

**Section 6.0**  
**Long-Term Implications**  
**of the Proposed Project**

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## **6.0 LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT**

### **6.1 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SHORT-TERM USES OF MAN'S ENVIRONMENT AND THE MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY**

If the proposed Specific Plan is approved and constructed, a variety of short-term and long-term impacts would occur on a local level. During Project grading and construction, portions of surrounding uses may be temporarily impacted by dust and noise. Short-term erosion may occur during grading. There may also be a minor increase in dust and vehicle emissions caused by grading and construction activities. However, these disruptions would be temporary, and may be lessened to a large degree through mitigation cited in this report and the standards for construction as cited in the Town of Yucca Valley Development Code, Title 9; refer to Sections 5.1 through 5.4 of this EIR.

Ultimate development of the Specific Plan area would create long-term environmental consequences that are associated with new development. The long-term effects of the proposed Specific Plan and subsequent development may impact the physical, aesthetic, and human environments. Long-term physical consequences of development include: increased traffic volumes, new mobile and stationary noise sources, the incremental degradation of local and regional air quality from new stationary and mobile emission sources, incremental increased demands for public utilities, and increased energy and natural resource consumption. Long-term consequences associated with grading, construction, and landscaping would also include the replacement of on-site vegetation with pavement and other plant varieties. Long-term visual/aesthetic impacts include alterations to views across the Project area.

### **6.2 IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES THAT WOULD BE INVOLVED IN THE PROPOSED ACTION SHOULD IT BE IMPLEMENTED**

Approval of the proposed Project would cause irreversible environmental changes. Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would result in the following changes:

- ◆ Commitment of land, which would be physically altered.
- ◆ Vegetation removal for grading and construction activities.
- ◆ Alteration of the human environment, as a consequence of the development process. The Project represents a commitment to residential, commercial,



and industrial uses, replacing vacant land on the Project site with development and altering existing development.

- ◆ Utilization of various new raw materials, such as lumber, sand, and gravel for construction. Some of these resources are already being depleted worldwide. The energy consumed in development and maintaining the sites may be considered a permanent investment.
- ◆ Incremental increases in vehicular activity in the surrounding circulation system, resulting in associated increases in air emissions and noise levels.

### **6.3 GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS**

Section 15126.2(d) of the *CEQA Guidelines* requires that an EIR discuss a project's potential to foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. The *CEQA Guidelines* also indicate that it must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment. This section analyzes potential growth-inducing impacts, based on criteria suggested in the *CEQA Guidelines*.

In general terms, a project may foster spatial, economic, or population growth in a geographic area if it meets any one of the following criteria:

- ◆ Removal of an impediment to growth (e.g., establishment of an essential public service and provision of new access to an area);
- ◆ Fostering of economic expansion or growth (e.g., changes in revenue base and employment expansion);
- ◆ Fostering of population growth (e.g., construction of additional housing), either directly or indirectly;
- ◆ Establishment of a precedent-setting action (e.g., an innovation, a change in zoning, and general plan amendment approval); or
- ◆ Development of or encroachment on an isolated or adjacent area of open space (being distinct from an in-fill project).

Should a project meet any one of the above-listed criteria, it may be considered growth-inducing. The potential growth-inducing impacts of the proposed Project are evaluated below against these criteria.

Note that the *CEQA Guidelines* require an EIR to “discuss the ways” a project could be growth-inducing and to “discuss the characteristics of some projects that may encourage...activities that could significantly affect the environment.” However, the *CEQA Guidelines* do not require that an EIR predict (or speculate) specifically where such growth would occur, in what form it would occur, or when it would occur. The



answers to such questions require speculation, which CEQA discourages; refer to *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15145.

## POPULATION

County San Bernardino. The Town of Yucca Valley (Town) is located in the County of San Bernardino (County), one of six counties (Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Ventura, and Imperial Counties) that comprise the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) region. According to SCAG, since the Census 1990, population in the six-county region has grown from 14.6 million to 16.5 million persons, an increase of 12.8 percent. The County increased by approximately 7.4 percent, while the remaining counties experienced an approximately 12 percent growth in population.<sup>5</sup> The SCAG region’s population is projected to grow to 22.89 million by 2030, an increase of 6.26 million from 2000.

Between 1990 and 2000, the County grew from 1,418,380 persons to 1,709,434 persons. This population increase represented a total change in population of approximately 21 percent. In 2000, the County’s population represented approximately 65 percent of the Region’s total population.<sup>6</sup> The County’s estimated population as of January 2006 is 1,991,829 persons.<sup>7</sup> The County is anticipated to continue the population growth trend.

Town of Yucca Valley. In 1990, the Town’s population was an estimated 13,701 persons. The Town’s population in 2000 was an estimated 16,865, representing a population increase between 1990 and 2000 of approximately 23 percent (3,164 persons). In 2000, the Town’s population represented less than one percent of the County’s total population. Table 6-1, *Population and Housing*, provides the population estimates for the Town and Project Area. As indicated in Table 6-1, the Town’s population, as of January 2006, was an estimated 20,537 persons.

**Table 6-1  
Population and Housing**

Geography	Dwelling Units	Persons per Household <sup>1</sup>	Population Estimate
Within SPA – Existing	326 DU <sup>2</sup>	2.517 persons	821 persons
Within SPA - General Plan Buildout	27 DU		68 persons
Town of Yucca Valley- Existing	9,195 DU	--	20,537 persons <sup>1</sup>

1. State of California, Department of Finance, *E-5 Population and Housing Estimates, for Cities, Counties, and the State, 2001-2006, with 2000 Benchmark*. Sacramento, California, May 2006.  
2. *Old Town Yucca Valley Specific Plan CMP Traffic Impact Analysis*, Urban Crossroads, August 7, 2005.

<sup>5</sup> SCAG forecasts are the 2004 Regional Transportation Plan/Growth Vision: Socio-Economic Forecast Report.

<sup>6</sup> Southern California Association of Governments Region. <http://www.scag.ca.gov/census/>. April 2002.

<sup>7</sup> State of California, Department of Finance, *E-5 Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State, 2001-2006, with 2000 Benchmark*. Sacramento, California, May 2006.



Specific Plan Area. The existing population within the SPA, based on 326 existing dwelling units is approximately 821 persons. The projected population within the SPA, based on 27 dwelling units, which is the maximum residential development potential according to existing *General Plan* land use designations, is 68 persons.

## **HOUSING**

County San Bernardino. The County's housing supply totaled 661,668 housing units as of 2006. The residential vacancy rate, a translation of the number of unoccupied housing units on the market, is a good indicator of the balance between housing supply and demand in a community. As of 2006, the County's vacancy rate was 11.81 percent. The average number of persons per household in the County was 3.326.

Town of Yucca Valley. The housing supply in the Town totaled 9,195 housing units as of January 2006; refer to Table 6-1. The vacancy rate in the Town as of January 2006 was 12.62 percent (1,160 vacant housing units). The Town's vacancy rate was greater than the County's vacancy rate of 11.81 percent. The average number of persons per household in the Town was 2.517, which is less than the County's estimate of 3.326 persons per household.

Specific Plan Area. The SPA contains housing in the southern portion along Santa Fe Trail, and sparsely throughout the commercial and industrial areas along the existing SR-62. An estimated 326 dwelling units are located within the SPA. The maximum residential development potential within the SPA, according to existing *General Plan* land use designations, is 27 dwelling units.

## **EMPLOYMENT**

County San Bernardino. The Census 2000 reported a total civilian labor force of approximately 721,185 in the County. Approximately 4.9 percent of the County's civilian labor force was unemployed at the time of the Census. The majority (approximately 28.1 percent) of the County's labor force was employed in management, professional, and related occupations. The majority, an estimated 21.2 percent, of the County's labor force filled positions in the educational, health, and social services industries.

Town of Yucca Valley. The Census 2000 reported a total civilian labor force of approximately 6,223 in the Town. Approximately 4.0 percent (521 persons) of the Town's civilian labor force was unemployed at the time of the Census report. The majority (approximately 28.4 percent) of the Town's labor force was employed in management, professional, and related occupations. The majority, an estimated 25.9 percent, of the Town's labor force filled positions in the educational, health, and social services industries.

Specific Plan Area. The estimated total employment within the SPA, which includes employment in service, retail, and other industries, is approximately 660 positions; refer to Table 6-2, *Employment Estimates*. The projected employment within the SPA, according to existing *General Plan* land use designations, is 7,592 positions.



**Table 6-2  
Employment Estimates**

Geography	Estimated Employment
Within SPA – Existing <sup>1</sup>	
Service Employment	351 positions
Retail Employment	153 positions
Other Employment	156 Positions
<i>Total Employment</i>	<i>660 positions</i>
Within SPA – General Plan Buildout <sup>1</sup>	
Service Employment	1,463 positions
Retail Employment	3,331 positions
Other Employment	2,798 positions
<i>Total Employment</i>	<i>7,592 positions</i>
1. <i>Old Town Yucca Valley Specific Plan CMP Traffic Impact Analysis, Urban Crossroads, August 7, 2005.</i>	

## IMPACT ANALYSIS

The *General Plan* designations on the SPA are currently Commercial, Residential, Industrial, and Public/Quasi Public; the zoning is Service Commercial (C-S), General Commercial (C-G), Mixed Use (C-MU), Residential Single-Family (R-S-5), and Rural Living (R-L) Districts. As described in Section 3.0, *Project Description*, a *General Plan* Amendment (Land Use and Circulation Elements) would be required to designate the Project area as Specific Plan (SP) and reflect the circulation proposed by the Specific Plan. The *Development Code* and *Zoning Map* would be amended to indicate the new Specific Plan Zoning District (SP).

The Old Town Yucca Valley Specific Plan provides for the development of four planning districts: the Old Town Mixed-use District, Old Town Commercial/Residential District, Old Town Industrial/Commercial District, and the Old Town Highway Commercial District. Exhibit 3-5, *Proposed Land Use Map*, depicts the boundaries of the planning districts and potential realignment of SR-62 within the Project area; Table 3-1, *Land Use Plan Buildout Summary*, provides a statistical breakdown of each district. As indicated in Table 3-1, the Specific Plan would allow a maximum of 1,115 residential units and up to 2,900,604 square feet (SF) of a variety of uses, including commercial/retail, industrial/commercial, office, and civic.

An analysis of the Project’s potential to result in significant growth-inducing impacts upon the Town of Yucca Valley is presented below.

## Impediments To Growth

The proposed Specific Plan would not be growth-inducing inasmuch as it would not remove an impediment to growth. The Project site is located in an area currently



served by utilities (i.e. water, storm drains, electrical, etc.)<sup>8</sup> and other public services (i.e., police, fire, and solid waste). Specific Plan implementation would require the expansion of existing facilities and services to meet the new demands associated with the Project that would be determined and paid by developers on a project-by-project basis. Public services and utilities would be extended from existing facilities, currently located along Twentynine Palms Highway and throughout the site, without the anticipated need for expansion of capacity or establishment of new sources of service. Further, the anticipated increase in demand would not reduce or impair any existing or future levels of utilities or services, either locally or regionally, as increased costs would be met through cooperative agreements between the future developers and servicing agencies.

The demand for wastewater services created by future development within the SPA is not considered a significant growth-inducing impact. All wastewater in the SPA is treated through septic systems located on each lot. A sewer system is not presently available in the Town of Yucca Valley. Thus, as discussed in Section 5.4, *Public Services and Utilities*, private septic systems would be used for disposal of the wastewater generated by future development within the SPA. The dependency on septic systems for wastewater disposal needs, and the eventual replacement of the existing septic systems with a sewage system, is not unique to the SPA. Similar to the proposed Project, redevelopment and new development throughout the Town would continue the use of septic systems until such time as sufficient development has occurred to extend sewer system infrastructure to Yucca Valley.

### **Economic Expansion**

Project implementation would foster economic expansion within the SPA by providing both short-term and long-term employment. The proposed Project would involve the development of new land uses, creating temporary construction-related employment, as development occurs over time. As indicated in Table 6-3, *Employment Estimates – Project*, implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would provide approximately 6,547 employment positions at buildout, or approximately 5,887 positions over the existing 660 positions.

The Town of Yucca Valley has identified the need to improve the economic vitality and livability of the Old Town area. To this end, the Specific Plan establishes a comprehensive strategy to attract and expand economic activity and commerce. Further, the Specific Plan would provide key opportunities to enhance the Town's overall economic base and the historic Old Town area. Thus, the economic expansion fostered by the Project is consistent with an existing need identified by the Town and is considered a beneficial growth-inducing impact.

Comparatively, the Specific Plan proposes less commercial floor area (a net decrease of 478,435 SF), as compared to buildout according to the existing *General Plan*. Thus, the economic expansion generated by the proposed Specific Plan would be proportionately less (approximately 1,045 fewer employment positions) than the existing *General Plan*. The economic expansion fostered by the Project is consistent

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<sup>8</sup> Currently, all wastewater in the SPA is treated through septic systems located on each lot. A sewer system is not presently available in the Town of Yucca Valley.



with the economic expansion anticipated in the *General Plan*, although to a lesser degree. The commercial (and residential) uses proposed by the Specific Plan are considered more responsive than the existing *General Plan* to recent market trends, which favor mixed uses in commercial core areas.

**Table 6-3**  
**Employment Estimates – Project**

Geography	Estimated Employment
Old Town Yucca Valley SP – Proposed	
Service Employment	1,264 positions
Retail Employment	3,398 positions
Other Employment	1,885 positions
<i>Total Employment</i>	<i>7,592 positions</i>
Within SPA – Existing	660 positions
<i>Net Change (Specific Plan:Existing)</i>	<i>+5,887 positions</i>
Within SPA – General Plan Buildout	7,592 positions
<i>Net Change (Specific Plan:General Plan)</i>	<i>-1,045 positions</i>
Source: <i>Old Town Yucca Valley Specific Plan CMP Traffic Impact Analysis, Urban Crossroads, August 7, 2005.</i>	

### **Population Growth**

A project could foster population growth in an area directly, through the development of new homes, or indirectly through the development of employment generating land uses. Table 6-4, *Population and Housing - Project*, provides an estimate of the population growth at Specific Plan buildout and indicates that Project implementation would result in a population of approximately 2,806 persons, or 1,985 persons more than existing conditions. Comparatively, the projected population at Specific Plan buildout would be approximately 2,738 persons more than buildout according to the existing *General Plan*.

**Table 6-4**  
**Population and Housing – Project**

Geography	Dwelling Units	Persons per Household <sup>1</sup>	Population Estimate
Old Town Yucca Valley SP - Proposed	1,115 DU	2.517 persons	2,806 persons
Within SPA – Existing	326 DU <sup>2</sup>		821 persons
<i>Net Change (Specific Plan:Existing)</i>	<i>+789 DU</i>		<i>+1,985 persons</i>
Within SPA - General Plan Buildout	27 DU		68 persons
<i>Net Change (Specific Plan:General Plan)</i>	<i>+1,088 DU</i>		<i>+2,738 persons</i>
1. State of California, Department of Finance, <i>E-5 Population and Housing Estimates, for Cities, Counties, and the State, 2001-2006, with 2000 Benchmark</i> . Sacramento, California, May 2006. 2. <i>Old Town Yucca Valley Specific Plan CMP Traffic Impact Analysis, Urban Crossroads, August 7, 2005.</i>			





Table 6-5, *Population Growth Comparison*, provides an analysis of the population growth that would occur according to the existing *General Plan*, as compared to the proposed Specific Plan. As indicated in Table 6-5, the projected population at Specific Plan buildout would be approximately 2,806 persons, representing a 242 percent increase over existing conditions. In contrast, the projected population within the SPA at *General Plan* buildout would be approximately 68 persons, representing a 92 percent decrease from existing conditions. Therefore, the proposed Specific Plan is considered growth-inducing with respect to its potential to foster population growth within the SPA.

**Table 6-5**  
**Population Growth Comparison**

Geography	Dwelling Units	Persons per Household <sup>1</sup>	Population Estimate
Within SPA – Existing	326 DU <sup>2</sup>	2.517 persons	821 persons
Old Town Yucca Valley SP – Proposed	1,115 DU		2,806 persons
<i>Net Change (Specific Plan:Existing)</i>	<i>+789 DU</i>		<i>+1,986 persons</i>
<i>Percent Change (Specific Plan:Existing)</i>			<i>+242%</i>
Within SPA - General Plan Buildout	27 DU	2.517 persons	68 persons
<i>Net Change (General Plan:Existing)</i>	<i>-299 DU</i>		<i>-753 persons</i>
<i>Percent Change (General Plan:Existing)</i>			<i>-92%</i>

1. State of California, Department of Finance, *E-5 Population and Housing Estimates, for Cities, Counties, and the State, 2001-2006, with 2000 Benchmark*. Sacramento, California, May 2006.  
2. *Old Town Yucca Valley Specific Plan CMP Traffic Impact Analysis*, Urban Crossroads, August 7, 2005.

- ◆ The Project proposes an amendment to the existing *General Plan*, which would result in more residential development and resultant population increases within the SPA. However, based on the rural nature and existing residential development patterns, which exist in the communities that surround the SPA, the Project is not considered growth-inducing with respect to its potential to establish a precedent-setting action (e.g., higher residential densities in areas surrounding the SPA).
- ◆ The proposed Specific Plan would not be growth-inducing with respect to development or encroachment into an isolated or adjacent area of open space. As discussed in Section 3.0, *Project Description*, the SPA involves approximately 265 acres located in the original commercial core of the Town of Yucca Valley. With the exception of existing easements and right-of-ways, the entire SPA is planned for development at buildout. The Project would consist of primarily urban infill development and redevelopment. Existing commercial, residential, and industrial uses surround the SPA. The existing land uses surrounding the SPA are:
  - North: A variety of underdeveloped uses, including industrial, commercial, and residential uses.
  - South: Single-family residential neighborhoods.



- East: Commercial uses, with most of the businesses concentrated along Twentynine Palms Highway.
- West: A variety of uses, including commercial and a golf course to the northwest.

Based on the analysis presented above, it is concluded that Project implementation would result in significant growth-inducing impacts upon the Town of Yucca Valley with respect to population growth.