

## SECTION 4.10: MINERAL RESOURCES

### 4.10 MINERAL RESOURCES

#### 4.10.1 *Environmental Setting*

Based on the California Department of Conservation maps, there are no oil, gas, or geothermal resources in the City of Ontario, including the project site. The nearest oilfields are located within the City of Chino, approximately 10 miles south of the site (Oil, Gas and Geothermal Fields in California, 2001). There are no exploratory core holes or completed/abandoned oil wells on or near the site (Regional Wildcat Map W1-4, February 22, 2004). The project site is not subject to oil, gas, or mining operations.

The California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) acknowledges that:

- “Extraction of minerals is essential to the continued economic well-being of the State and to the needs of the society;
- Reclamation of mined lands is necessary to prevent or minimize adverse effects on the environment and to protect the public health and safety;
- Reclamation of mined lands ... will permit the continued mining of minerals and will provide for the protection and subsequent beneficial use of the mined and reclaimed land;
- Surface mining takes place in diverse areas where the geologic, topographic, climatic, biological, and social conditions are significantly different; and
- Reclamation operations and the specifications therefore may vary accordingly.”

Thus, the Act intends “to create and maintain an effective and comprehensive surface mining and reclamation policy with regulation of surface mining operations to assure that adverse environmental effects are prevented or minimized and that mined lands are reclaimed to a usable condition which is readily adaptable for alternative land uses; the production and conservation of minerals are encouraged, while giving consideration to values relating to recreation, watershed, wildlife, range and forage, and aesthetic enjoyment; and residual hazards to the public health and safety are eliminated ” (SMARA and Associated Regulations, 2007 p. 1).

The SMARA calls for land use decisions that may affect mineral-bearing lands to be made with the knowledge of these resources. Thus, the Act requires the State Geologist to classify areas with potential for significant mineral resources and local agencies to incorporate the information into their General Plans (SMARA and Associated Regulations, 2007 p. 6).

Aggregate materials are classified as either reserves or resources. Reserves are defined as aggregate materials believed to be acceptable for commercial use, that exist within property boundaries owned or leased by an aggregate-producing company and for which permission allowing extraction and processing has been granted by the proper authorities. Aggregate resources include reserves and similar potentially usable aggregate materials that may be economically mined in the future, but for which no use permit allowing extraction has been granted (Mineral Land Classification of the Greater Los Angeles Area, 1987 p. xii).

In accordance with the SMARA, five parcels have been identified as Regionally Significant Aggregate Resources Areas in the southeastern section of the City, approximately 7.0 miles southeast from the site (SMARA and Associated Regulations, 2007 p. 37). The State Office of Mine Reclamation defines an Area of Regional Significance as an area “which is known to contain a deposit of minerals, the extraction of which is judged to be of prime importance in meeting future needs for minerals in a particular region of the State within which the minerals are located and which, if prematurely developed for alternate incompatible land uses, could result in the permanent loss of minerals that are of more than local significance” (SMARA and Associated Regulations, 2007 p.4).

The regionally significant gravel resources found within the southeastern section of the City of Ontario were deposited by the Day Creek alluvial fan and in 1992 were estimated to contain approximately 35.5 million short tons of gravel. There are no mining activities at these locations. There are also no plans for future mineral extraction activities in these areas, as they are currently developed with specific plan and industrial uses (Ontario General Plan, 1992 p. 5-9).

The Natural Resources Element of the Ontario General Plan states that areas where gravel resources are present are developed or proposed for development. Aggregate extraction would be an interim use, provided it is compatible with existing and proposed uses in adjacent areas. Goal 3.0 of the Ontario General Plan Natural Resources Element provides “for future land use compatibility of aggregate resource sectors with adjacent urbanizing areas”. This goal was established to ensure that land use conflicts are not created by future mining activities on existing and planned urban land uses (Ontario General Plan, 1992 p. 5-9).

Based on the Mineral Land Classification for the Greater Los Angeles Area, as prepared by the California Department of Conservation, the majority of the City of Ontario, including the project site, is located outside the area designated as Mineral Resource Zone 2 (MRZ-2). The MRZ-2 zone designation indicates that the area contains significant aggregate deposits (Mineral Land Classification of the Greater Los Angeles Area, 1987 p. xi and Generalized Map).

#### **4.10.2 Thresholds of Significance**

In accordance with Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project could have a significant adverse impact on mineral resources, if its implementation results in any of the following:

- ◆ Loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the State; or
- ◆ Loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan.

#### **4.10.3 Environmental Impacts**

There are no known aggregate, mineral, oil or geothermal resources in the northwestern section of the City of Ontario, including the project site, which may be affected by the proposed project (Oil, Gas and Geothermal Fields in California, 2001).

**Regional Demand for Mineral Resources** (*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?*)

The project would not impact oil, gas, or mining operations occurring in other areas of the region. Regionally Significant Aggregate Resource Areas have been identified approximately 7.0 miles southeast of the project site (SMARA and Associated Regulations, 2007 p. 37). Given the distance of identified gravel resources from the site, the project is not expected to affect these off-site resources or affect access to these resources.

Sand and gravel are important resources for construction and the development of buildings and infrastructure improvements. Construction activities associated with the development of proposed structure, parking areas and infrastructure for the Wal-Mart Supercenter proposed on the site and off-site would require aggregate resources.

The sand, gravel, and other building materials that would be needed for construction of the proposed project are expected to come from mineral extraction sites in the region, such as those located within the Lytle Creek alluvial fan and Lytle Creek Wash in the cities of Rialto and San Bernardino. The Lytle Creek Alluvial fan area produced an average of over 500,000 tons of aggregate per year during the 1980's. The Lytle Creek Wash area has produced over 2 million tons per year (Mineral Land Classification of the Greater Los Angeles Area, 1987 p. 10). The project's demand for sand and gravel resources is not expected to represent a significant amount of local aggregate resources, when compared to available resources in the area and the cumulative demand for these resources by ongoing construction activities in the region.

The demand for aggregate resources generated by the proposed project can be met by available sand and gravel resources found throughout the region. The project's demand would be a single event and would represent a minimal amount of the construction activity in the region and of the total demand of aggregate resources used in construction. Thus, it is not expected to have an adverse effect on the availability of aggregate resources in the region.

Per City requirements, the demolition of the existing structures and parking lot would involve the salvage, recycling and reuse of demolition wastes, such as metals, lumber, asphalt, concrete, roofing materials, drywall, corrugated cardboard, fixtures, windows, wood, tiles, equipment, and fixtures (Construction and Demolition Recycling Plan, Winter 2005). The recycling of asphalt and concrete would allow for the conservation of existing aggregate resources through a reduction in demand, either by the project or another development that would reuse the recycled demolition wastes from the site. Impacts would be less than significant on the availability of mineral resources that are of value to the region.

**Local Mineral Resources** (*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?*)

There are no mining activities on or near the project site and no mining operation is proposed as part of the Wal-Mart Supercenter. The project site is not located within an MRZ-2 zone and no mineral resources of State or regional significance are present on the site (Mineral Land Classification of the Greater Los Angeles Area, 1987 p. xi and Generalized Map). Additionally, the site is not designated for mining activities in the City's General Plan (Ontario General Plan, 1992 p. 5-9). Rather, the site is currently designated for commercial uses within the City's General Plan and the Mountain Village Specific Plan (Ontario General Plan Land Use Map, 2006 and Mountain Village Specific Plan, 1997 pp. 1-7). The site is also developed with commercial structures and is surrounded by urban developments. The demolition of existing vacant commercial structures on the site and construction of a new commercial building would not change access to mineral resources that may underlie the site. No adverse impacts are expected relating to the availability of a locally-important mineral resource.

#### **4.10.4 Previous Analysis**

To the extent applicable, this Subsequent EIR tiers off previous environmental documents relating to the development of the project site. As outlined in Section 1.2.1, *Previous Environmental Review*, previous analyses include a Supplemental EIR considering the environmental impacts associated with future development within the Mountain Village Specific Plan area (which included the project site) and the EIR analyzing the environmental impacts of new development and redevelopment within the Added Area, which was part of Amendment No. 1 to the Ontario Redevelopment Project No. 2.

While baseline conditions in this Subsequent EIR reflect the present situation, the linkages between the three documents remain pertinent to the environmental review of the Wal-Mart Supercenter proposal. The following discussion summarizes the salient points of similarity/difference between the previous documents and the Subsequent EIR and, where similar impacts are present, applicable policies, standard conditions or mitigation measures in the previous documents are identified for incorporation or implementation by the current project, where appropriate.

### **Supplemental EIR for Mountain Village Specific Plan**

The Supplemental EIR for the Mountain Village Specific Plan stated that there are no mineral resources of State-wide significance in the City. Regionally significant mineral resources are located outside the Specific Plan area. No adverse impacts on energy and mineral resources are expected from future development within the Specific Plan area.

The proposed project would require mineral resources for construction but this demand would not have significant adverse impacts on available resources in the region or the State, as discussed above. No standard conditions or mitigation measures for mineral resources were provided in the Supplemental EIR for the Mountain Village Specific Plan.

### **EIR for Amendment No. 1**

The EIR for the proposed Amendment No. 1 stated that while there are regionally significant gravel resources in the southeastern section of the City, there are no mineral resources within the Added Area. No adverse impacts on energy and mineral resources are expected from future development and redevelopment within the Added Area.

The proposed project would require mineral resources for construction but this demand would not have significant adverse impacts on available resources in the region or the State, as discussed above. No standard conditions or mitigation measures for mineral resources were provided in the EIR for Amendment No. 1.

Based on the comparative discussion above, the project's impacts are no different than those analyzed in the previous EIRs.

#### ***4.10.5 Standard Conditions and Mitigation Measures***

No significant adverse impact on mineral resources is expected; thus, no standard conditions or mitigation measures are recommended. Also, no standard conditions or mitigation measures for mineral resources were provided in the Supplemental EIR for the MVSP or the EIR for Amendment No. 1. However, the City may impose project-specific conditions as part of project approval.

#### ***4.10.6 Unavoidable Significant Adverse Impacts***

The preliminary analysis in the Initial Study indicated that no significant impacts are expected resulting in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site, since the proposed project would be located on a developed site where no aggregate resources have been identified, and there are no mining operations on or near the site. Project impacts resulting in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region are expected to be less than significant since the sand, gravel, and other materials required for construction of the proposed project are not expected to represent a significant amount of local aggregate

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resources, when compared to available resources and the cumulative demand for these resources by construction activities in the region.

The analysis in the Subsequent EIR, as provided above, reflects the same findings, although more detailed discussion of mineral resources on the site and in the City is provided, along with the project's potential demand for mineral resources.

The analysis above states that the demand for mineral resources that would be generated by construction of the proposed Wal-Mart Supercenter is not expected to have a significant adverse impact on regional mineral resources. No unavoidable significant adverse impact is expected.