation is provided by public and private local roadways. Some of the more important local roadways include Glenneyre, Park Avenue, Cypress, Temple Hills Drive, Acacia, High Drive, Third Street, Lower Cliff Drive, Alta Laguna Boulevard, Bluebird Canyon, Nyes Place, Wesley Drive, Monterey/Virginia/West Street, Third Avenue (South Laguna) and Vista Del Sol.

Traffic congestion is a common occurrence in Laguna Beach, especially during the summer months. In fact, Laguna's widely acclaimed congestion, lack of parking and its attendant frustration level for the motorist, often serve as deterrents for many "would-be-visitors" to the City. Traffic conditions cause extreme frustration for all motorists (resident and/or visitor) traveling through or within the community. During winter months, traffic conditions tend to be more tolerable, but are not deemed ideal. It is important to note that the configuration of Laguna Beach is not situated or based on the traditional grid system. Pacific Coast Highway, a State Scenic Route, is primarily a north/south arterial constructed to accommodate two travel lanes in each direction. Two-way left turn medians and/or left turn pockets are provided at many major intersections along the highway. Dual left turning lanes are provided for southbound Pacific Coast Highway traffic turning left to eastbound Crown Valley Parkway.

Existing Street Network

The street network surrounding Juanita Way in the Arch Beach Heights neighborhood of Laguna Beach is characterized by a series of narrow, winding, and steep streets that traverse the hilly terrain of the area. These roads were developed primarily in the 1960s and 1970s, transforming what were once hiking paths into residential access routes.

Juanita Way itself is a cul-de-sac that extends from the main road network, ending at a terminus. The surrounding streets in Arch Beach Heights are similarly narrow and winding, designed to navigate the steep slopes of the area. These streets often lack sidewalks and are primarily residential, with limited through traffic. The neighborhood's layout reflects its historical development and the natural topography of the region.

Access to Arch Beach Heights is primarily from Pacific Coast Highway, which runs along the coastline. Public transportation options are limited in this area, and residents often rely on personal vehicles for commuting and accessing amenities.

4.12.2 Regulatory Setting

State

Senate Bill 743

On September 27, 2013, Senate Bill (SB) 743 was signed into State law. The California legislature found that with the adoption of the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 (SB 375), the State had signaled its commitment to encourage land use and transportation planning decisions and investments that reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and thereby contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, as required by the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (Assembly Bill 32).

SB 743 required the California Governor's Office of Planning and Research to amend the CEQA Guidelines to provide an alternative to level of service (LOS) as the metric for evaluating transportation impacts under CEQA. Particularly within areas served by transit, SB 743 requires the alternative criteria to promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, development of multimodal transportation networks, and diversity of land uses. The alternative metric for transportation impacts detailed in the CEQA Guidelines is VMT. Jurisdictions had until July 1, 2020, to adopt and begin implementing VMT thresholds for traffic analysis.

<u>AB 1358: California Complete Streets Act</u>

The California Complete Streets Act was implemented on January 1, 2011, which required circulation elements to address the transportation system from a multimodal perspective. The bill states that streets, roads, and highways must "meet the needs of all users… in a manner suitable to the rural, suburban, or urban context of the general plan." This bill requires a circulation element to plan for all modes of transportation where appropriate—including walking, biking, car travel, and transit. The Complete Streets Act also requires circulation elements to consider the multiple users of the transportation system, including children, adults, seniors, and the disabled.

<u>California Fire Code</u>

The California Fire Code sets requirements pertaining to fire safety and life safety, including for emergency access and evacuation (California Code of Regulations Title 24 Part 9).

Regional

<u>2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy</u>

On April 7, 2016, the SCAG adopted the 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). The RTP/SCS is a long-range visioning plan that balances future mobility and housing needs with economic, environmental, and public health goals. It receives input from local governments, county transportation commissions, tribal governments, non-profit organizations, businesses, and local stakeholders within the counties of Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura. The RTP/SCS demonstrates how the region will reduce emissions from transportation sources to comply with Senate Bill 375 and meet the NAAQS set forth by the Clean Air Act.

The updated RTP/SCS contains thousands of individual transportation projects that aim to improve the region's mobility and air quality and revitalize the economy. Since adoption of the RTP/SCS, the county transportation commissions have identified new project priorities and have experienced technical changes that are time sensitive. Additionally, the new amendments for the plan have outlined minor modifications to project scopes, costs, and/or funding and updates to completion years. The amendments to the RTP/SCS do not change any other policies, programs, or projects in the plan.

Local

City General Plan

The Transportation, Circulation and Growth Management Element identifies the location and extent of transportation routes and facilities. Table 4.12-1 analyzes the consistency of the Project with specific policies contained in the General Plan associated with transportation and traffic.

Table 4.12-1: General Plan Consistency

General Plan Policies	Consistency with General Plan	Analysis
Transportation, Circulation and Growth Management element		
Topic 1 Philosophical Perspective.		
1B. Maximize the efficiency of existing roads and public transit before new infrastructure is built.	Consistent	The Project would utilize existing roadway infrastructure, as access would be provided via Alta Vista Way and Juanita Way. No new regional roads or transit facilities are proposed, and the Project would not reduce the efficiency of existing transportation services.
1D. Discourage new roads and the extension or widening of existing roadways, since traffic almost always expands to fill available road capacity.	Inconsistent	The Project proposes an extension of 18.5 linear feet of road surface at the terminus of Juanita Way to provide access to the potential development of a single-family residence. Although this technically extends the existing roadway, the limited scale would not increase regional roadway capacity or induce substantial additional traffic.
Topic 2. Local Thoroughfares, Transportation Routes and Traffic Flow		
2A. Discourage the creation of new building sites where access and traffic conditions create an unacceptable level of traffic.	Consistent	The Project involves the development of a single-family residence and would not generate substantial traffic that degrades the level of service on surrounding roadways. Alta Vista Way and Juanita Way would continue to operate within acceptable capacity. According to the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), a single-family residential dwelling unit would generate an average rate of 9.43 daily vehicle trips, which would not create a substantial increase compared to existing conditions (ITE 2025)
2G. Require developers to be financially responsible for improvements necessary to mitigate the impacts of increases in level of traffic.	Consistent	A single-family residential dwelling unit, such as the Proposed Project, would generate an average rate of 9.43 daily vehicle trips, which would not create a substantial increase compared to existing conditions (ITE 2025). No traffic mitigation measures, such as an in-lieu fee, are necessary or proposed.

2J. Continue to require on-site turn around capability for streets identified on the transit map.	Inapplicable	Juanita Way is not identified on the City's transit map, and the Project does not affect any designated transit routes (OCTA 2025). This policy is not applicable.
2L. Prior to constructing new roads and installing new utilities, consider maintenance, operating costs and staffing requirements of those facilities.	Consistent	The proposed roadway extension would be minimal in scale and would not require substantial additional maintenance or staffing from the City. Utilities would be extended underground consistent with City standards.
2M. Avoid extending roads and utilities to identified Environmentally Sensitive Areas and unincorporated County lands. The City's map of environmentally sensitive areas is located at the public information counter.	Inconsistent	The Project proposes extending 18.5 linear feet of roadway and utilities into an identified ESA, as mapped by the City. This action conflicts with Policy 2M.
2U. Discourage the creation of new building sites on streets with substandard width as defined in the City's access standards.	Consistent	According to LBMC Section 21.12.140, common access driveways shall be sixteen feet wide (minimum) and sixteen feet paving. The Project site plans indicate consistency with the minimum width requirement for the proposed road extension.
Topic 3. Residential Neighborhoods		
3B. Encourage street design and traffic levels that are sympathetic to the health, safety and social needs of individual neighborhoods.	Consistent	The Project would generate minimal additional traffic and does not propose widening Juanita Way or introducing through-traffic. Traffic levels would remain compatible with the surrounding residential neighborhood.
Topic 4. Growth Management		
4C. Require new development to share the cost of traffic mitigation, as deemed appropriate.	Consistent	A single-family residential dwelling unit, such as the Proposed Project, would generate an average rate of 9.43 daily vehicle trips, which would not create a substantial increase compared to existing conditions (ITE 2025). No traffic mitigation measures, such as an in-lieu fee, are necessary or proposed.
Topic 10. Emergency Response and the Transport of Hazardous Materials		
10A. Improve and maintain the transportation system to further enhance adequate emergency access to all developed areas.	Consistent	The Project has been designed to comply with the Laguna Beach Fire Department's Landscape/Fuel Modification Standards and would maintain adequate emergency vehicle access around the structure and site perimeter.
10C. Require that a minimum of one unobstructed travel be traversable at all times by emergency service vehicles.	Consistent	The Project's design ensures an unobstructed access road along Juanita Way during both construction and operation, consistent with Fire Department access standards.

4.12.3 Thresholds of Significance

In order to assist in determining whether a project would have a significant effect on the environment, the County utilizes the State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Checklist. Appendix G states that a project may be deemed to have an impact on transportation if it would:

Threshold a) **Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadways, bicycle and pedestrian facilities.**

Threshold d) **Result in inadequate emergency access.**

Please refer to **Section 6.1: Effects Found Not to Be Significant** for an evaluation of Thresholds b) and c) that were determined to be less than significant or have no impact and do not require further analysis in the EIR**.**

4.12.4 Methodology

The analysis of transportation impacts was conducted using applicable policies and standards from the City of Laguna Beach General Plan, including the Transportation, Circulation, and Growth Management Element (TCGME), as well as local and regional transportation information. The evaluation considered whether the Proposed Project would conflict with adopted transportation plans or policies, reduce roadway capacity, affect transit services, or impair bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Additionally, access along Alta Vista Way and Juanita Way was analyzed to determine whether the Project would affect local circulation or emergency response capabilities. Cumulative impacts were assessed based on review of existing and reasonably foreseeable development projects in the surrounding area.

4.12.5 Project Impact Analysis

Threshold a) **Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadways, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?**

Significant and Unavoidable Impact. The Proposed Project consists of constructing an additional 18.5 linear feet of road surface at the terminus of Juanita Way. The Proposed Project would facilitate the construction of a new building site and potential development of a single-family residence at 2400 Juanita Way.

Transit Facilities

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) provides public transportation services within the City and surrounding jurisdictions. There are no transit facilities located adjacent to the Project site (OCTA 2025). The closest OCTA bus stop is located approximately 0.23 miles south of the Project site at the corner of Solana Way and Pacific Coast Highway. In addition, the City runs a trolley system along SR-1 (City 2024d). The closest trolley stop is 0.23 miles south of the Project Site, at the same location as the OCTA stop.

No modifications to routes or bus stops within the area would occur as a result of the proposed Project. Project implementation would not conflict with a program plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system specific to transit facilities. Impacts would be less than significant.

Roadway Facilities

Regional access to the site is provided via SR-1 located southwest of the Project site. Local access to the Project site is provided via Alta Vista Way. Within the Project area, Alta Vista Way provides access to Juanita Way. The Proposed Project consists of constructing an additional 18.5 linear feet of road surface at the terminus of Juanita Way. The City's Transportation, Circulation, and Growth Management Element (TCGME) specifies policies regarding impacts to roadway facilities. The Project would conflict with TCGME policy 1D, which discourages new roads and the extension or widening of existing roadways, since traffic almost always expands to fill available road capacity. The Project proposes an extension of 18.5 linear feet of road surface at the terminus of Juanita Way to provide access to the potential development of a single-family residence. Although this technically extends the existing roadway, the limited scale would not increase regional roadway capacity or induce substantial additional traffic. Therefore, while the Project is inconsistent with this policy, it would not result in traffic levels that would expand to fill road capacity.

The City has determined that the Proposed Project would potentially conflict with the Transportation, Circulation and Growth Management Element Policy 2M, which states that development should avoid extending roads and utilities to identified Environmentally Sensitive Areas and unincorporated County lands. The intent of this policy is to preserve sensitive habitats and prevent urban sprawl.

As discussed in Section 4.9, *Land Use and Planning*, the Project also conflicts with several LBMC roadway design standards.

Implementation of MM BIO-1 through MM BIO-4 would not reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level. Further, no feasible mitigation measures are available that would reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level. **Therefore, impacts would be significant and unavoidable**.

Bicycle Facilities

No existing or planned bicycle facilities occur on Juanita Way. The Proposed Project would not conflict with a program plan, ordinance, or policy specific to bicycle facilities. Impacts would be less than significant. No further analysis is required.

Pedestrian Facilities

The Proposed Project would not disturb existing sidewalk paths along Juanita Way. Impacts during construction and operations are not anticipated to conflict with a plan, ordinance, or policy that addresses pedestrian facilities. Impacts towards pedestrian facilities would be less than significant. No further analysis is required.

Threshold d) Result in inadequate emergency access.

Less than Significant Impact. The nearest evacuation corridor to the Project site is the southern route along Alta Vista Way, which connects to the primary evacuation route via South Coast Highway. Because the Project is located at the terminus of Juanita Way, residents located along the street would not need to pass the Project site to evacuate, and the proposed development would not create obstructions that could limit or delay evacuation for other residents in the area.

Any staging of equipment during construction would occur on the Project site and therefore would not block the roadway or driveways of neighboring residents. While the Proposed Project may introduce temporary traffic delays during construction with vehicles entering and exiting the site, these incidents are limited during the construction phase and would not result in road closures.

The Project has been designed to comply with the Laguna Beach Fire Department's Landscape/Fuel Modification Standards and Maintenance Program (L/FMSMP), which requires a minimum of 36 inches of horizontal clearance and unlimited vertical clearance around structures for firefighter access (City 2019b). The Project site lies within a Fuel Modification Zone (City 2025a), and a Fuel Modification Plan prepared by a licensed architect will be submitted for City approval prior to issuance of building permits. Final fire inspection and approval will also be required prior to occupancy.

Given Project site plans demonstrate a minimum of 36 inches of horizontal clearance and unlimited vertical clearance surrounding the exterior of the structure, the Proposed Project would have sufficient emergency access. Impacts would be less than significant.

4.12.6 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are defined in CEQA as "two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15355). Stated in another way, "a cumulative impact consists of an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing relating impacts" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 [a][1]).

Chapter 3.0, Environmental Setting, of this Draft EIR provides a list of related projects that would have the potential to be considered in a cumulative context with the Project's incremental contribution. These projects are summarized in **Table 3.0-1,** *Related Projects*.

Review of related projects in the surrounding area indicates that no other development projects are planned or approved that would require extending roadways or utilities into Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) or unincorporated County lands. As a result, the Proposed Project would be the only project in the vicinity contributing to this type of potential impact. Therefore, this impact is site-specific and not cumulatively considerable.

The Proposed Project involves potential future construction of a single-family residence and a minor roadway extension of 18.5 linear feet at the terminus of an existing local street to create a new building site. Given the limited size and scope of the Project, it would not generate substantial traffic, require significant infrastructure upgrades, or meaningfully alter area-wide circulation patterns.

Because the Project represents an isolated, site-specific improvement at the terminus of a residential street and does not introduce new through-streets or regional connections, it would not result in cumulatively considerable impacts related to circulation, roadway capacity, transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, or emergency access. Any effects would be limited to the immediate Project site and would not combine with other projects to create a significant cumulative impact.

4.12.7 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are proposed.

4.12.8 Level of Significance After Mitigation

No mitigation measures are proposed, and impacts would be significant and unavoidable.

4.13 TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

This section evaluates the Proposed Project's potential impacts on tribal cultural resources (TCRs). TCRs are defined as sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that are either included or determined to be eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) or included in a local register of historical resources, or a resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant. A cultural landscape that meets these criteria is a tribal cultural resource to the extent that the landscape is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape. Historical resources, unique archaeological resources, or non-unique archaeological resources may also be tribal cultural resources if they meet these criteria.

Applicable State and local policies related to TCRs are discussed and potential impacts to TCRs are based on coordination and consultation with California Native American tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the Project site. The consultation process was conducted pursuant to PRC Section 21080.3.

Additionally, information used in preparing this section was derived from the consultation summaries and communication between the City and tribes. The notices sent to tribes is contained in Appendix G of this EIR.

4.13.1 Existing Environmental Setting

Existing Conditions

The Project site is located at the terminus of Juanita Way in the Arch Beach Heights neighborhood of Laguna Beach, situated on an undeveloped hillside within the San Joaquin Hills. The area is characterized by steep slopes, natural open space, and coastal sage scrub habitat, with portions of the surrounding landscape forming part of the South Coast Wilderness. The Project site itself remains undeveloped and lacks existing built structures; however, its location within a largely natural hillside environment contributes to its sensitivity for potential subsurface cultural resources.

Cultural Setting

The broader Laguna Beach area has a rich cultural history and is considered sensitive for archaeological resources. The region was historically inhabited by the Acjachemen (Juaneño) and Tongva indigenous peoples, whose presence is documented through archaeological findings in nearby Laguna Canyon, including stone tools, grinding implements, and habitation sites that indicate long-term occupation. The discovery of the "Laguna Woman" skull, one of the oldest known human remains in California, further demonstrates the area's prehistoric significance. Historically, the San Joaquin Hills were part of the Rancho San Joaquin land grant during the Mexican period before being incorporated into the Irvine Ranch for cattle grazing and agricultural uses. In the late 20th century, community-led preservation efforts, including the Laguna Canyon Project and the establishment of the Laguna Coast Wilderness Park, protected large portions of surrounding open space.

As discussed under 4.4 Cultural Resources, the Chambers Group requested a records search from the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC) at Cal State Fullerton, on January 28, 2025. A records search of the Project site and surrounding 0.5-mile radius was requested to provide context and additional information regarding types and extent of resources recorded within the study area. The SCCIC returned the records search results on March 25, 2025, providing information on all documented cultural resources and previous archaeological investigations within the Project site.

Based on the records search conducted by the SCCIC, six previously recorded cultural resources are recorded within the study area. Of the six resources, none are mapped within the Project site. Additionally, 10 cultural resource studies have previously been completed within the study area. Of these 10 reports, one is partially mapped within the Project site.

Chambers Group also requested a Sacred Lands File (SLF) records search from the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), on January 28, 2025. The purpose of the request is to determine if any sacred lands or other resources important to local tribal groups have been recorded within the Project site or adjacent areas. The results of the SLF search, provided by the NAHC on February 5, 2025, were positive, and included a list of 25 tribal government contacts representing 14 tribes to seek additional information. The SLF results letter specifically named the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians Acjachemen Nation – Belardes Tribe for outreach in order to obtain further information in relation to their tribal lands.

4.13.2 Regulatory Setting

Federal

Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 sets provisions for the intentional removal and inadvertent discovery of human remains and other cultural items from federal and tribal lands. It clarifies the ownership of human remains and sets forth a process for repatriation of human remains, associated funerary objects, and sacred religious objects to the Native American groups claiming to be lineal descendants or culturally affiliated with the remains or objects. It requires any federally funded institution housing Native American remains or artifacts to compile an inventory of all cultural items within the museum or with its agency and to provide a summary to any Native American tribe claiming affiliation.

National Park Service – National Register Bulletin 38

National Park Service has prepared guidelines to assist in the documentation of Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs) by public entities. National Register Bulletin 38 is intended to be an aid in determining whether properties have traditional cultural significance and if they are eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). It is also intended to assist federal agencies, State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs), Certified Local Governments, tribes, and other historic preservation practitioners who need to evaluate such properties when considering their eligibility for the National Register as part of the review process prescribed by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP).

TCPs are a broad group of places that can include:

- Location associated with the traditional beliefs of a Native American group about its origins, its cultural history, or the nature of the world;
- Rural community whose organization, buildings and structures, or patterns of land use reflect the cultural traditions valued by its long-term residents;

- An urban neighborhood that is the traditional home of a particular cultural group, and that reflects its beliefs and practices;
- Location where Native American religious practitioners have historically gone, and are known or thought to go today, to perform ceremonial activities in accordance with traditional cultural rules of practice; and
- Location where a community has traditionally carried out economic, artistic, or other cultural practices important in maintaining its historic identity

State

<u>Assembly Bill 52</u>

AB 52, in effect as of July 1, 2015, introduces tribal cultural resources as a class of cultural resources and additional considerations relating to Native American consultation into CEQA. As a general concept, a tribal cultural resource is similar to the federally defined Traditional Cultural Properties; however, it incorporates consideration of local and state significance and required mitigation under CEQA. A tribal cultural resource may be considered significant if included in a local or State register of historical resources; determined by the lead agency to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in PRC Section 5024.1; is a geographically defined cultural landscape that meets one or more of these criteria; or is a historical resource described in PRC Section 21084.1, a unique archaeological resource described in PRC Section 21083.2, or is a nonunique archaeological resource if it conforms with the above criteria.

In compliance with AB 52 (2014), the City provided formal notification of the Proposed Project on August 4, 2025, via certified mail to each representative of 26 Native American groups and individuals who may have knowledge of cultural resources in the Project area. The letters can be seen in Appendix G: AB 52 Tribal Consultation.

Pursuant to the provisions of AB 52, any tribe who wished to request consultation had until September 3, 2025, or 30 days from receipt of notification, to respond. The City received requests from the Gabrieleno Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation, the Juaneno Band of Mission Indians, Acjachemen Nation – Belardes, and the Juaneno Band of Mission Indians Acjachemen Nation 84A. The City is currently engaged in consultation with the three Tribes.

<u>Native American Historic Resource Protection Act</u>

State law addresses the disposition of Native American burials in archaeological sites and protects such remains from disturbance, vandalism, or inadvertent destruction; establishes procedures to be implemented if Native American skeletal remains are discovered during construction of a project; and establishes the NAHC to resolve disputes regarding the disposition of such remains. In addition, the Native American Historic Resource Protection Act (PRC Section 5097 et seq.) makes it a misdemeanor punishable by up to one year in jail to deface or destroy a Native American historic or cultural site that is listed or may be eligible for listing in the CRHR.

<u>Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act</u>

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA; 25 U.S.C., Chapter 32), enacted in 2001, requires all State agencies and museums that receive State funding and that have possession or control over collections of human remains or cultural items, as defined, to complete an inventory and summary of these remains and items on or before January 1, 2003, with certain exceptions. The NAGPRA also provides a process for the identification and repatriation of these items to the appropriate tribes.

<u>California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5</u>

California law protects Native American burials, skeletal remains, and associated grave goods, regardless of their antiquity, and provides for the sensitive treatment and disposition of those remains. California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 requires that if human remains are discovered in any place other than a dedicated cemetery, no further disturbance or excavation of the site or nearby area reasonably suspected to contain human remains can occur until the County Coroner has examined the remains (Section 7050.5b). If the coroner determines or has reason to believe that the remains are those of a Native American, the coroner must contact the NAHC within 24 hours (Section 7050.5c). The NAHC will notify the most likely descendant; and, with the permission of the landowner, the most likely descendant may inspect the site of discovery. The inspection must be completed within 24 hours of notification of the most likely descendant by the NAHC. The most likely descendant may recommend means of treating or disposing of, with appropriate dignity, the human remains and items associated with Native Americans.

Local

<u>City of Laguna Beach General Plan</u>

The City's General Plan Open Space and Conservation Element Topic 12: Archaeology/Paleontology includes goals, objectives, and policies for the protection of tribal cultural resources and scientific sites that emphasize identification, documentation, and protection of tribal cultural resources.

Policy 12-B: Develop a program which systemically inventories, records, and preserves significant cultural resources in the community, in accordance with the guidelines in the City's Local Coastal Plan.

4.13.3 <u>Thresholds of Significance</u>

In order to assist in determining whether a project would have a significant effect on the environment, the County utilizes the State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Checklist. Appendix G states that a project may be deemed to have an impact on tribal cultural resources if it would:

Threshold a) **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 define 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 forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth is 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.

4.13.4 Methodology

Chambers Group requested a Sacred Lands File (SLF) records search from the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), on January 28, 2025. The purpose of the request is to determine if any sacred lands or other resources important to local tribal groups have been recorded within the Project site or adjacent areas.

The results of the SLF search, provided by the NAHC on February 5, 2025, were positive, and included a list of 25 tribal government contacts representing 14 tribes was provided to seek additional information. The SLF results letter specifically named the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians Acjachemen Nation – Belardes Tribe for outreach in order to obtain further information in relation to their tribal lands.

On August 4, 2025, AB 52 letters were sent to 26 Native American groups and individuals who may have knowledge of cultural resources in the Project area.

4.13.5 Project Impact Analysis

Threshold a) **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 define 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 forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth is 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.**

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. As described in Section 4.4, Cultural Resources, the results of the SLF search provided by the NAHC on February 5, 2025 were positive, and included a list of 25 tribal government contacts representing 14 tribes were provided to seek additional information. The SLF results letter specifically named the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians Acjachemen Nation – Belardes Tribe for outreach in order to obtain further information in relation to their tribal lands.

On August 4, 2025, AB 52 letters were sent to 26 Native American groups and individuals who may have knowledge of cultural resources in the Project area. Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians Kizh Nation responded to the initial notification letter, requesting formal consultation on August 4, 2025 and provided written mitigation measures. Juaneño Band of Mission Indians, Acjachemen Nation – Belardes responded to the initial notification letter, requesting formal consultation on August 21, 2025 and provided written mitigation measures. Juaneño Band of Mission Indians Acjachemen Nation 84A responded to the initial notification letter, requesting formal consultation on August 24, 2025. The City met with the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians Acjachemen Nation 84A on September 3, 2025, who verbally requested that a mitigation measure be provided to require a Native American monitor be on site during grading activities. Mitigation Measures TCR-1, TCR-2, and TCR-3 reflect the requested mitigation by the Tribes. As the lead agency, and in compliance with AB 52, the City has initiated its obligations under AB 52 to engage in tribal consultation with all other tribal governments.

Based on the results of the records search from the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC) and in consultation with the tribes, the City has determined that there are no previously recorded tribal cultural resources within the Project site. However, the potential remains for the Project's ground-disturbing activity to inadvertently encounter and consequently damage or destroy unknown cultural resources that may qualify as tribal cultural resources upon evaluation. Such impacts to tribal cultural resources would be potentially significant. However, implementation of Mitigation Measures TCR-1 through TCR-3, outlined in Section 4.13.7 Mitigation Measures below would reduce potential impacts to a less than significant level.

4.13.6 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are defined in CEQA as "two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15355). Stated in another way, "a cumulative impact consists of an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing relating impacts" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 [a][1]).

Ongoing development and growth in the broader area and in the Project vicinity may result in a cumulatively significant impact to tribal cultural resources due to the continuing disturbance of undeveloped areas, which could potentially contain significant, buried archaeological or tribal cultural resources, or transform an area related to tribal cultural history.

Although the Proposed Project site is located on an undeveloped hillside, the results of the records search indicate there are no previously recorded cultural resources within the Project site, and the steep slopes reduce the likelihood of intact subsurface deposits. Because ground disturbing activities could result in encountering undiscovered tribal cultural resources during construction activities, no matter the location or sensitivity of a particular site, Mitigation Measures TCR- 1 through TCR-3 have been included and would serve to protect, preserve, and maintain the integrity and significance of cultural or tribal cultural resources in the event of the unanticipated discovery of a resource.

The individual, Project-level impacts were found to be less than significant with implementation of Mitigation Measures TCR-1 through TCR-3, and the Project would be required by law to comply with all applicable federal, State, and local requirements related to historical, archaeological and tribal cultural resources. Other related cumulative projects would similarly be required to comply with all such requirements and regulations, to be consistent with the provisions set forth by CEQA, and to implement all feasible mitigation measures should a significant project-related or cumulative impact be identified.

With implementation of Mitigation Measures TCR-1 through TCR-3, potential impacts to previously undiscovered tribal cultural resources would be minimized. Therefore, the Project's contribution to cumulative cultural resource impacts would be less than cumulatively considerable.

4.13.7 Mitigation Measures

In order to minimize potential impacts to TCRs for the Project, the following mitigation measures shall be implemented:

TCR-1: Retain a Native American Monitor Prior to Commencement of Ground-Disturbing Activities

a) The Project applicant shall retain a Native American Monitor in consultation with Gabrieleno Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation, the Juaneno Band of Mission Indians, Acjachemen Nation – Belardes, and the Juaneno Band of Mission Indians Acjachemen Nation 84A. The monitor shall be retained prior to the commencement of any “ground-disturbing activity” for the subject project at all project locations (i.e., both onsite and any offsite locations that are included in the project description/definition and/or required in connection with the project, such as public improvement work). “Ground-disturbing activity” shall include, but is not limited to, demolition, pavement removal, potholing, auguring, grubbing, tree removal, boring, grading, excavation, drilling, and trenching.

b) A copy of the executed monitoring agreement shall be submitted to the lead agency (City) prior to the earlier of the commencement of any ground-disturbing activity, or the issuance of any permit necessary to commence a ground-disturbing activity.

c) The monitor will complete daily monitoring logs that will provide descriptions of the relevant ground-disturbing activities, the type of construction activities performed, locations of ground-disturbing activities, soil types, cultural-related materials, and any other facts, conditions, materials, or discoveries of significance to the Tribe. Monitor logs will identify and describe any discovered TCRs, including but not limited to, Native American cultural and historical artifacts, remains, places of significance, etc., (collectively, tribal cultural resources, or “TCR”), as well as any discovered Native American (ancestral) human remains and burial goods. Copies of monitor logs will be provided to the project applicant/lead agency upon written request to the Tribe.

d) On-site tribal monitoring shall conclude upon the latter of the following:

   (1) Written confirmation to the Tribe or Tribal monitoring agency from a designated point of contact for the Project applicant/Lead Agency that all ground-disturbing activities and phases that may involve ground-disturbing activities on the project site or in connection with the project are complete; or,

   (2) A determination and written notification by the Tribe or Tribal monitoring agency to the Project applicant/Lead Agency that no future, planned construction activity and/or development/construction phase at the project site possesses the potential to impact TCRs.

TCR-2: Unanticipated Discovery of Tribal Cultural Resource Objects (Non-Funerary/Non-Ceremonial)

a) Upon discovery of any TCRs, all construction activities in the immediate vicinity of the discovery shall cease (i.e., not less than the surrounding 50 feet) and shall not resume until the discovered TCR has been fully assessed by the Native American Monitor. The Tribe or Tribal monitoring agency will recover and retain all discovered TCRs in the form and/or manner the Tribe deems appropriate, in the Tribe's sole discretion, and for any purpose the Tribe deems appropriate, including for educational, cultural and/or historic purposes.

TCR-3: Unanticipated Discovery of Human Remains and Associated Funerary or Ceremonial Objects

a) Native American human remains are defined in PRC 5097.98 (d)(1) as an inhumation or cremation, and in any state of decomposition or skeletal completeness. Funerary objects, called associated grave goods in Public Resources Code Section 5097.98, are also to be treated according to this statute.

b) If Native American human remains and/or grave goods are discovered or recognized on the project site, then Public Resource Code 5097.9 as well as Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 shall be followed.

c) Human remains and grave/burial goods shall be treated alike per California Public Resources Code section 5097.98(d)(1) and (2).

d) Preservation in place (i.e., avoidance) is the preferred manner of treatment for discovered human remains and/or burial goods.

e) Any discovery of human remains/burial goods shall be kept confidential to prevent further disturbance.

4.13.8 Level of Significance After Mitigation

With incorporation of Mitigation Measure TCR-1, TCR-2, and TCR-3, impacts would be less than significant.

4.14 WILDFIRE

This section discusses the potential wildfire impacts that would occur in association with implementation of the proposed Project. This analysis describes the Project-specific impacts, regulatory compliance measures, site conditions, and cumulative wildfire risks in the Project area.

4.14.1 Existing Environmental Setting

Regional Setting

The City is characterized by a coastal Mediterranean climate, with mild, wet winters and warm to hot, dry summers, conditions that are conducive to wildfire risk during the dry season. Fire season in Southern California generally begins in late spring and extends through the fall, when precipitation is minimal, vegetation is dry, and temperatures are elevated. Santa Ana winds are a driver for fire events, which typically develop in the fall and winter months and consist of strong, dry, offshore winds flowing from inland desert regions toward the coast. These winds significantly reduce humidity, increase temperatures, and can rapidly spread wildfires. While proximity to the Pacific Ocean generally moderates temperatures and increases coastal humidity through marine influences and daily onshore sea breezes, thus reducing fire risk under typical conditions, these moderating effects are often overwhelmed during Santa Ana wind events. In addition, local topography in the City, including steep coastal canyons and ridgelines, can channel and accelerate winds, potentially increasing fire spread rates.

The City is bordered by natural, undeveloped hillsides, with developed areas situated on relatively narrow corridors adjacent to these lands (City 2025b). A substantial portion of the community is located in close proximity to these hillsides. The City's canyon and hillside areas, along with select coastal terrace areas, are designated as Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ) by CalFIRE, representing the highest wildfire risk classification. Approximately 90 percent of the City is located within a VHFHSZ. According to the Laguna Beach Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP), these hazard zones are mapped in relation to existing development, critical facilities, and infrastructure. The Laguna Beach Fire Department conducts ongoing strategic planning to ensure adequate fire response capabilities citywide and to identify potential operational challenges. The most recent Strategic Plan was completed in 2019. In addition, a Wildfire Mitigation and Fire Safety Report update was recently completed in 2025 (City 2025e).

There are only three evacuation routes out of the city: North Coast Highway, South Coast Highway, and Laguna Canyon Road.

In the last ten years, the City has experienced five wildfires (City 2025e):

1. Canyon Fire - July 3, 2015, on Laguna Canyon Road and Canyon Acres
2. Aliso Fire – June 2, 2018, in Aliso Woods Canyon Park
3. Emerald Fire – February 10, 2022, in Emerald Canyon above Emerald Bay
4. Coastal Fire – May 12, 2022, in South Laguna behind Aliso Creek
5. Rancho Fire – July 7, 2025, in open space near Arch Beach Heights

Each of these wildfires forced immediate evacuations and burned vegetation in the City's open space while the Coastal Fire also destroyed homes in neighboring Laguna Niguel. The City's most devastating wildfire occurred on October 27, 1993, when a Santa Ana wind-driven wildfire, known as the Laguna Fire, consumed over 14,000 acres and forced the evacuation of the entire city. In total, the Laguna Fire destroyed 441 homes and structures in less than 24 hours.

Project Site

The Project site is located within the Arch Beach Heights Evacuation Zone (City 2025b). The nearest evacuation corridor near the Project site is the southern direction of Alta Vista Way, which leads to the main evacuation route along the South Coast Highway.

According to a Wildfire Egress Study prepared for the City in 2021, Alta Vista Way is a narrow local roadway with a winding alignment and several hairpin turns, and on-street parking further constrains its width (City 2021). While the roadway presents some challenges for evacuation, there is minimal adjacent fuel along the corridor, and the study concludes that the road would remain passable during a wildfire event.

The undisturbed and vegetated Project site contains 0.14 acres of Lemonade Berry Scrub habitat and 0.03 acres of ornamental landscaping (Appendix C). The Project site exhibits steep hillside topography; the proposed driveway along the southern end of the Project site features slopes ranging from 2% to 30.9%, while the remainder of the Project site features slopes ranging from 30.9% to 66%. Due to the Project site's location within a wildland-urban interface, the proposed road extension and residential development would necessitate the creation of a fuel modification zone (FMZ).

4.14.2 Regulatory Setting

Federal

National Fire Plan

The National Fire Plan was developed in August 2000, following a landmark wildland fire season, with the intent of actively responding to severe wildland fires and their impacts to communities while ensuring sufficient firefighting capacity for the future. The NFP addresses five key points: Firefighting, Rehabilitation, Hazardous Fuels Reduction, Community Assistance, and Accountability. As it nears its fifth year, the National Fire Plan continues to provide invaluable technical, financial, and resource guidance and support for wildland fire management across the U.S.

Together, the USDA Forest Service and the Department of the Interior are working to successfully implement the key points outlined in the National Fire Plan by taking the following steps: 1) Assuring that necessary firefighting resources and personnel are available to respond to wildland fires that threaten lives and property; 2) Conducting emergency stabilization and rehabilitation activities on landscapes and communities affected by wildland fire; 3) Reducing hazardous fuels (dry brush and trees that have accumulated and increase the likelihood of unusually large fires) in the country's forests and rangelands; 4) Providing assistance to communities that have been or may be threatened by wildland fire; 5) Committing to the Wildland Fire Leadership Council, an interagency team created to set and maintain high standards for wildland fire management on public lands.

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is an independent, nonprofit organization that develops and publishes consensus-based codes and standards intended to reduce the risk and impacts of fire, electrical hazards, and related dangers. Founded in 1896, NFPA brings together experts from government, industry, academia, and the fire service to establish widely recognized best practices for fire prevention, building design, fire protection systems, emergency response, and life safety. Its codes and standards, such as those addressing fire alarms, sprinkler systems, electrical safety, and wildfire mitigation, are updated regularly to reflect advances in technology, research, and fire science, and are used internationally as a technical foundation for fire and life safety regulations.

Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy & Program

The Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy & Program is a unified framework adopted by U.S. federal land management agencies to guide how wildland fires are prevented, managed, and suppressed on federal lands. Established through interagency policy and implemented by agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Indian Affairs, the policy emphasizes firefighter and public safety as the highest priority. It promotes a risk-based, science-driven approach to wildfire management that integrates fire prevention, preparedness, suppression, hazardous fuels reduction, post-fire recovery, and the appropriate use of managed wildfire to achieve resource benefits where conditions allow. The program also stresses interagency coordination, protection of communities and natural resources, and adaptation to changing conditions such as climate change, drought, and increased wildfire severity.

International Fire Code

The International Fire Code (IFC) is a model code developed by the International Code Council (ICC) to establish minimum regulations for fire prevention, fire protection systems, emergency access, hazardous materials management, and life safety in the built environment. It is designed to be adopted and enforced by state and local jurisdictions and is often used in conjunction with building and residential codes to provide a comprehensive approach to fire safety. The IFC is updated on a three-year cycle to reflect advancements in fire science, technology, and emergency response practices, and it incorporates by reference numerous nationally recognized standards, including those published by the National Fire Protection Association. Jurisdictions may adopt the IFC as written or modify it to address local conditions, hazards, and policy objectives, making it a flexible yet consistent regulatory framework for fire and life safety.

International Wildland-Urban Interface Code

The International Wildland-Urban Interface Code (IWUIC) establishes requirements for land use and the built environment within designated Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas using prescriptive and performance provisions. The IWUIC establishes minimum special regulations for the safeguarding of life and property from the intrusion of wildfire and:

- Regulates ignition-resistant construction techniques and defensible space as well as fire department access and available water supplies for fire suppression.
- Focuses on preventing ignition of buildings and vegetative fuels from direct exposure to wildfire and fire exposure from adjacent structures.

- Helps prevent structure fires in the WUI from spreading to wildland fuels, even in the absence of fire department intervention.

State

California Building Code and Fire Code

Chapter 7A of the California Building Code (CBC), Materials and Methods for Exterior Wildfire Exposure, prescribes building materials and construction methods for new buildings in a fire hazard severity zone. Chapter 7A contains requirements for roofing; attic ventilation; exterior walls; exterior windows and glazing; exterior doors; decking; protection of underfloor, appendages, and floor projections; and ancillary structures. Chapter 49 of the California Fire Code (CFC), Requirements for Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Areas, prescribes construction materials and methods in fire hazard severity zones. These requirements generally parallel CBC Chapter 7A.

The CFC incorporates National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards by reference as part of its regulatory framework to establish minimum fire and life safety requirements statewide. The CFC, which is based on the International Fire Code and adopted as part of Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations, references specific NFPA codes and standards to address specialized fire protection topics such as fire alarms, fire sprinkler systems, hazardous materials, and fire apparatus access. When referenced, these NFPA standards become enforceable under California law, unless amended or modified by state or local jurisdictions. This approach allows California to rely on nationally recognized best practices developed by NFPA while tailoring requirements to address state-specific fire risks and regulatory needs.

California Code of Regulations, Title 14 - Natural Resources, Division 1.5 - Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Chapter 7 - Fire Protection

For structures within Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZs), California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 1.5, Chapter 7 establishes enhanced fire protection requirements for buildings to reduce structural ignition risk and improve firefighter safety. These requirements include mandatory vegetation management and defensible space extending a minimum of 100 feet from structures, with specific fuel reduction standards in the immediate zone surrounding buildings. Structures must be provided with adequate fire apparatus access, including minimum roadway widths, turning radii, and vertical clearances, as well as approved addressing for emergency response. The regulations also require reliable emergency water supplies for fire protection, such as hydrants, water tanks, or other approved sources, depending on site conditions. In addition, construction activities must implement fire prevention measures to reduce ignition risk during building and maintenance operations.

CAL FIRE Strategic Fire Plan 2024

The CAL FIRE Strategic Plan 2024 functions as a statewide policy and management framework that directs how the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection prioritizes resources, programs, and partnerships to address wildfire risk, forest and rangeland health, and community safety. It is developed collaboratively with state agencies, local governments, tribes, and other stakeholders, and aligns with overarching state initiatives such as California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan and climate change goals for maintaining resilient, carbon-sequestering landscapes. The plan sets long-term goals and measurable objectives that inform CAL FIRE unit fire plans, pre-fire planning, community wildfire protection efforts, and related regulatory and funding decisions, thereby providing a unifying strategic context for wildfire prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery activities across the state.

California State Hazard Mitigation Plan

The 2023 State Hazard Mitigation Plan (SHMP) is California's primary hazard mitigation guidance document and demonstrates the State's continued commitment to a comprehensive mitigation strategy. The SHMP:

- Details California's historical and current hazards
- Identifies mitigation strategies and actions to address those hazards
- Provides guidance to local jurisdictions developing their own hazard mitigation plans.

The 2023 Plan update expands on previous SHMP discussions of hazard impacts on equity priority communities and of climate change as a hazard exacerbator. It also organizes hazards according to an impact rating, rather than by hazard type as seen in previous plans. The 2023 SHMP will expire on August 29, 2028.

PRC § 4427 - Operation of Fire-Causing Equipment

Requires that during times when burning permits are required, anyone operating equipment that can produce sparks, flames, or heat capable of starting a fire on or near forest-, brush-, or grass-covered land must take basic fire-prevention measures. Before operating the equipment, flammable materials must be cleared within a 10-foot radius of the work area, and the operator must keep readily available a serviceable round-point shovel and a backpack-type water fire extinguisher to control any fire that may start.

PRC § 4428 - Fire Tools for Industrial Operations

PRC § 4428 applies to industrial or commercial operations using internal combustion engines near wildland areas during fire season or other periods of high fire danger. It requires operators to provide and maintain a specified cache of firefighting tools at the worksite, including water extinguishers, hand tools such as shovels, axes, and McLeods, and cutting equipment such as chainsaws or equivalent felling tools. Vehicles used in the operation must also carry basic fire tools, ensuring that crews can respond immediately to a wildfire ignition.

PRC § 4431 - Fire Tools for Portable Gasoline-Powered Tools

PRC § 4431 focuses on portable gasoline-powered tools used near flammable vegetation when burning permits are required. It mandates that a serviceable shovel or an approved fire extinguisher be kept within 25 feet of the operator at the point of use. The intent is to ensure rapid suppression of small fires that may be ignited by sparks or heat from portable equipment.

PRC § 4442 - Spark Arresters on Internal Combustion Engines

PRC § 4442 prohibits the operation of hydrocarbon-fueled internal combustion engines on forest-, brush-, or grass-covered lands unless the engine is equipped with a properly maintained spark arrester or is otherwise constructed and maintained to prevent the escape of sparks. This requirement is designed to reduce wildfire ignitions caused by engine exhaust systems, with limited exemptions for certain engines that meet equivalent fire-prevention standards.

<u>PRC § 4290 - Minimum Fire Safety Standards in Hazardous Fire Areas</u>

PRC § 4290 directs the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection to adopt minimum fire safety standards for new development in State Responsibility Areas and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. The standards address features such as fire access roads, road and building signage, water supplies for firefighting, and fuel breaks or greenbelts. PRC § 4290 establishes a baseline level of wildfire safety for development while allowing local governments to adopt more stringent requirements if needed.

California Code, Government Code - GOV § 51182

Under Government Code § 51182, a person who owns, leases, controls, operates, or maintains an occupied dwelling or other occupied structure located in, upon, or adjoining flammable lands within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone designated by the local agency must continuously take specified fire safety steps. These include maintaining defensible space around the structure by clearing flammable vegetation and creating firebreaks - generally 100 feet of defensible space or to the property line, as directed by state or local rules and tailored to conditions (such as vegetation type, building materials, and topography). § 51182 also includes maintenance obligations (e.g., removing vegetation near chimneys or rooflines) and requires, before constructing or rebuilding an occupied dwelling in such zones, that the owner obtain and retain certification from the local building official that the proposed construction complies with all applicable state and local building standards, including wildfire-related standards.

Regional

<u>Regional Water Quality Control Board</u>

The Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) regulates potential impacts to water quality that can result from wildfire events and vegetation clearing associated with fire prevention measures. When projects involve fuel modification, grading, or vegetation removal within a VHFHSZ, applicants may need to comply with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit under Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ, as amended by 2012-0006-DWQ. This requires implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) to prevent erosion, sedimentation, and pollutant runoff into local waterways during and after construction or fuel modification activities.

Additionally, following wildfire events, the RWQCB enforces post-fire watershed protection strategies under the Clean Water Act Sections 401 and 402, which include requirements for stabilizing soils, protecting coastal lagoons, and preventing sediment-laden flows from entering creeks, streams, and the ocean.

Local

<u>Local Hazard Mitigation Plan</u>

The City of Laguna Beach Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP), adopted December 12, 2023, is a planning document that identifies local threats such as wildfires, flooding, landslides, and seismic activity, evaluates the community's vulnerabilities, and outlines mitigation strategies to minimize potential impacts. Aligned with FEMA requirements, the LHMP also helps the City qualify for federal funding to implement hazard reduction projects. The LHMP integrates with other city planning efforts, including the Safety Element of the General Plan, the Wildfire Mitigation and Fire Safety Report (City 2025c), and the ongoing Evacuation Time Estimate Study. Given that approximately 87 percent of Laguna Beach lies within Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ), the LHMP emphasizes wildfire risk reduction through vegetation management, defensible space requirements, and fuel modification programs.

Laguna Beach Vegetation Management Program

Laguna Beach maintains an extensive Vegetation Management Program aimed at reducing wildfire risk through strategic fuel reduction measures. This program enforces annual weed abatement, targeted removal of dead or invasive vegetation, and maintenance of fuel breaks around high-risk areas. The City also utilizes goat grazing, hand crews, and mechanical clearing to maintain defensible space in canyon areas and near residential neighborhoods. For properties not covered by fuel modification zones, the City requires property owners to maintain defensible space consistent with both state mandates and local guidelines.

Building and Fire-Resistant Construction Standards

Laguna Beach enforces strict building and fire safety standards for development within VHFHSZ areas, consistent with the CBC and local amendments. These standards require the use of fire-resistant roofing materials (Class A or B), noncombustible siding, ember-resistant attic vents, and protected eaves to reduce the potential for structural ignition. New construction and significant remodels must demonstrate compliance with these requirements as part of the building permit approval process, ensuring structures are designed to withstand wildfire exposure and reduce community vulnerability.

Laguna Beach Municipal Code

The Proposed Project is subject to multiple provisions of the City's Municipal Code (LBMC), including the following:

- **LBMC Section 25.05.040(2)(u): Design Review – Fuel Modification.** Plans consisting solely of a new or modified fuel modification shall be reviewed and approved by the Director of Community Development or designee to evaluate landscape design, and by the Fire Chief or designee for compliance with fuel modification regulations. Such plans may qualify as development requiring a coastal development permit that is subject to the provisions of Chapter 25.07, including instances when such a plan constitutes development that is not exempt pursuant to Section 25.07.008 because it would impact environmentally sensitive habitat areas.

- **LBMC Section 25.05.040(C)(3): Biological Report Requirements.** Prior to deliberation and action on a design review application, the applicant shall submit a biological report that is prepared by a professional in the fields of wildlife biology or botany for any proposal to clear native vegetation on undeveloped parcels that are located within or adjacent to areas designated high or very high value on the city's biological values maps and any other areas that contain environmentally sensitive habitat resources except for annual weed abatement and approved fuel modification programs.

- **LBMC Section 25.05.040(C)(4): Fire Department Review and Approval**. Prior to deliberation and action on a design review application for new construction and alterations involving 50% or more of an existing structure, the Fire Department shall review and approve or conditionally approve applications, including proposed fuel modification programs. Fuel modification programs or Alternative Materials and Methods (AM&Ms) requests, when determined necessary by the Fire Department, are required for any parcel having an "FM"—Fuel Modification designation or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone on the City's Geographic Information Mapping system. The Cal Fire-designated Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone is an overlay zone, and does not change the underlying zoning of Title 25. The Fire Department conditions of approval relating to public safety may not subsequently be modified by the approval authority without the Fire Department's review and approval.

Laguna Beach General Plan

The Safety Element of the General Plan contains goals, objectives, policies, and programs relating to public services. Table 4.14-1 identifies the General Plan goals, objectives, policies, and programs related to wildfire that are relevant to the Project and summarizes the Project's consistency with the General Plan.

Table 4.14-1: General Plan Consistency

General Plan Policies	Consistency with General Plan	Analysis
Safety Element		
GOAL S-2: REDUCE THE THREAT OF WILDFIRE HAZARDS FOR LAGUNA BEACH RESIDENTS, BUSINESSES, AND VISITORS.		
S-2.4 Promote development outside of the VHFHSZ, where applicable and allow for transfer of development rights into lower risk areas, if feasible.	Consistent	The Proposed Project is located entirely within a VHFHSZ; however, given site constraints and the nature of the existing neighborhood, development outside the VHFHSZ is not feasible. The majority of Laguna Beach is within a VHFHSZ. The Project is consistent with the policy to the extent practicable, as required design measures minimize wildfire risk within the high-hazard area.
S-2.5 Require development within the VHFHSZ's to incorporate fire-resistive construction and defensible space management strategies consistent with State requirements, municipal regulations, and requirements identified in Policy S-2.3. S-2.5a – All new development and major remodels, in applicable areas, will be responsible for preparation of a Fire Protection Plan, the creation, maintenance, and rehabilitation of fuel modification zones, which will include a recorded deed restriction acknowledging the fire hazard potential and maintenance responsibility by the developer or his successors and assigns.	Consistent	The Project incorporates fire-resistive construction materials, maintains 100 feet of defensible space around the single-family home, and shall comply with all applicable State and municipal fire regulations as a condition of approval. As required by the City's Municipal Code, the Project will prepare a Fire Protection Plan (FPP) approved by the Fire Code Official, including fuel modification zones, recorded deed restrictions, and long-term maintenance obligations. As required by the City's Municipal Code, the Project's landscaping plan incorporates fire-safe plant species, irrigation, and spacing standards in accordance with City guidelines.

Table 4.14-1: General Plan Consistency

General Plan Policies	Consistency with General Plan	Analysis
S-2.5b – Require property owners within the VHFHSZ to create defensible space surrounding their homes, including providing access for firefighters, maintaining plantings and outdoor areas, and minimizing combustible structures. S-2.5c – Require the use of fire-safe planting, especially in landscaped areas located within the VHFHSZ. S-2.5d – Conduct a feasibility study to develop permit expediting options such as permit fee reductions for the voluntary inclusion of fire safety mitigation actions incorporated into development projects.		
Fire Protection Plans A Fire Protection Plan (FPP) approved by the fire code official is required for all new development within the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. FPPs are required to include mitigation strategies that take into consideration location, topography, geology, flammable vegetation, sensitive habitats/species, and climate of the proposed site. FPPs must address water supply, access, building ignition and fire resistance, fire protection systems and equipment, proper street signage, defensible space, vegetation management, and long-term maintenance. All required FPPs must be consistent with the requirements of the current adopted versions of the California Building Code Chapter 7A, California Fire Safe Regulations, and the City of Laguna Beach Fire Code	Consistent	As required by the City's Municipal Code, the Project will prepare a Fire Protection Plan (FPP) approved by the Fire Code Official, including fuel modification zones, recorded deed restrictions, and long-term maintenance obligations.

Table 4.14-1: General Plan Consistency

General Plan Policies	Consistency with General Plan	Analysis
S-2.7 Ensure that existing and new developments have adequate water supplies and conveyance capacity to meet daily demands and firefighting requirements. S-2.7a – Coordinate with water districts to identify issues that may affect water supply and delivery. S-2.7b – Require new developments to expand water infrastructure capacity in areas where current improvements do not meet Fire Code requirements. S-2.7c – Map water pressure and capacity characteristics of the water infrastructure throughout the City to identify potential areas requiring upgrade and enhancement to meet future daily, peak, and fire flow requirements.	Consistent	The Project will utilize existing water infrastructure, which provides adequate supply and pressure to meet daily and firefighting needs because there is existing water infrastructure that serves residences along Juanita Way.

4.14.3 Thresholds of Significance

In order to assist in determining whether a project would have a significant effect on the environment, the City utilizes the State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Checklist. Appendix G states that a project may be deemed to have wildfire impacts if it would:

Threshold a) **If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?**

Threshold b) **If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?**

Threshold c) **If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?**

Threshold d) **If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?**

Please refer to **Section 6.1: Effects Found Not to Be Significant** for an evaluation of those topics that were determined to be less than significant or have no impact and do not require further analysis in the EIR**.**

4.14.4 Methodology

The assessment of Project-related wildfire impacts involved reviewing applicable state, regional, and local regulations, including the California Fire Code, California Building Code, Laguna Beach Fire Department (LBFD) Landscape/Fuel Modification Standards and Maintenance Program (L/FMSMP), and the Laguna Beach Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Site-specific conditions were evaluated using CalFIRE Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps, Project site plans, aerial imagery, and topographic data to assess factors such as vegetation, slope stability, prevailing winds, and proximity to evacuation routes. The analysis also considered the Project's conceptual fuel modification plan and associated regulatory compliance measures, including defensible space, fire-resistant construction materials, required irrigation systems, and firefighter access provisions.

4.14.5 Project Impact Analysis

Threshold a) **If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?**

Less than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project is located in a VHFHSZ (CalFIRE 2024). The City's LHMP outlines strategies and mitigation actions to reduce risks associated with local hazards, including wildfire, evacuation, and emergency response (City 2023). However, the majority of these action items are directed toward citywide planning efforts and agency-level responsibilities rather than individual development projects.

The nearest evacuation corridor to the Project site is the southern route along Alta Vista Way, which connects to the primary evacuation route via South Coast Highway. Because the Project is located at the terminus of Juanita Way, residents located along the street would not need to pass the Project site to evacuate, and the proposed development would not create obstructions that could limit or delay evacuation for other residents in the area. A construction staging plan will be required during the design review process and will be included as a condition of approval (City 2014). The construction staging plan must be approved by the Building Official prior to the issuance of a building or grading permit. This plan would ensure that equipment staging would not block the roadway or driveways of neighboring residents. Further, any proposed storage of materials within the public right-of-way would require an encroachment permit from the Department of Public Works. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not conflict with, hinder, or otherwise impede the implementation of any LHMP strategies or mitigation measures.

Due to the Project's location in a VHFHSZ, the Project will be required to include complete firefighter access around the proposed development and is subject to final LBFD inspection and approval, per sections 15.01.040 and 15.01.045 of the LBMC. Therefore, given the Proposed Project would not obstruct evacuation routes and would comply with all LBFD requirements, impacts would be less than significant.

Threshold b) **If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?**

Less than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project is located in a VHFHSZ (CalFIRE 2025) and is situated within a residential neighborhood along an undeveloped canyon hillside. The Project's location within a canyon hillside area increases wildfire risk due to steep topography, wind channelization, and the presence of combustible native vegetation that can facilitate rapid fire spread upslope. While the surrounding topography and natural vegetation could contribute to wildfire risk, the Project would not exacerbate these risks due to its compliance with all applicable fire safety regulations, including the California Building Code, California Fire Code, and LBFD requirements. The Project would implement required fire-resistant construction materials such as ignition-resistant exterior siding, Class A fire-rated roofing, tempered or dual-pane windows, and ember-resistant vents, maintain defensible through vegetation thinning, and incorporate fuel modification zones consistent with City standards including reduced-fuel landscaping, separation between vegetation and structures, and use of fire-resistant plant species, thereby reducing potential ignition sources and limiting fire spread. Additionally, the Project would not alter prevailing wind patterns or increase the availability of combustible materials beyond existing conditions. Although the Project would introduce potential ignition sources into undeveloped open space, with these design features and regulatory compliance measures in place, the Proposed Project would not increase the risk of wildfire occurrence or expose future occupants to significant pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of fire. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Threshold c) **If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?**

Less than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project is located in a VHFHSZ (CalFIRE 2025). Development within a VHFHSZ has the potential to increase wildfire risk by introducing new ignition sources, increasing human activity, and modifying existing vegetation patterns. The Proposed Project includes construction of a single-family residence, roadway extension, and associated fuel modification areas, which could, absent appropriate controls, exacerbate wildfire hazards in the Project area.

However, the Proposed Project would not exacerbate wildfire risk because it would be required to comply with the 2019 Laguna Beach Fire Department Landscape/Fuel Modification Standards and Maintenance Program (L/FMSMP) (City 2020). The integrated landscape/fuel modification plan shall be reviewed by LBFD and approved by the Design Review Board (DRB) prior to issuance of the building permit.

Requirements under the L/FMSMP include, but are not limited to:

- Zone A – Setback Irrigated Zone

  A. Automatic irrigation systems to maintain healthy vegetation with high moisture content.

B. Irrigation maintained outside the drip line of native oak trees.

C. Pruning of foliage to reduce fuel load, vertical continuity, and removal of plant litter and dead wood.

D. Complete removal of fire prone plant species, minimal allowance for retention of selected native vegetation.

E. Trees and tree form shrub species are not allowed within 10 feet of combustible structures (measured from the edge of a full growth crown).

F. Trees and tree form shrub species are not allowed to extend beyond the property line (measured from the edge of a full growth crown).

G. Tree and tree from shrub species are not allowed within 10 feet of adjacent tree species as measured from the edge of a full growth crown.

H. Special consideration should be given for rare and endangered species, geologic hazards, tree ordinances, or other conflicting restrictions.

I. Maintenance including ongoing removal and/or thinning of undesirable combustible vegetation, replacement of dead/dying fire resistant plantings, maintenance of the operations integrity and programming of the irrigation system, regular trimming to prevent ladder fuels.

J. A minimum of 36" of horizontal clearance and unlimited vertical clearance around the exterior of the structure (360̊) shall be provided for Firefighter access Firefighter access shall be made without the need for special tools (ladders) or ability and have permanent improvements installed when ascending or descending form street level (e.g., stairs).

K. No combustible construction shall be allowed in Zone A.

L. No permanent or portable barbeques/grills, fire pits, fireplaces or other flame generating device shall be permitted within 30' of non-fire resistive plants/vegetation.

M. No vines shall be permitted on combustible structures (e.g., Type V non-rated structure)

- Zone B – Irrigated Zone
  A. Groundcover shall be maintained at a height not to exceed 18 inches.

  B. In order to maintain proper coverage, native grasses should be allowed to go to seed. Native grasses shall be cut after annual seeding. Cut heights should not exceed 8 inches.

  C. Irrigation shall be designed to supplement native vegetation and establish and maintain planted natives and ornamentals.

  D. Planting will be in accordance with planting guidelines and spacing standards established in this guideline.

E. In Zone B sensitive and/or protected plant species shall be identified on the landscape/fuel modification plans and dealt with per the City's Open Space/Conservation Plan.

F. Tree and tree-form shrub pruning and spacing will be in conformance with Attachment 6. Tree form shrubs are defined as shrubs that naturally exceed 4 feet in height.

G. Shrubs shall be spaced such that they do not create an excessive fuel mass and can be maintained in accordance with specified spacing as indicated on the plan.

H. Special consideration should be given for rare and endangered species, geological hazards, tree submitted for project approval, upon further review.

I. Removal of undesirable plant species

Because these measures are designed to reduce fuel loads and minimize fire hazards, the Project would not require the installation or maintenance of infrastructure that could exacerbate wildfire risk. Furthermore, implementation of the plan would avoid significant temporary or ongoing environmental impacts by integrating fire-safe practices while preserving sensitive resources where feasible. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Threshold d) If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?

Less than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project is located in a VHFHSZ (CalFIRE 2025). The Project site's steep topography, natural vegetation, and wildfire potential could increase the risk of slope instability, erosion, post-fire runoff, landslides, or downstream flooding. Development in this area, including road improvements, building construction, and fuel modification zones, could theoretically expose people and structures to these hazards if not properly managed.

However, the Proposed Project would not exacerbate these risks because it would comply with all applicable City grading and drainage requirements, including implementation of an approved SWPPP and on-site drainage controls to manage runoff and prevent downstream flooding. Additionally, the Project plans would be subject to review by the City to ensure that slope stability, soil conditions, and potential landslide risks are thoroughly evaluated by a licensed geotechnical engineer. These measures would reduce the potential for slope failure, erosion, or uncontrolled runoff during and after construction.

Furthermore, compliance with the L/FMSMP would minimize the risk of wildfire spreading into adjacent slopes, reducing the likelihood of post-fire instability. Under the Zone B requirements of the L/FMSMP, the Project's plant material selection, irrigation, system design, and the landscape maintenance management plan shall sensitively address water conservation practices and include methods of erosion control to protect against slope failure. With these regulatory requirements and design features incorporated, the Project would not expose people or structures to significant downslope flooding, landslides, or drainage-related hazards. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

4.14.6 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are defined in CEQA as "two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15355). Stated in another way, "a cumulative impact consists of an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing relating impacts" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 [a][1]).

Chapter 3.0, Environmental Setting, of this Draft EIR provides a list of related projects that would have the potential to be considered in a cumulative context with the Project's incremental contribution. These projects are summarized in **Table 3.0-1,** *Related Projects*.

The Proposed Project is located within a VHFHSZ, an area where cumulative wildfire risk is inherently elevated due to topography, vegetation, and regional fire history. When considered alongside other existing and potential development within the City, the Project's incremental contribution to cumulative wildfire-related hazards would be less than significant for the following reasons:

First, the City has adopted a comprehensive LHMP and implements stringent development standards to minimize fire-related risks citywide. These include requirements for fuel modification zones, fire-resistant construction materials, firefighter access, and defensible space. Since the Proposed Project would comply with these regulations, including the L/FMSMP, it would not impede emergency response or evacuation efforts and would avoid introducing new design elements that could exacerbate fire hazards. Given approximately 90 percent of the City is in a VHFHSZ, the majority of cumulative projects would be required to comply with such regulations and would be subject to LBFD review and approval.

Additionally, cumulative wildfire hazards in the region are primarily driven by natural environmental factors (e.g. steep slopes, dense vegetation, and prevailing winds) rather than by isolated, small-scale development. While each new project in a VHFHSZ has the potential to incrementally affect evacuation capacity, ignition sources, or pollutant exposure, the Proposed Project's design and operational features would not meaningfully increase these risks. Specifically, the Project:

- Would not obstruct evacuation routes or reduce roadway capacity during emergencies, as access via Alta Vista Way and South Coast Highway remains unimpeded.
- Incorporates fire-resistant building materials, defensible space, and irrigation systems to limit potential ignition and fire spread.
- Would not require infrastructure, such as new overhead powerlines or road extensions, that could contribute to regional fire hazards.
- Implements erosion control and slope stabilization measures to minimize downstream flooding or landslide risks that could otherwise worsen cumulative post-fire hazards.

Given these design features and mandatory compliance with City and State fire protection requirements, the Proposed Project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to wildfire-related impacts in the region. Even when considered in combination with other existing and foreseeable developments in Laguna Beach, impacts would remain less than significant.

4.14.7 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required, as all Project impacts regarding wildfire are less than significant.

4.14.8 Level of Significance After Mitigation

Project impacts would be less than significant and no mitigation is required.

CHAPTER 5.0 – ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

5.1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

CEQA requires that an EIR describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the Proposed Project, or to the location of the Proposed Project, which could feasibly avoid or lessen any significant environmental impacts while substantially attaining the basic objectives of the project. An EIR should also evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives. This chapter describes potential alternatives to the Proposed Project that were considered, identifies alternatives that were eliminated from further consideration and reasons for dismissal, and analyzes available alternatives in comparison to the potential environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Project.

Key provisions of the CEQA Guidelines (§15126.6) pertaining to the alternatives analysis are summarized below:

- The discussion of alternatives shall focus on alternatives to the Proposed Project or its location that are capable of avoiding or substantially lessening any significant effects of the Proposed Project, even if these alternatives would impede to some degree the attainment of the Proposed Project objectives or would be more costly.

- The No Project Alternative shall be evaluated along with its impact. The No Project analysis shall discuss the existing conditions at the time the Notice of Preparation is published. Additionally, the analysis shall discuss what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the Proposed Project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services.

- The range of alternatives required in an EIR is governed by a "rule of reason"; therefore, the EIR must evaluate only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice. Alternatives shall be limited to ones that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the Proposed Project.

- For alternative locations, only locations that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the Proposed Project need to be considered for inclusion in the EIR.

- An EIR need not consider an alternative whose effects cannot be reasonably ascertained and whose implementation is remote and speculative.

The range of feasible alternatives is selected and discussed in a manner to foster meaningful public participation and informed decision-making. Among the factors that may be taken into account when addressing the feasibility of alternatives are environmental impacts, site suitability, economic viability, availability of infrastructure, general plan contingency, regulatory limitation, jurisdictional boundaries, and whether the proponent could reasonably acquire, control, or otherwise have access to the alternative site. An EIR need not consider an alternative whose effects cannot be reasonably identified, whose implementation is remote or speculative, and that would not achieve the basic Project Objectives.

5.2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The Project has the following objective(s):

- Implement right-of-way improvements and a roadway extension that provide safe and legal driveway access at the terminus of Juanita Way to a new building site at APN 656-131-04.
- Facilitate creation of a buildable lot - while respecting site constraints such as lot size, topography, and existing development patterns - that could accommodate the potential future construction of a single-family residence.
- Maintain neighborhood character and achieve visual compatibility with adjacent open space by incorporating design, materials, and finishes that reflect the existing background and minimize visual contrast

In addition to meeting the Project objectives, alternatives were considered that would avoid or substantially avoid or substantially less the following significant and unavoidable adverse impacts identified for the Proposed Project:

- Biological Resources – Threshold e)
- Land Use and Planning -Threshold b)
- Transportation – Threshold a)

5.3 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED

Several alternatives could be considered for the Project which address the Project size or development of a similar project elsewhere in the Project area. A range of alternatives that are “reasonable” for analysis have been defined by the City and are discussed below in Section 5.4 Alternatives Analyzed. The following section describes alternatives or alternative concepts that were given consideration but rejected from further analysis in the EIR due to their infeasibility.

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(c), alternatives may be eliminated from detailed consideration in an EIR if they fail to meet most of the Project objectives, are infeasible, or do not avoid or substantially reduce any significant environmental effects. Alternatives that are remote or speculative, or the effects of which cannot be reasonably predicted, also do not need to be considered (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126(f)(2)). Per CEQA, the lead agency may make an initial determination as to which alternatives are feasible and warrant further consideration, and which are infeasible.

The following alternatives were initially considered but were eliminated from further consideration in this EIR because they do not meet any Project objectives or were infeasible:

- Other Project Location Alternative

- Reduced Project Lot Area Alternative
- Build a road extending from the north
- Modified cul-de-sac

5.3.1 Other Project Location Alternative

An alternative involving construction of the proposed road extension and single-family home at a different site was considered but deemed infeasible. The Project applicant already owns the subject parcel, and the primary objective of the Project is to develop a single-family home on property that has been acquired and designated for Residential Low Density (R-1) use.

Relocating the Project to another site would require the purchase of additional land, which introduces uncertainties surrounding cost, availability, and zoning compatibility. Given no alternative parcel is reasonably available to the applicant and development at a different location would conflict with the primary project objective to extend the road at the terminus of Juanita Way to create a new building site and facilitate the potential future construction of a single-family home, the "Other Project Location Alternative" was considered but rejected from further review.

5.3.2 Reduced Project Lot Area Alternative

The possibility of reducing the overall lot area of the Project was considered; however, this alternative was deemed infeasible because it would violate the LBMC by failing to meet the minimum lot area required for the site's zoning designation. According to Laguna Beach Municipal Code (LBMC) Section 25.10.008(A): Property Development Standards, "each lot shall have a minimum area of 6,000 square feet (SF)." The Proposed Project has a lot size of 7,174 square feet. While the Proposed Project complies with this requirement with a lot size of 7,174 square feet, a reduction in lot area would risk noncompliance with the minimum lot size requirement, rendering the alternative legally infeasible.

In addition, a minor reduction in lot area would not result in a meaningful change to the Project's development footprint, intensity, or design, and therefore would not substantially reduce or avoid the potential environmental impacts identified for the Project. Because the alternative would neither comply with applicable land use regulations nor provide a significant environmental benefit, it was eliminated from further consideration.

As a result, the "Reduced Project Lot Area Alternative" was considered but rejected from further review.

5.3.3 Build a Road Extending from the North

Instead of a road extension from Juanita Way, an alternative access route to the Project site would be to extend an existing driveway off of Fern Street, approximately 150 feet northwest of the Project site. However, this would require development of a road intersecting a canyon, which would inevitably result in more significant biological and aesthetic impacts compared to the Proposed Project due to the amount of vegetation clearing and grading required.

In addition to increased biological and aesthetic impacts, the northern access alternative would be constrained by steep canyon topography and potential geotechnical instability, which would necessitate substantial grading, retaining structures, and long-term slope stabilization measures. Construction of a roadway across the canyon could alter natural drainage patterns, increase erosion and stormwater runoff, and conflict with local hillside and canyon protection policies contained in the City's General Plan and LCP.

The alternative may also be unable to meet City and LBFD roadway design and emergency access standards due to grade, alignment, and width limitations. Furthermore, implementation would likely require additional property acquisition or easements and entail significantly higher construction and maintenance costs without providing environmental or operational advantages over the Proposed Project. For these reasons, the northern access alternative was considered but rejected from further review.

5.3.4 Modified Cul-De-Sac

Under this alternative, instead of an additional 18.5 linear feet of road surface, a modified cul-de-sac would be placed at the terminus of Juanita Way to facilitate driveway access for the potential construction of a single-family home. The modified cul-de-sac design would meet Fire Department requirements for an emergency vehicle turnaround. Because the turnaround area and required public parking space' occupy a portion of the private property, this approximately 2,000-square-foot area will be subject to a grant of public easement dedicated to the City and is deducted from the net lot area.

The turnaround design necessitates several variances, including substandard lot size and depth, and other Municipal Code deviations for which a variance may not be granted. The proposed road extension would lengthen Juanita Way by approximately 70 feet. The proposed road extension would involve significant amounts of fill to elevate the grade supported by a terraced retaining wall system. Viewed from across the canyon, the walls would attain an exposed height of 48 feet (44.5 vertical feet of retention). The terraced design would allow for a landscape treatment to reduce the appearance of mass and better integrate the structure with the surrounding open space.

The City's access standards require that dead-end hillside local streets be paved to a minimum width of 20 feet excluding parking lanes, serve no more than 24 building sites, terminate with a turnaround, and not exceed 750 feet in length. In addition, the Access Standards require grades for new streets and street extensions between ten and twelve percent to be approved only for such distances as topographical conditions make a lesser grade impractical. Grades for new streets or street extensions exceeding twelve percent, but not in excess of fourteen percent, are allowed only upon the approval of a variance. This alternative would comply with the above access standards with the exception of the maximum street grade requirements. The street grade would vary from 3- to 30-percent.

Although the Modified Cul-De-Sac alternative would provide a compliant emergency vehicle turnaround, it would require multiple discretionary variances, including approval of street grades substantially exceeding City standards, and would introduce a large and visually prominent retaining wall structure into a sensitive hillside setting. This alternative would result in a significant and unavoidable aesthetic impact and would not reduce environmental impacts or provide any operational or access advantages compared to the Proposed Project. Accordingly, the Modified Cul-De-Sac alternative was considered but rejected from further review.

5.4 ALTERNATIVES ANALYZED

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(d), each alternative is evaluated in sufficient detail to determine whether the overall environmental impacts would be less, similar, or greater than the corresponding impacts of the Project. Furthermore, each alternative is evaluated to determine whether the Project objectives would be substantially attained by the alternative.

5.4.1 No Project Alternative

Section 15126.6(e) of the CEQA Guidelines requires analysis of a No Project alternative that (1) discusses existing site conditions at the time the NOP is prepared or the Draft EIR is commenced and (2) analyzes what is reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future based on current plans if the Project were not approved. Under this alternative, the Project site would remain an undisturbed and vegetated parcel. Given the steep topography of the site and ESA designation, it is unlikely that the Project would be developed. Potential effects for the No Project Alternative were compared to the environmental topics that were analyzed as a part of this Draft EIR.

Aesthetics

Under the No Project alternative, the existing visual character of the area would remain unchanged. The preservation of existing conditions ensures that current hillside viewsheds and scenic vistas are maintained without introducing new visual elements that could alter the landscape's character. The preservation of existing conditions ensures that current viewsheds and scenic vistas are maintained without introducing new visual elements that could alter the landscape's character. The No Project Alternative would avoid the proposed project’s less than significant impacts on visual quality. No impact would occur, and would result in a reduction of potential impacts compared to the proposed Project.

Air Quality

Under the No Project alternative, existing conditions for air quality would remain, meaning that the current levels of vehicular emissions, dust, and other pollutants associated with the road Juanita Way would continue without significant change. Since no construction or road expansion would occur, there would be no temporary construction-related emissions, such as particulate matter or equipment exhaust. There would be no operational air quality impact as the Project site would remain an undisturbed natural area. The No Project alternative would avoid air quality impacts from construction and operations. No impact would occur, and would result in a reduction of potential impacts compared to the proposed Project.

Biological Resources

Under the No Project alternative, existing biological resources on and adjacent to the Project site would remain largely undisturbed, as no construction or roadway expansion would occur. This means that existing vegetation, wildlife habitat, and any sensitive species present would continue in their current state, avoiding the potential loss or fragmentation of habitat that could result from the Proposed Project. No impact would occur, and would result in a reduction of potential impacts compared to the proposed Project.

Cultural Resources

Under the No Project alternative, existing cultural resources within and near the Project area would remain unaffected, as no construction or ground-disturbing activities would occur. This would ensure that any known historic, archaeological, or architectural resources are preserved in their current condition, avoiding the risk of inadvertent damage or disturbance associated with the Proposed Project. No impact would occur, and would result in a reduction of potential impacts compared to the proposed Project.

Energy

Under the No Project alternative, the Project site would remain in its natural state. No new construction, roadway improvements, or operational activities would occur that would consume energy. This means that electricity and fuel use for construction equipment, lighting, and other infrastructure would be avoided, preventing any temporary and permanent increases in energy demand. No impact would occur, and would result in a reduction of potential impacts compared to the proposed Project.

Geology and Soils

Under the No Project alternative, there would be no impacts to paleontological resources, as no excavation, grading, or other ground-disturbing activities would occur. This would preserve any known or undiscovered fossil resources in their current state, avoiding the risk of accidental damage or loss that could result from construction associated with the Proposed Project. No Impact would occur, and would result in a reduction of potential impacts compared to the proposed Project.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Under the No Project alternative, no GHG would occur as no construction or roadway improvements would take place. This means there would be no temporary increase in emissions from construction equipment, vehicles, or energy use related to project development. There would be no change in operational GHGs given there would be no new sources of emissions from increased traffic capacity, roadway lighting, or maintenance activities, since the existing roadway and traffic patterns remain unchanged. No impact would occur, and would result in a reduction of potential impacts compared to the proposed Project.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Under the No Project alternative, emergency access conditions along Juanita Way would remain unchanged. The Project site would remain in it's natural, undeveloped state and surrounding development would continue to lie in a VHFHSZ. The No Project alternative would avoid potential impacts related to emergency access and wildfire without the development of an extended roadway and single-family home on the Project site. No impact would occur, and would result in a reduction of potential impacts compared to the proposed Project.

Land Use and Planning

Under the No Project alternative, existing land use and planning conditions would be maintained and the project site would remain a non-building site. Current zoning, land use designations, and development patterns would remain unchanged, ensuring consistency with the City's General Plan and other planning policies. No new conflicts with applicable regulations or plans would occur, and the overall character and function of the surrounding neighborhood and habitat area would be preserved. No impact would occur, and would result in a reduction of potential impacts compared to the proposed Project.

Noise

Under the No Project alternative, existing noise conditions would be maintained, resulting in no impacts. Ambient noise levels from traffic, nearby development, and other ongoing sources would remain consistent with current conditions. No new construction or operational activities would occur to introduce additional noise, and the overall acoustic environment of the area would remain unchanged. No impact would occur, and would result in a reduction of potential impacts compared to the proposed Project.

Public Services

Under the No Project alternative, existing fire protection services would be maintained. Fire stations, personnel, and emergency response capabilities would continue to operate as they currently do, ensuring that the community's fire protection needs are fully met. No changes to service levels, access, or response times would occur. The No Project alternative would preserve existing fire protection conditions. No impact would occur, and would result in a reduction of potential impacts compared to the proposed Project.

Transportation

Under the No Project alternative, the Project's road extension would not occur, and existing transportation conditions would be maintained. Roadways, traffic patterns, and intersection operations would continue at current levels, and no new construction or modifications would occur that could alter vehicle, pedestrian, or bicycle circulation. No impact would occur, and would result in a reduction of potential impacts compared to the proposed Project.

Tribal Cultural Resources

The No Project Alternative would not involve ground-disturbing activities and would not impact tribal cultural resources or disturb human remains. The No Project Alternative would avoid potential Proposed Project impacts regarding potential damage of buried tribal cultural resources during construction of the roadway and potential housing development. No impact would occur, and would result in a reduction of potential impacts compared to the proposed Project.

Wildfire

Under the No Project alternative current wildfire risk levels, vegetation management practices, and evacuation routes would remain unchanged. The lack of development on the Project site would result in no fuel load management activities, but existing fuel load management zones surrounding existing development would remain. Even though the Project provides a fuel modification zone, it increases wildfire risk by extending development into an area susceptible to fire hazards. The No Project alternative would preserve existing wildfire conditions and no impact would occur, and would result in a reduction of potential impacts compared to the proposed Project.

Conclusion and Relationship to Project Objectives

Under the No Project alternative, the Project site and surrounding area would remain in their current, natural, and undeveloped state. Across all environmental categories existing conditions would be maintained, and no new impacts would occur. The No Project alternative avoids all potential impacts associated with construction, roadway expansion, and future development. The No Project alternative would not generate the significant impacts of the Proposed Project and would not require implementation of mitigation measures. This alternative would meet the objective of maintaining neighborhood character and achieving visual compatibility with adjacent open space given it would result in no change to the existing visual conditions of the Project area. However, this alternative would not achieve the Project objectives to implement right-of-way improvements and a roadway extension and to facilitate creation of a buildable lot.

5.4.2 Alternative 1 – Reduced Development (Single-Story) Alternative

Under this "Reduced Development (Single-Story) Alternative", the three-story single-family home would be reduced to a single-story structure. According to the 2023 Project site plan, the three-story single-family home is comprised of three levels:

- Lower Level (1,323.8 SF) consisting of a bedroom, bathroom, and laundry room;
- Middle Level (1,921.8 SF) consisting of one bedroom, a half bath, and a master bathroom;
- Upper Level (245.2 SF) consisting of a studio and 2-car garage.

The 2023 Project site plan does not conform to the to the 25'-0" maximum height limit .

The terraced, step-in design is consistent with the City's *Design Guidelines* to better integrate the structure into the natural hillside landscape. However, the proposed grading required to develop all three levels would be extensive, particularly on the 40- to 70-percent average slope areas existing within the Project site. The "Reduced Development (Single-Story) Alternative" would reduce the amount of cut and fill into the hillside, which is currently 1,039.03 cubic yards in total for all three stories. This alternative would result in Project compliance with the 25'-0" maximum height limit, assuming a single story would be approximately 10 feet high.

Aesthetics

As noted in Section 4.1, Aesthetics, the Proposed Project would have a less than significant impact to scenic vistas and the visual character or quality of public views. Under the single-story alternative, the project footprint would be reduced, requiring less grading, excavation and fill associated with the Proposed Project's original three-story terraced design. Impacts would remain less than significant, and would be less than those of the Proposed Project.

Air Quality

According to the *Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Consumption Technical Memorandum* produced by Vista Environmental, the Proposed Project would have less than significant impacts related to criteria air pollutants and would comply with SCAQMD single-story alternative would result in less grading, excavation and fill associated with a one-story structure. The construction period would be shorter due to the reduced project footprint and scale of the development, leading to a decrease in criteria air pollutant emissions. Impacts to air quality under the single-story alternative would remain less than significant, and would be less than those of the Proposed Project.

Biological Resources

The single-story alternative would remain in a designated in an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) due to its Drainage, Open Space Preserve (OSP), and High-Value Habitat (HVH) classifications. The site is in the Fuel Modification Zone (FMZ) and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ).

Incorporation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-3, and BIO-4 would reduce impacts to special-status plants, wildlife and habitats to less than significant. However, the Proposed Project and the single-story alternative both conflict with the City's General Plan policies, resulting in potentially significant and avoidable impacts to biological resources that would be equal to those of the Proposed Project.

Cultural Resources

As noted in Section 4.4, Cultural Resources, the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC) records search results indicated that no recorded historic resources were identified within the Project site. The single-story alternative would result in a reduction in the overall Project footprint, requiring less grading, excavation, and fill associated with a one-story structure and further decreasing the likelihood of encountering cultural resources. Impacts to cultural resources under the single-story alternative would remain less than significant with mitigation incorporated, outlined in MM CUL-1 and MM CUL-2 within Section 4.4, Cultural Resources. Impacts would be less than those of the Proposed Project

Energy

According to the *Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Consumption Technical Memorandum* produced by Vista Environmental, the construction-related energy impacts associated with construction-related transportation and electricity would be less than significant, and operations-related transportation, electricity, and natural gas would be less than significant. The single-story alternative would result in a reduction in the overall Project footprint, shortening the construction period and decreasing the already minimal consumption of energy resources. Impact to energy under the single-story alternative would remain less than significant and would be less than those of the Proposed Project

Geology and Soils

Currently, the Proposed Project requires 1,039.03 cubic yards for the terraced, three-story home. Under the single-story alternative scenario, the project footprint would be reduced, lessening impacts from grading, excavation, and fill. The slightly reduced footprint further decreases the likelihood of encountering previously unrecorded fossil resources. As outlined in Section 4.6, Geology and Soils, MM PAL-1 would reduce impacts to geology and soils under the single-story alternative to remain less than significant. Impacts would be less than those of the Proposed Project

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

According to the *Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Consumption Technical Memorandum* produced by Vista Environmental, the Proposed Project would have less than significant impacts related to greenhouse gas emissions as it is well below the SCAQMD threshold of significance. Therefore, the single-story alternative would further reduce greenhouse gas emissions – from mobile sources, area sources, energy usage, waste disposal, water usage, refrigeration, and construction equipment – due to the reduced scope of the development. As noted in Air Quality and Energy sections above, the shortened construction period will further decrease any greenhouse gas emissions associated with the single-story alternative. Impacts to greenhouse gas emissions under the single-story alternative would remain less than significant and would be less than those of the Proposed Project

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The single-story alternative would result in similar impacts to hazards and hazardous materials as the Proposed Project. Located in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ), the single-story development would be required to comply with the City's emergency response plans and Landscape/Fuel Modification Plan (LFMP). Therefore, impacts to hazards and hazardous materials under the single-story alternative would remain less than significant and would be equal to those of the Proposed Project

Land Use and Planning

The single-story alternative would have a similar impact to land use and planning as the Proposed Project. As noted in Section 4.9, Land Use and Planning, the Proposed Project conflicts with several key policies and regulations of the City's General Plan and Municipal Code. The single-story alternative would reduce cut and fill impacts, but the visual character of the undeveloped hillside would remain significantly altered due to grading within 40- to 70-percent average slope areas, thus potentially conflicting with General Plan policies designed to protect visual resources. However, under this alternative, the Project would be in conformance with the maximum permitted height of 25 feet. Given the Project would still be out of compliance with other policies, impacts to land use and planning under the single-story alternative would remain significant and unavoidable, but less than those of the Proposed Project.

Noise

As detailed in the *Noise Technical Memorandum*, construction noise would be periodic and temporary. While the Proposed Project's construction activities currently exceed the City's construction noise recommended limit nearby sensitive receptors, NOISE MM-1 would reduce construction noise impacts to less than significant. The single-story alternative would utilize similar equipment as the Proposed Project and would occur at the same distance from neighboring residences. Thus, noise impacts would be comparable. With implementation of NOISE MM-1, noise impacts associated with both Project construction and operation would remain less than significant, and would be equal to those of the Proposed Project.

Public Services

Under the single-story alternative, impacts to fire protection services would be similar to those of the Proposed Project, as both scenarios would introduce new development within the same Project site and would require compliance with Laguna Beach Fire Department (LBFD) standards. Therefore, LBFD service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives would not be adversely affected by the single-story alternative and impacts would remain less than significant and equal to those of the Proposed Project.

Transportation

The single-story alternative would result in similar transportation impacts as the Proposed Project regarding hazardous (e.g., emergency response and access) and vehicle miles traveled (VMT). According to the *Noise Technical Memorandum* prepared by Vista Environmental, the Proposed Project would generate 9.4 daily trips on weekdays. Given the Proposed Project and single-story alternative are both single-family residences, it is reasonable to anticipate the daily trip generation would remain the same. However, in both scenarios, the proposed road extension would conflict with the City's General Plan policies that prohibit development from encroaching on Environmentally Sensitive Areas. Therefore, impacts to transportation under the single-story alternative would remain significant and unavoidable, and would be equal to those of the Proposed Project.

Tribal Cultural Resources

Under the single-story alternative, impacts to tribal cultural resources would be similar to those under the Proposed Project. However, the single-story alternative would result in a reduction in the overall Project footprint, requiring less grading, excavation, and fill associated with a one-story structure and further decreasing the likelihood of encountering tribal cultural resources. Impacts to tribal cultural resources under the single-story alternative would remain less than significant with mitigation incorporated, outlined in MM CUL-1 and MM CUL-2 within Section 4.4, Cultural Resources, and MM TCR 1-3 within Section 4.13. Impacts would be less than those of the Proposed Project.

Wildfire

The single-story alternative would result in similar wildfire impacts to those under the Proposed Project. Located in a VHFHSZ, the single-story development would be required to comply with the City's emergency response plans and Landscape/Fuel Modification Plan (LFMP). Therefore, impacts to hazards and wildfire under the single-story alternative would remain less than significant and would be equal to those of the Proposed Project.

Conclusion and Relationship to Project Objectives

The "Reduced Development (Single-Story) Alternative" would have impacts similar in nature and magnitude to those under the Proposed Project. The single-story development would result in less grading and excavation due to the scaled back nature of the development, reducing the amount of cut and fill and shortening the construction period overall. As such, impacts to aesthetics, air quality, cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, noise, public services, tribal cultural resources, and wildfire would remain less than significant.

Similarly to the Proposed Project, the single-story alternative would result in significant and unavoidable impacts to biological resources, land use and planning, and transportation due to its non-compliance with the City's General Plan policies and Municipal Codes and encroachment into Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs).

This alternative would meet all Project objectives: it would maintain neighborhood character and achieve visual compatibility with adjacent open space; implement right-of-way improvements and a roadway extension; and facilitate creation of a buildable lot.

Table 5.4-1: Comparison of Alternatives – Project Objectives

Project Objectives	Ability of Alternatives to Meet Project Objectives	
	Alternative 1	No Project Alternative
Implement right-of-way improvements and a roadway extension that provide safe and legal driveway access at the terminus of Juanita Way to a new building site at APN 656-131-04..	**Meets**; alternative would include right-of-way improvements and roadway expansion	**Does not meet**; no right-of-way improvements or roadway expansion would occur
Facilitate creation of a buildable lot - while respecting site constraints such as lot size, topography, and existing development patterns - that could accommodate the	**Meets;** buildable lot would be created	**Does not meet**; no buildable lot would be created

Project Objectives	Ability of Alternatives to Meet Project Objectives	
	Alternative 1	No Project Alternative
potential future construction of a single-family residence.		
Maintain neighborhood character and achieve visual compatibility with adjacent open space by incorporating design, materials, and finishes that reflect the existing background and minimize visual contrast	**Meets**; single-story home would be compatible with neighborhood character and surrounding open space	**Meets**; neighborhood character and visual compatibility with open space would not change

5.5 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

As previously discussed, two alternatives were considered feasible and analyzed in this analysis. A comparison of the Project's impacts, Alternative #1 (Reduced Development (Single-Story) Alternative), and the No Project Alternative impacts is shown in Table 5.5-1.

Table 5.5-1: Comparison of Environmental Issues

Environmental Issue Area	Project	Alternative 1: Reduced Development (Single-Story)	No Project Alternative
Aesthetics	LSI	Less (LSI)	Less (No Impact)
Air Quality	LSI	Less (LSI)	Less (No Impact)
Biological Resources	**Significant / Unavoidable**	**Equal (Significant / Unavoidable)**	Less (No Impact)
Cultural Resources	LSI w/ Mitigation	Less (LSI w/ Mitigation)	Less (No Impact)
Energy	LSI	Less (LSI)	Less (No Impact)
Geology and Soils	LSI	Less (LSI)	Less (No Impact)
Greenhouse Gas	LSI	Less (LSI)	Less (No Impact)
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	LSI	Equal (LSI)	Less (No Impact)
Land Use and Planning	**Significant / Unavoidable**	**Less (Significant / Unavoidable)**	Less (No Impact)
Noise	LSI w/ Mitigation	Equal (LSI w/ Mitigation)	Less (No Impact)
Public Services	LSI	Equal (LSI)	Less (No Impact)
Transportation	**Significant / Unavoidable**	**Equal (Significant / Unavoidable)**	Less (No Impact)
Tribal Cultural Resources	LSI w/ Mitigation	Less (LSI w/ Mitigation)	Less (No Impact)
Wildfire	LSI	Equal (LSI)	Less (No Impact)
LSI = Less than Significant Impact			

Based on the environmental analysis presented in Table 5.5-1, the No Project Alternative is identified as the environmentally superior alternative overall because it would result in no significant environmental impacts, unlike the Project or Alternative #1. However, because CEQA requires identification of the environmentally superior alternative among the feasible project alternatives if the No Project Alternative is the overall superior, Alternative #1, the Reduced Development (Single-Story) Alternative, is considered the environmentally superior project alternative. This alternative would achieve the basic objectives of the Project while generally minimizing environmental impacts compared to the Proposed Project, particularly by reducing building massing, though several significant and unavoidable impacts associated with Biological Resources, Land Use and Planning, and Transportation would remain. Nonetheless, Alternative #1 would substantially lessen impacts related to Land Use and Planning given it would result in Project compliance with the maximum permitted building height of 25 feet under the R-1 zoning designation.

CHAPTER 6.0 – OTHER CEQA CONSIDERATIONS

This chapter presents the evaluation of other types of environmental impacts required by CEQA that are not covered within the other chapters of this Draft EIR. The other CEQA considerations include effects not found to be significant, irreversible environmental changes, growth-inducing impacts, and significant and unavoidable adverse impacts.

6.1 EFFECTS NOT FOUND TO BE SIGNIFICANT

This section includes information from the Initial Study that was prepared by Chambers Group in May 2025, which can be found in Appendix A: Initial Study. In addition to the environmental impact thresholds analyzed in detail in this EIR, the City has determined through the preparation of an Initial Study that the development and operation of the Project would not result in potentially significant impacts to the environmental impact topics discussed below. Section 15128 of the CEQA Guidelines requires a brief description of any possible significant effects that were determined not to be significant and were not analyzed in detail within the environmental analysis. Therefore, this section has been included in this Draft EIR as required by CEQA.

The discussion below presents the analysis of the effects related to the following resources not found to be significant:

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural and Forestry Resources
- Biological Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Utilities / Service Systems

Any thresholds or topics not addressed in this section are addressed in Section 4.0: Environmental Impact Analysis of this Draft EIR.

6.1.1 Aesthetics

Threshold b) Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

No Impact. The Laguna Beach General Plan includes a Landscape and Scenic Highways Element (LSHE) which was last updated in 2018. The purpose of the LSHE is to preserve, enhance, and sustain landscapes and scenic corridors essential to the character of Laguna Beach. The LSHE focuses on sustainability, preservation, and improvement of the City's distinct neighborhoods, natural open space, highways – Pacific Coast Highway, Laguna Canyon Rd, and El Toro Rd; other streetscapes and parks; and heritage trees and landscapes. Projects and structures that obscure or block viewsheds, vistas, or lookout points are considered to have a substantial impact on aesthetic resources.

The LSHE identifies three arterial roads within and adjacent to Laguna Beach that meet local scenic highway designation guidelines: Pacific Coast Highway (SR-1), Laguna Canyon Rd, and El Toro Rd (City 2018). The nearest officially designated State scenic highway is a portion of State Route (SR) 91, approximately 22 miles north of the Project site. The nearest eligible State scenic highway is a portion of SR-1, located approximately 0.3 miles southwest of the Project site (CalTrans 2024). The Project site is not located adjacent or within the view of the officially designated scenic highway, SR-91. Furthermore, the Proposed Project is subject to the City's design review process to ensure preservation of scenic resources. Therefore, no impact would occur to scenic resources within a state scenic highway. No further analysis is required.

Threshold d) Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

Less Than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project would not include the installation of streetlights or other public right-of-way illumination. However, the Proposed Project may incorporate outdoor lighting features such as wall-mounted fixtures, landscape uplighting, or security lighting**.** The LBMC Chapter 7.70*, Good Neighbor Outdoor Lighting*, requires that all outdoor lighting must be hooded, fully shielded, and aimed downward. Additionally, this Municipal Code prohibits light trespass that results in glare. Pursuant to LBMC 7.25.080(A), Project construction activities are limited to weekdays between the hours of seven-thirty a.m. and six p.m., therefore, no nighttime construction lighting would be required. An exception for emergency construction work performed by a private party may be granted when authorized by the director of community development, building official or their designee. Compliance with this regulation would reduce impacts to less than significant levels. No further analysis is required.

6.1.2 <u>Agricultural and Forest Resources</u>

Threshold a) Would the project 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?

No Impact. According to the Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), the Project site and surrounding area are considered Urban and Built-Up Land; therefore, the Proposed Project would not convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (DOC 2024). Furthermore, the Project site is zoned R-1 and is not zoned for agricultural use. No impact would occur to Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. No further analysis is required.

Threshold b) Would the project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?

No Impact. As stated above in impact a), the Project site is not located in an area designated for Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (DOC 2024). The Project site is not located under a Williamson Act contract (DOC 2024). Because the Proposed Project would not conflict with existing agricultural zoning or a Williamson Act contract, no impact would occur. No further analysis is required.

Threshold c) Would the project conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?

No Impact. According to the City's Land Use Element Plan, no forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production occur within the City (City 2022). The Project site is zoned R-1 and would not conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Production. No impact would occur and no further analysis is required.

Threshold d) Would the project result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

No Impact. As stated above in impact c), the Project site does not contain forest land. The Proposed Project would not result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use; therefore, no impact would occur. No further analysis is required.

Threshold e) Would the project 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 the conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

No Impact. As discussed in a) and c), the Project site is designated as Urban and Built-Up Land and does not contain agricultural or forest land (DOC 2024; City 2002).The Proposed Project would not involve changes in the existing environment that could result in conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural use or the conversion of forest land to non-forest use; therefore, no impact would occur. No further analysis is required.

6.1.3 Biological Resources

Threshold c) Would the project 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?

Less than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project consists of the construction of an 18.5 linear foot of road surface at the terminus of Juanita Way, which is located in a residential neighborhood. The Proposed Project would facilitate the creation of a new building site and the potential future construction of a single-family home. The Project is located on Lots 7 and 8, Block 14, Tract 26 of the City's Environmentally Sensitive Areas Map (City 1976). These lots are within the boundaries of "open space preserved areas."

According to the City's GIS map, the Proposed Project site is designated as an Environmentally Sensitive Area due to its classification under drainage, Open Space Preserve (OSP), and High-Value Habitat (HVH). The site is in the Fuel Modification Zone (FM) and High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (HFHSZ) (City 2025b).

The Proposed Project would disturb a previously undisturbed area that is identified as an Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA). However, according to the Biological Technical Report, two significant drainage courses and their associated tributaries occur adjacent to the proposed fuel modification area, but will be entirely avoided. Thus, the Project impacts on state or federally protected wetlands would be less than significant.

6.1.4 Geology and Soils

Threshold a) Would the project directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including 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?

Less Than Significant Impact. The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act was passed in 1972 to mitigate the hazard of surface faulting to structures for human occupancy. The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act's main purpose is to prevent the construction of buildings used for human occupancy on the surface trace of active faults. The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act requires the State Geologist to establish regulatory zones, known as "Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones," around the surface traces of active faults and to issue appropriate maps. If an active fault is found, a structure for human occupancy cannot be placed over the trace of the fault and must be set back from the fault (typically 50 feet). Although the Project site is located in a seismically active region of Southern California, according to the Department of Conservation's California Geological Survey (CGS), the Project site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone (CGS 2024a). Therefore, impacts would be less than significant. No further analysis is required.

ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?

Less Than Significant Impact. The Project site is located in a seismically active region of Southern California. The closest fault to the Project site is the Newport-Inglewood Fault Zone, located approximately 3.0 miles southwest. Although the rupture of this fault could result in seismic ground shaking, the Project site, as stated above, is not located in an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone. Additionally, the Proposed Project would comply with the latest California Building Code (CBC) seismic design standards.

The City has adopted the CBC (LBMC Chapter 14.50), with amendments, which prescribes regulations for the erection, construction, enlargement, repair, improving, removal, conversion, demolition, occupancy, equipment, use, height, area and maintenance of all buildings and structures. Per Section 22.10.010 of the LBMC, the Project would require a grading permit prior to construction. The grading permit process ensures that site preparation, including earthwork and slope stability, complies with applicable seismic safety standards as established in the California Building Code and supported by site-specific geotechnical investigations.

Construction of the Proposed Project would comply in accordance with all applicable City standards and requirements. Therefore, compliance with the City's established regulatory framework and standard engineering practices and design criteria, which would be verified through the City's development review process, would ensure potential impacts associated with strong seismic shaking at the Project site would be less than significant. No further analysis is required.

iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

Less Than Significant Impact. Liquefaction is a phenomenon where earthquake-induced ground vibrations increase the pore pressure in saturated, granular soils until it is equal to the confining, overburden pressure. The Project site is not mapped as being within an area where liquefaction is likely to occur (CGS 2024a). Additionally, the Geotechnical Report states that the Project is not located within a zone of required investigation for liquefaction (Geofirm 2017).

According to the report, the Project site is underlain at shallow depth by bedrock strata of the San Onofre Formation. The bedrock is mantled by residual soil consisting of dark brown sandy silt and clay. Based on the Geotechnical Report's observations, the bedrock is suitable in its present form for support of improvements (Geofirm 2017). No evidence of groundwater activity was noted during the field exploration conducted as part of the Geotechnical Report. The report notes that the potential for seismically induced settlement to occur is considered remote for bedrock sites, such as the Project site.

The City has adopted the CBC (LBMC Chapter 14.50), with amendments, which prescribes regulations for the erection, construction, enlargement, repair, improving, removal, conversion, demolition, occupancy, equipment, use, height, area and maintenance of all buildings and structures. Per Section 22.10.010 of the LBMC, the Project would require a grading permit prior to construction. The grading permit process ensures that site preparation, including earthwork and slope stability, complies with applicable seismic safety standards as established in the California Building Code and supported by site-specific geotechnical investigations. Construction of the Proposed Project would comply in accordance with all applicable City standards and requirements. Therefore, compliance with the City's established regulatory framework and standard engineering practices and design criteria, which would be verified through the City's development review process, would ensure potential impacts associated with seismic-related ground failure at the Project site would be less than significant.

iv) Landslides?

Less Than Significant Impact. Landslides are mass movements of the ground that include rock falls, relatively shallow slumping and sliding of soil, and deeper rotational or transitional movement of soil or rock. According to the California Geological Survey, a portion of the Project site's parcel (APN 656-131-04) lies within a landslide zone. However, the entire Project area lies outside of this landslide zone (CGS 2024a).

The City has adopted CBC (LBMC Chapter 14.50), with amendments, which includes standards related to soils and foundations, structural design, building materials, and structural testing and inspections to minimize potential geologic hazards. LBMC Chapter 14.78, *Geology Report,* prescribes parameters and requirements for the preparation and contents of geology reports within the City in order to protect life and property. The Project would be required to comply with the applicable regulations to the CBC, which would reduce potential impacts associated with geological hazards such as landslides. Construction of the Proposed Project would be done in accordance with all applicable City standards and requirements, thus reducing impacts less than significant levels.

Threshold b) Would the project result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

Less Than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project would expose soil to potential short-term erosion by wind and water during construction activities. According to the Geotechnical Report, the existing surface runoff is generally uncontrolled. The Proposed Project operations would modify surficial discharge, which the report recommended to be controlled and conducted offsite by appropriate civil engineering design to preclude potential soil saturation, erosion, and runoff onto the adjoining properties (Geofirm 2017).

Furthermore, the Proposed Project would be required to comply with water quality measures included in LBMC Title 16, *Water Quality Control*, requiring preparation of a Construction Best Management Practices Plan (CBMPP) or equivalent erosion and sediment control plan, which includes measures such as silt fences, straw wattles, stabilized construction entrances, and storm drain inlet protection. Chapter 22.17 of the LBMC requires implementation and maintenance of erosion and sediment control devices during all phases of construction. Additionally, the Project must adhere to the requirements of LBMC Chapter 14.78, *Geology Report*, which includes guidelines for evaluating the erodibility of the site and adjacent areas. Project-specific design features, such as landscaping and drainage design, will minimize erosion both during and after construction. Compliance with these regulations, collectively, will ensure that impacts related to soil erosion and topsoil loss are reduced to less than significant levels.

Threshold c) Would the project 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?

Less Than Significant Impact. As stated above in impact a)iii) and a)iv), the Project site is not located in an area defined by the Department of Conservation California Geological Survey to be at risk for liquefaction and landslides. Lateral spreading is the horizontal movement or spreading of soil toward an open face. Lateral spreading may occur when soil liquefied during an earthquake event, and the liquefied soils with overlying soils move laterally to unconfined spaces. Subsidence is the sudden sinking or gradual downward settling of the earth's surface with little or no horizontal movement. Subsidence is caused by a variety of activities, which include, but are not limited to, withdrawal of groundwater, pumping of oil and gas from underground, the collapse of underground mines, liquefaction, and hydro compaction.

Since liquefaction is not considered a hazard at the Project site, earthquake-induced lateral spreading would also not be a hazard at the Project site. Additionally, Proposed operations of the expanded road and residential single-family home would not include activities known to cause subsidence, such as groundwater or oil extraction. The Proposed Project would be required to comply with the CBC, as adopted by the LBMC Chapter 14.50. Additionally, LBMC Chapter 14.78, *Geology Report*, prescribes parameters and requirements for the preparation and contents of geology reports within the City in order to safeguard life and property. Therefore, compliance with the City's established regulatory framework and standard engineering practices and design criteria would ensure potential impacts associated with a geologic unit or soil that is unstable or would become unstable at the Project site, would be less than significant.

Threshold d) Would the project 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?

Less Than Significant Impact. Expansive soils are defined as soils possessing clay particles that react to moisture changes by shrinking (when dry) or swelling (when wet). As discussed in part a), the Project site is not considered to be within a zone of potentially liquefiable soils (CGS 2024a). Testing of on-site samples indicates soils have a low expansion, and contain negligible concentration of soluble sulfates. According to the USDA Web Soil Survey, the Project site area is comprised of soper gravelly loam, which is not considered an expansive soil (USDA 2025).

The Proposed Project would be required to comply with the CBC, as adopted by the LBMC Chapter 14.50. The Proposed Project would not be located on expansive soil, thus would not directly or indirectly increase risk to life or property. Impacts would be less than significant.

Threshold e) Would the project 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?

No Impact. The Proposed Project does not propose the installation of septic tanks or connections to alternative wastewater systems. Therefore, no impact would occur.

6.1.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Threshold a) Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

Less Than Significant Impact. The exposure of persons to hazardous materials can occur from improper handling or use of hazardous materials or hazardous waste during construction or operation of future development, particularly by untrained personnel, an accident during transport, environmentally unsound disposal methods, or fire, explosion or other emergencies. The severity of potential effects varies with the activity conducted, the concentration and type of hazardous materials or waste present, and the proximity of sensitive receptors.

Construction activities associated with the Proposed Project include grading and the construction of an 18.5 linear foot of road surface at the terminus of Juanita Way. The proposed street access would facilitate the creation of a new building site and the potential future construction of a single-family residence at 2400 Juanita Way. The Proposed Project would involve the use of heavy equipment during construction that would emit emissions associated with internal combustion engines, (i.e., diesel and gasoline). Hazardous materials that are used during construction (e.g., petroleum-based products, paints, solvents, sealers, and asphalt) for a short period of time would be transported, used, stored, and disposed of according to local, County, state, and federal regulations. Once operational, the Proposed Project would only use chemicals associated with maintenance operations including the use of commercial cleansers, lubricants, solvents, and paints, among other things typically used in residential facilities. Maintenance materials would not be acutely hazardous and would be used in limited quantities at the Proposed Project site. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Threshold b) Would the project 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?

Less Than Significant Impact. As previously stated in a) above, construction activities would involve the use of chemical agents, oils, solvents, paints, and other hazardous materials that are typical at such construction sites. While typical household hazardous materials (e.g., paints, cleaning agents, fertilizers) would be present during operations, they would be consistent with existing residential uses in the area. No industrial or large-scale hazardous material storage is proposed. Construction and operational activities would be required to adhere to local standards set forth by the City, as well as state and federal health and safety requirements that are intended to minimize risk to the public from hazardous materials, such as California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) requirements, the Hazardous

Waste Control Act, the California Accidental Release Prevention (CalARP) Program, and the California Health and Safety Code. The Project would have a less than significant impact associated with creating significant hazards to the public or the environment through foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment.

Threshold c) Would the project emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

No Impact. The Project site is not located within 0.25-mile of an existing or proposed school. The closest school to the Project site is Laguna Beach High School, which is located approximately one mile northwest of the Project site. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. No impact would occur.

Threshold d) Would the project 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?

No Impact. The Project site is not on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 (SWRCB 2024; DTSC 2024). Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project would not result in an impact associated with known hazardous materials sites.

Threshold e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 2 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?

No Impact. The Project site is not located within an airport land use plan, nor is the Project site located within two miles of a public airport or public use airport. The closest airport to the Project site is John Wayne Airport, located approximately 11 miles northwest of the site. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the Project area; no impact would occur.

6.1.6 Hydrology and Water Quality

Threshold a) Would the project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?

Less Than Significant Impact. Project-related construction activities would include grading activities and construction of the driveway, proposed residential structure, and associated improvements. Construction activities have the potential to temporarily alter the existing drainage patterns of the Project site. Soil disturbance would temporarily occur during Project construction due to grading activities. Disturbed soils would be susceptible to increased rates of erosion from wind and water and could produce polluted runoff or degrade surface and/or ground water quality. According to the Geotechnical Report, groundwater during the subsurface investigation was not encountered (Geofirm 2017). Existing surface runoff is generally uncontrolled and Proposed site improvements will modify surficial discharge.

The Project would be required to comply with LBMC Chapter 16.01, *Water Quality Control*, including Section 16.01.040, Control of Urban Runoff, which states that prior to issuance of a grading permit, building permit, or coastal development permit, the Community Development Department shall review project plans and impose Best Management Practices (BMPs), terms, conditions and requirements on the project to ensure that pollutant discharges are prevented, reduced, or removed to the extent practicable. This would include, but is not limited to, implementation of erosion-control and sediment-control BMPs to control potential construction-related pollutants.

Regarding operational impacts, the existing catch basin at the Project site will be relocated and will connect to the existing 16-inch diameter storm drainpipe. The drainage pattern of the Proposed Project site and surrounding area is well established. According to LBMC 16.01.020, the Project site is located on a "priority development area" due to its location on a hillside with greater than 25% slope. Under LBMC 16.01.050, all priority development projects shall prepare a water quality/urban runoff management plan (WQMP), which shall include proposed source control, site design, structural treatment control BMPs, and hydromodification controls as specified in the NPDES/MS4 permit, and the WQMP shall be prepared in conformance with the Jurisdictional Urban Runoff Management Program/Local Implementation Plan (JURMP/LIP).

In compliance with these ordinances and requirements, the Proposed Project would not violate any water quality standards or discharge requirements and would not result in a significant reduction of groundwater quality. Impacts would be less than significant.

Threshold b) Would the project substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?

Less Than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project consists of constructing an additional 18.5 linear feet of road surface at the terminus of Juanita Way. The Proposed Project would facilitate the creation of a new building site and potential future construction of a single-family residence at 2400 Juanita Way. The Proposed Project would increase impervious area in the proposed condition.

According to the Geotechnical Report, the Project site is underlain at shallow depth by competent sandstone bedrock strata of the San Onofre Formation (Geofirm 2017). The bedrock is overlain by a thin overburden of residual soils and fill. The Geotechnical Report indicates that the Project site is geotechnically unsuitable for the on-site discharge and/or infiltration of stormwater due to the potential for adverse perching of groundwater on shallow impermeable bedrock. No groundwater was encountered during the subsurface investigation and groundwater is not considered a design constraint. Additionally, as indicated in the Hydrology Study, the Project site is primarily comprised of Hydrologic Soil Group Type C soils that are moderate for on-site infiltration and while surficial infiltration is possible, it is not feasible due to the steep slope (Total 2023). The Proposed Project would not introduce new uses or pollutants to the area. Neither the construction, nor operation of the Proposed Project would substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge. As such, the Proposed Project would result in a less than significant impact.

Threshold c) Would the project 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;

Less Than Significant Impact. Project-related construction activities would include grading activities and construction of the driveway, proposed residential structure, and associated improvements. Construction activities have the potential to temporarily alter the existing drainage patterns of the Project site. The Project would be required to comply with LBMC Chapter 16.01, Water Quality Control, including Section 16.01.040, Control of Urban Runoff, which states that prior to issuance of a grading permit, building permit, or Coastal Development Permit, the community development department shall review project plans and impose BMPs, terms, conditions and requirements on the project to ensure that pollutant discharges are prevented, reduced, or removed to the extent practicable. According to LBMC Section 25.05.040, all grading activities must comply with the city's grading ordinance, which includes requirements for erosion control. LBMC Section 22.10.050 mandates the use of best management practices (BMPs) to prevent erosion and sedimentation for the Proposed Project.

The existing catch basin at the Project site will be relocated and will connect to the existing 16-inch diameter storm drainpipe. The drainage pattern of the Proposed Project site and surrounding area is well established. Development of a catch basin and compliance with relevant local regulations would result in less than significant impacts associated with the existing drainage pattern.

ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site;

Less Than Significant Impact. Project-related construction activities would include grading activities and construction of the driveway, proposed residential structure, and associated improvements. Construction activities have the potential to temporarily alter the existing drainage patterns of the Project site. The Project would be required to comply with LBMC Chapter 16.01, Water Quality Control, including Section 16.01.040, Control of Urban Runoff, which states that prior to issuance of a grading permit, building permit, or Coastal Development Permit, the community development department shall review project plans and impose BMPs, terms, conditions and requirements on the project to ensure that pollutant discharges are prevented, reduced, or removed to the extent practicable. As such, Project related construction activities would not substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site.

The Proposed Project would not create or contribute surface runoff volume that would exceed the capacity of the existing stormwater drainage systems. According to the Hydrology Report prepared for the Proposed Project, to protect the proposed residential improvements at the subject property, grade and cross-slope must be sufficient to contain the flow within the street section, and the catch basin opening must be wider than the top width of the flow (Total 2023). The existing catch basin at the Project site will be relocated and will connect to the existing 16-inch diameter storm drainpipe. Compliance with relevant municipal codes and relocation of the catch basin will make impacts relating to surface runoff less than significant.

iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources or polluted runoff; or

Less Than Significant Impact. Project-related construction activities would include grading activities and construction of the driveway, proposed residential structure, and associated improvements. Construction activities have the potential to temporarily alter the existing drainage patterns of the Project site. The Project would be required to comply with LBMC Chapter 16.01, Water Quality Control, including Section 16.01.040, Control of Urban Runoff, which states that prior to issuance of a grading permit, building permit, or Coastal Development Permit, the community development department shall review project plans and impose BMPs, terms, conditions and requirements on the project to ensure that pollutant discharges are prevented, reduced, or removed to the extent practicable. Therefore, implementation of the Proposed Project would result in a less than significant impact associated with stormwater drainage from construction activities.

iv) impede or redirect flood flows?

Less Than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project is not located within a FEMA-identified 100-year flood hazard area (FEMA 2024). Additionally, the Project site is designated as Zone X on FEMA's National Flood Hazard Layer Viewer, which means that the site is an area of minimum flood hazard. Therefore, implementation of the Proposed Project would not result in a significant impact associated with redirecting flood flows in a flood hazard area (FEMA 2024).

Threshold d) Would the project in flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?

No Impact. Tsunamis are sea waves that are generated in response to large-magnitude earthquakes, which can result in coastal flooding. Seiches are the oscillation of large bodies of standing water, such as lakes, that can occur in response to ground shaking. The Project site is not located within a flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zone (CGS 2024b). Therefore, no impacts associated with risk of pollutants due to project inundation would occur.

Threshold e) Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

No Impact. The Project site is not in a designated groundwater recharge area and based on geotechnical conditions, groundwater is not anticipated to be encountered during construction (Geofirm 2017). The Project would not introduce new uses or pollutants to the area, and water usage during Project operation is expected to be similar to existing conditions. The Project's implementation will be consistent with the General Plan land use and the zoning for the Project site. The Proposed Project would be within the population projections anticipated and planned for by the City's General Plan and would not increase growth beyond what was anticipated in the Laguna Beach County Water District (LBCWD) Urban Water Master Plan & Water Shortage Contingency Plan (UWMP).

Construction activities would adhere to local, State, and federal regulations regarding construction emissions to ensure water quality is not significantly degraded. As such, the Project would not conflict with any water quality control plans or sustainable groundwater management plans; less than significant impacts would occur.

6.1.7 Land Use and Planning

Threshold a) Would the project physically divide an established community?

No Impact. The Project site is currently vacant and is zoned R-1 (Residential Low Density). The Proposed Project would not physically divide or separate the residential neighborhood within the surrounding area, as development of the proposed road extension would result in a continuation of residential uses that occur within the surrounding area. Therefore, no impact would occur.

6.1.8 Mineral Resources

Threshold a) Would the project 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?

No Impact. The State Mining and Geology Board establishes Mineral Resources Zones (MRZs) to designate lands that contain mineral deposits. The following classifications are used by the State to define MRZs:

(a) *MRZ-1:* Areas where the available geologic information indicates no significant likelihood of significant mineral deposits.
(b) *MRZ-2a:* Areas where the available geologic information indicates that there are significant mineral deposits.
(c) *MRZ-2b:* Areas where available geologic information indicates that there is a likelihood of significant mineral deposits.
(d) *MRZ-3a:* Areas where the available geologic information indicates that mineral deposits exist. However, the significance of the deposit is undetermined.
(e) *MRZ-3b:* Areas where the available geologic information indicates that mineral deposits are likely to exist. However, the significance of the deposit is undetermined
(f) *MRZ-4:* Areas where there is not enough information available to determine the presence or absence of mineral deposits.

The Laguna Beach General Plan does not discuss the presence of mineral resources, and the Department of Conservation Mineral Land Classification Map classifies the Project site as MRZ-1, meaning an area where available geological information indicates no significant likelihood of significant mineral deposits (CDMG 1981). Therefore, due to the MRZ-1 classification, the Proposed Project would not result in the loss of availability of known mineral resources of value to the region nor result in the loss of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan. No impact would occur.

Threshold b) Would the project 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?

No Impact. As stated above in impact (a), the Project site is classified as MRZ-1, meaning an area where available geological information indicates no significant likelihood of significant mineral deposits (CDMG

1981). Therefore, due to the MRZ-1 classification, the Proposed Project would not result in the loss of availability of known mineral resources of value to the region or result in the loss of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan. No impact would occur.

6.1.9 Population and Housing

Threshold a) Would the project induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and business) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?

Less Than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project consists of constructing an additional 18.5 linear feet of road surface at the terminus of Juanita Way. The Proposed Project would facilitate the creation of a new building site and potential future construction of a single-family residence at 2400 Juanita Way. Although the road expansion would result in the construction of a new single-family home, the Proposed Project would not induce substantial unplanned population growth. The single-family home would be consistent with the R-1 zoning designation. Additionally, the Project site has a General Plan land use designation of Village Low Density, which is intended to provide for single-family residential development and has been accounted for under General Plan build-out. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not induce substantial unplanned population growth to the area, either directly or indirectly, and impacts would be less than significant.

Threshold b) Would the project displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

Less Than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project consists of constructing an additional 18.5 linear feet of road surface at the terminus of Juanita Way. The Proposed Project would facilitate the creation of a new building site and potential future construction of a single-family residence at 2400 Juanita Way. The Project site is zoned for R-1, and the Proposed Project would be consistent with this zoning designation. The Proposed Project would not displace substantial numbers or existing people or housing elsewhere. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

6.1.10 Public Services

Threshold 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:

i) Police Protection?

No Impact. Laguna Beach Police Department provides law enforcement to the City, including the Project site. Police services for the City are located at 505 Forest Ave, approximately 1.6 miles northwest of the Project site.

The Proposed Project consists of constructing an additional 18.5 linear feet of road surface at the terminus of Juanita Way. The Proposed Project would facilitate the creation of a new building site and potential future construction of a single-family residence at 2400 Juanita Way. The Proposed Project would not result in the need for construction of new or physically altered police facilities. The LBPD currently provides services to the Project site under existing conditions, and the Proposed Project is not anticipated to increase calls for service or alter response times or other performance objectives that would result in the need for new substantially altered law enforcement facilities. The Project would not require the need for new or physically altered police facilities in order to maintain acceptable services ratios, response times, or other performance objectives. No impact would occur.

ii) Schools?

No Impact. The City, including the Project site, is served by the Laguna Beach Unified School District (LBUSD). The Proposed Project consists of constructing an additional 18.5 linear feet of road surface at the terminus of Juanita Way. The Proposed Project would facilitate the creation of a new building site and potential future construction of a single-family residence at 2400 Juanita Way. The Project site is zoned for residential uses; therefore, the Project would not directly result in new students to the LBUSD. The Proposed Project would not require the need for new or physically altered school facilities, and no impact would occur.

iii) Parks?

No Impact. According to the General Plan Land Use Element, the City maintains 29 oceanfront parks and viewing areas totaling approximately 24.7 acres (City 2022). In addition, the City’s 6.2 miles of coastline provide recreational beach opportunities, with public access to approximately 82 acres of sandy beaches. Community recreational needs are further supplemented by 13 neighborhood parks, totaling 11.3 acres and 25 acres of outdoor recreational facilities provided by LBUSED. Combined with parks and beach, total public recreational acreage in Laguna Beach is approximately 143 acres.

The Proposed Project consists of constructing an additional 18.5 linear feet of road surface at the terminus of Juanita Way. The Proposed Project would facilitate the creation of a new building site and potential future construction of a single-family residence at 2400 Juanita Way. The Project site would be consistent with the residential land uses in the area and therefore, the Proposed Project would not induce substantial unplanned population growth within the City that would potentially result in a significant increase in the use of existing parks within the area. The Proposed Project would not involve the construction of new park facilities, nor would it result in the need for new or physically altered park facilities. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in a substantial adverse physical impact associated with the provision of new or physically altered park facilities, and no impact would occur.

iv) Other Public Facilities?

No Impact. As described in Section 4.14, Population and Housing, the Project would not involve a significant increase in new residents to the City, as the proposed road expansion would facilitate the potential construction of a single-family home, which would be consistent with land use in the area and the surrounding neighborhood. The Proposed Project would not result in the need for new or physically altered public facilities. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered public facilities. No impact would occur.

6.1.11 Recreation

Threshold a) Would the project increase the use of the existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?

No Impact. As discussed in Section 4.14 (d) the Proposed Project would not result or induce substantial unplanned population growth within the City limit that would potentially result in a significant increase in the use of existing parks or other recreational facilities. The Proposed Project consists of constructing an additional 18.5 linear feet of road surface at the terminus of Juanita Way. The Proposed Project would facilitate the creation of a new building site and potential future construction of a single-family residence at 2400 Juanita Way. The Proposed Project would be consistent with the residential land uses in the area. Therefore, no impact to regional parks or recreational facilities would occur.

Threshold b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse effect on the environment?

No Impact. The Proposed Project consists of constructing an additional 18.5 linear feet of road surface at the terminus of Juanita Way. The Proposed Project would facilitate the creation of a new building site and potential future construction of a single-family residence at 2400 Juanita Way. The Proposed Project does not propose the development of recreational facilities as part of the Project. No impact would occur.

6.1.12 Transportation

Threshold b) Would the project Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

Less Than Significant Impact. CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b) identifies appropriate criteria for evaluating transportation impacts. It states that land use projects with vehicle miles traveled (VMT) exceeding an applicable threshold of significance may indicate a significant impact, and that projects that decrease VMT compared to existing conditions should be presumed to have a less than significant transportation impact. The Proposed Project consists of constructing an additional 18.5 linear feet of road surface at the terminus of Juanita Way. The Proposed Project would facilitate the creation of a new building site and potential future construction of a single-family residence at 2400 Juanita Way.

According to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA, land use projects, such as the Project, "that generate or attract fewer than 110 trips per day generally may be assumed to cause a less-than significant transportation impact" (OPR 2018). Construction vehicle trips are temporary in nature and would not produce more than 110 trips per day. The daily weekday vehicle trips for a single-family residence is 9.43 trips per dwelling unit (ITE 2025). Operation of the proposed single-family residence would not produce more than 110 trips per day. Therefore, because the Project would not generate substantial new vehicle trips, the Project would not conflict with or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3 (b). Impact would be less than significant.

Threshold c) Would the project substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g. farm equipment)?

Less Than Significant Impact. The Project site is part of an existing residential neighborhood that is currently served by local roadways and access driveways. The Project site would continue to be accessed by the existing roadway, Juanita Way, and the proposed potential future single-family home would be accessed by the proposed road extension.

The City has adopted Title 10, Traffic, into the Municipal Code. Title 10 establishes driving regulations in Chapter 10.02, and contains chapters that monitor turns, stops, parking, and crosswalks. The Municipal Code also includes Title 11, Streets and Sidewalks. Title 11 regulates buildings and materials (Chapter 11.12), street work (Chapter 11.16), excavations (Chapter 11.20), intersection visibility (Chapter 11.30), street openings and extensions (Chapter 11.40), and encroachment permits (Chapter 11.50). Regulations and design standards presented in Municipal Titles 10 and 11 reduce the possibility of Projects implementing hazardous design features and incompatible uses in an area. The Project would be required to comply with the applicable regulations in the LBMC, reducing potential impacts associated with hazardous design features, such as sharp curves or dangerous intersections. Construction of the proposed residential structure, and road extension would be undertaken in accordance with City standards. Thus, compliance with the City's established regulatory framework, standard engineering practices, and design criteria, which would be verified through the City's development review process, would ensure that potential impacts associated with hazardous design features and incompatible uses at the Project site would be less than significant.

6.1.13 Utilities and Service Systems

Threshold a) Would the project require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or expansion of which could cause significant environmental effects?

Less Than Significant Impact.

Water

The Project site and surrounding area are within the service area of LBCWD. The Project site is currently undeveloped and surrounded by residential single-family homes and open space. The Project site and surrounding uses (residential uses) receive water services from LBCWD. As the Proposed Project will connect to the utilities that service the existing community and adjacent homes, implementation of the Proposed Project would not require new or expanded water services, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects. Existing LBCWD water lines would continue to serve residential development within the Project site. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Wastewater and Water Treatment

Wastewater service in the community is supplied by the City and the South Orange County Wastewater Authority (SOCWA). The City operates the sewer lines and pump stations that collect wastewater from buildings and facilities in Laguna Beach and conveys it to a regional network operated by SOCWA for treatment. The nearest wastewater treatment facility is the Coastal Treatment Plant, located in the unincorporated area of Aliso Canyon.

The Proposed Project consists of similar uses to that of the existing conditions (single-family residential land use). The sewer system will be extended along with the proposed road extension and will connect to the extended infrastructure within the right of way. Implementation of the Proposed Project would not require the relocation or construction of new or expanded wastewater facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects. Existing wastewater lines would continue to serve residential development within the Project site. Therefore, a less than significant impact would occur.

Stormwater Drainage

The Project site is located within a mapped watercourse and open space preserve. Stormwater runoff from Juanita Way would be collected in a storm drain system and conveyed to the natural drainage course below. The existing catch basin at the Project site will be relocated and will connect to existing stormwater drainage systems. However, the relocated catch basin will be placed within the existing Juanita Road Right-of-Way, similar to the existing condition.

The potential environmental effects associated with construction and operation of the Project would further be reduced by compliance with regulatory stormwater requirements, including those presented in LBMC Chapter 16.01, *Water Quality Control*. LBMC Section 16.01.040, *Control of Urban Runoff*, states that prior to issuance of a grading permit, building permit, or Coastal Development Permit, the community development department shall review project plans and impose BMPs, terms, conditions and requirements on the project to ensure that pollutant discharges are prevented, reduced, or removed to the extent practicable. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not require or result in relocation or construction of new or expanded storm water drainage facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects. Impacts would be less than significant.

Electricity, Natural Gas, and Telecommunications

Energy consumption would occur during construction and operation of the Project. The proposed Project would extend existing electrical, natural gas, and telecommunications infrastructure to the Project site. The existing infrastructure serves the existing community. The potential environmental effects associated with the construction and operation of the Project would be less than significant with compliance with regulatory requirements. Impacts would be less than significant.

Threshold b) Would the project have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal dry and multiple dry years?

No Impact. The Proposed Project consists of constructing an additional 18.5 linear feet of road surface at the terminus of Juanita Way. The Proposed Project would facilitate the creation of a new building site and potential future construction of a single-family residence at 2400 Juanita Way. LBCWD and South Coast

Water District supply water to the City. The Project is within the LBCWD jurisdiction. In the 2020 UWMP, LBCWD confirmed that there is a sufficient amount of water to supply Laguna Beach residents, including the Project site, during normal, dry, and multiple dry years. Therefore, the Proposed Project would result in no impact.

Threshold c) Would the project 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?

Less Than Significant Impact. Wastewater service in the community is provided by the City and SOCWA. The City operates a sanitary sewer system that serves a population of approximately 22,700 in an 8.7-square-mile service area, including the Project site. The sewer system serves 7,688 residential connections and 355 commercial, industrial, and institutional customers, as of 2014. The sewer system consists of 85.71 miles of gravity sewers (approximately 2,937-line segments), 2,674 manholes, 9.44 miles of force mains, and 25 lift stations (City 2024b).

The Proposed Project consists of constructing an additional 18.5 linear feet of road surface at the terminus of Juanita Way. The Proposed Project would facilitate the creation of a new building site and potential future construction of a single-family residence at 2400 Juanita Way. The proposed addition of a single-family residence in the neighborhood would generate additional wastewater. The Proposed Project would connect to the existing wastewater system and would not require the expansion of such facilities. Additionally, the Proposed Project would comply with LBMC Chapter 17.25, *Sewer Service Charge*, which imposes an annual sewer service charge to pay for operating and capital improvement costs of the City sewer system. Therefore, with compliance of LBMC Chapter 17.25, implementation of the Proposed Project would result in a less than significant impact to wastewater treatment.

Threshold d) 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?

Less Than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project consists of constructing an additional 18.5 linear feet of road surface at the terminus of Juanita Way. The Proposed Project would facilitate the creation of a new building site and potential future construction of a single-family residence at 2400 Juanita Way. There is no demolition required, thus no waste would be produced that would otherwise need to be transported to the landfill.

Therefore, no demolition is required. Waste Management provides solid waste and recycling collection services to the City. The Proposed project would generate solid waste during construction and operational activities. The Proposed Project is consistent with the area's R1 zoning designation; operation of the Proposed Project is anticipated to generate a similar amount of solid waste as existing conditions in the existing neighborhood. The Proposed Project would not generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards. Therefore, a less than significant impact would occur.

Threshold e) Would the project comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

Less Than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project would generate solid waste during construction and operational activities. The Proposed Project consists of constructing an additional 18.5 linear feet of road surface at the terminus of Juanita Way. The Proposed Project would facilitate the creation of a new building site and potential future construction of a single-family residence at 2400 Juanita Way. Operation of the Proposed Project is anticipated to generate a similar amount of solid waste as existing conditions in the existing neighborhood. The Proposed Project would not negatively impact the provision of solid waste services or impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals. Therefore, a less than significant impact would occur.

6.2 IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

According to CEQA Guidelines, "[u]ses of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project may be irreversible since a large commitment of such resources makes removal or nonuse thereafter unlikely. Primary impacts and, particularly, secondary impacts (such as highway improvement which provides access to a previously inaccessible area) generally commit future generations to similar uses. Also, irreversible damage can result from environmental accidents associated with the project. Irretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified." Therefore, the purpose of this analysis is to identify any significant irreversible environmental effects of Project implementation that cannot be avoided.

The Proposed Project involves the construction of approximately 18.5 linear feet of additional road surface at the terminus of Juanita Way to provide driveway access to facilitate creation of a new building site and potential construction of a new single-family residence at 2400 Juanita Way. Implementation of the Proposed Project would result in a localized commitment of limited and non-renewable resources, including building materials, fuel and electricity to power construction, transportation of goods and people to and from the Proposed Project, and recycling and disposal of waste. These commitments are typical of a small-scale residential development and are not considered significant in the context of regional resource availability.

6.3 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

Pursuant to Section 15126.2 of the CEQA Guidelines: an EIR must address whether a project will directly or indirectly foster growth as follows:

> *[An EIR shall] discuss the ways in which the Proposed Project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Included in this are projects which would remove obstacles to population growth (a major expansion of wastewater treatment plant, might, for example, allow for more construction in service areas). Increases in the population may further tax existing community service facilities so consideration must be given to this impact. Also, discuss the characteristic of some projects, which may encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively. It must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.*

As discussed below, this analysis evaluates whether the Project would directly or indirectly induce economic, population, or housing growth in the surrounding environment.

6.3.1 Direct Growth-Inducing Impacts

Direct growth-inducing impacts occur when the development of a project induces population growth or the construction of additional developments in the same area of a proposed project and produces related growth-associated impacts. Growth-inducing projects remove physical obstacles to population growth, such as the construction of a new road into an undeveloped area, a wastewater treatment plant expansion, and projects that allow new development in the service area.

If the growth is not consistent with or accommodated by local land use plans and growth management plans and policies for the area affected, then the growth inducement may constitute an adverse impact. Local land use plans provide for land use development patterns and growth policies that allow for the orderly expansion of urban development supported by adequate urban public services. A project that would conflict with the local land use plans (i.e., “disorderly” growth) could indirectly cause additional adverse environmental impacts and other public services impacts. To assess whether a growth-inducing project would result in adverse secondary effects, the growth accommodated by a project must be assessed to determine if it would or would not be consistent with applicable land use plans.

The Proposed Project involves the construction of approximately 18.5 linear feet of additional road surface at the terminus of Juanita Way to provide driveway access to facilitate creation of a new building site and potential construction of a new single-family residence. City staff expressed concern that the project could set a precedent for road extensions into currently inaccessible hillside areas and the attendant issues arising thereof (fragmentation of the greenbelt and shrinking of wildlife corridors, public safety concerns related to population densities, alteration of the scenic hillside resource, etc. (City 2019d). However, it is unlikely the Project would not directly increase the local population, as it aligns with the R-1 zoning designation and is located in a Village Low Density area per the General Plan.

6.3.2 Indirect Growth-Inducing Impacts

CEQA Guidelines also specify that the environmental effects of induced growth are considered indirect impacts of the Proposed Project. The additional demand for housing, commodities, and services that new development causes or attracts by increasing population in the area are examples of indirect growth-inducing impacts or secondary effects of growth. Indirect growth-inducing impacts typically include substantial new, permanent employment opportunities that can result from a project.

The Proposed Project is not expected to generate any immediate employment opportunities, as it only involves a road extension and the potential development of a single-family residence. As such, it is unlikely to attract additional residents or result in a significant indirect impact on population growth within the neighborhood.

6.4 SIGNIFICANT UNAVOIDABLE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The potentially adverse effects of the Project are discussed in Chapter 3.0 of this Draft EIR. Mitigation measures have been recommended that would reduce impacts to cultural resources, tribal cultural resources, and noise to less than significant based on each set of significance criteria. Significant and unavoidable impacts to biological resources, land use and planning, and transportation would occur.

CHAPTER 7.0 – REFERENCES

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CHAPTER 8.0 – REPORT PREPARATION

8.1 EIR PREPARERS

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