

## 5. Environmental Analysis

### 5.13 POPULATION AND HOUSING

This section examines the existing population, housing, and employment conditions in the Project Area. The following section assesses existing conditions and compares the differences between forecasts based on the Proposed Project and regional growth projections. According to Section 15382 of the CEQA Guidelines, “An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant impact on the environment.” Socioeconomic characteristics should be considered in an EIR only to the extent that they create adverse impacts on the physical environment.

The discussion of population, housing, and employment provided below is based on the Proposed Project, Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) 2012–2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS), California Department of Finance (DOF) estimates, and existing conditions (2013). Historical population, housing, and employment data for the Project Area was provided by the DOF. The buildout of the Proposed Project is at an undefined time, but is expected to occur after the SCAG 2012–2035 RTP/SCS horizon. The Project Area buildout projections were provided by County of Los Angeles (County) staff and based on the proposed land uses included in the Proposed Project.

#### 5.13.1 Environmental Setting

##### Population

The County estimates that the existing population in the Project Area is 93,490 persons, representing 8.8 percent of Los Angeles County’s total population. This is the baseline for the Proposed Project analysis. The Antelope Valley and other communities in North Los Angeles County experienced a period of rapid growth during the early 2000s. At that time, relaxed lending practices and relatively low housing costs in suburban and rural areas increased the demand for homeownership opportunities. New neighborhoods were constructed, resulting in a significant increase in population in the Antelope Valley and environs. Although the majority of the development occurred within cities, unincorporated areas also grew. Table 5.13-1 shows population figures for the year 2000 and 2010. As shown, population within the Project Area grew from 66,800 to 73,590 between 2000 and 2010, or 10.1 percent. However, the majority of the population within Antelope Valley continues to be located within the incorporated cities of Palmdale and Lancaster (81 percent in 2010), which are not part of the Project Area.

**Table 5.13-1 Regional Population, 2000–2010**

Location	2000		2010	
	Number	Percent of Total	Number	Percent of Total
Project Area	66,800	22.1%	73,590	19.2%
City of Lancaster	118,718	39.3%	156,633	40.9%
City of Palmdale	116,670	38.6%	152,750	39.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>302,188</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>382,973</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: U.S. Census

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SCAG's historical data and projections combine the Project Area with the unincorporated area of the Santa Clarita Valley. According to SCAG, in 2003 the Project Area and unincorporated parts of the Santa Clarita Valley combined had a population of 128,922. By 2008 the population had increased by 33.6 percent to 172,298 persons.

As mortgage and interest rates adjusted and lending practices became more restrictive in the late 2000s, the demand for new housing decreased and population growth may have only temporarily slowed down. SCAG projects the 2020 population will be 232,250, a 34.8 percent increase from 2008. Table 5.13-2 provides SCAG population figures for the Project Area combined with unincorporated parts of the Santa Clarita Valley in 2003 and 2008, and projections for 2020 and 2035.

**Table 5.13-2 Unincorporated Antelope Valley and Santa Clarita Valley Population and Housing Units 2003–2035**

SCAG Data	2003 <sup>1</sup>	2008 <sup>1</sup>	2003–2008 Change	2020 <sup>3</sup>	2008–2020 Change	2035 <sup>2</sup>	2020–2035 Change
Population	128,922	172,239	33.6%	232,250	34.8%	302,005	30.0%
Housing Units	38,411	53,015	38.0%	77,965	47.1%	104,815	34.4%

Note: SCAG data includes the Project Area as well as unincorporated portions of the Santa Clarita Valley. The numbers shown here for 2020 and 2035 are SCAG projections. The Antelope Valley Area Plan will not be built out within the SCAG RTP/SCS horizon of 2035.

<sup>1</sup> Historic data from the SCAG 2008 RTP.

<sup>2</sup> SCAG 2012–2035 RTP/SCS.

### Housing

According to U.S. Census data, there were 21,803 housing units in the Project Area in 2000 and 26,962 housing units in 2010. The housing stock in the Project Area increased by 19.1 percent between 2000 and 2010. The Antelope Valley experienced a housing construction boom during the early- and mid-2000s. Although the majority of the development occurred within the cities of Lancaster and Palmdale, thousands of new units were constructed in the Project Area. Table 5.13-3 shows the number of new housing units in the Antelope Valley during a period of rapid expansion between 2004 and 2006.

**Table 5.13-3 New Housing Units Annually, 2004-2006**

Location	2004	2005	2006
Project Area	344	439	450
City of Lancaster	43,584	44,781	46,790
City of Palmdale	39,946	41,312	42,841
<b>Total</b>	<b>85,878</b>	<b>88,537</b>	<b>90,081</b>

Source: GAVEA 2007 Economic Roundtable Report, Los Angeles County Assessor Building Report (2008) within the Antelope Valley Area Plan Update Background Report

Housing development throughout the region may have only temporarily slowed while the local and national economy experienced recession. SCAG projects that population and housing growth in the Project Area and environs between 2008 and 2020, as shown in Table 5.13-2, will outpace the growth that occurred between 2003 and 2008.

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### Employment

In 2013, the County estimated that there were 31,838 jobs in the Project Area. Based on California Employment Development Department estimates for 2013, the jobs in the Project Area represented approximately 0.7 percent of total Los Angeles County employment (4,506,400 jobs). According to the U.S. Census and the County, in 2000 there were 25,624 jobs in the Project Area. This constitutes a job increase of 24.2 percent in the Project Area between 2000 and 2013.

SCAG employment historic data and projections shown in Table 5.13-4 combine the Project Area with unincorporated parts of the Santa Clarita Valley.

**Table 5.13-4 Unincorporated Antelope Valley and Santa Clarita Valley Employment, 2003–2035**

SCAG Data	2003 <sup>1</sup>	2008 <sup>1</sup>	2003–2008 Change	2020 <sup>3</sup>	2008–2020 Change	2035 <sup>2</sup>	2020–2035 Change
Population	34,459	38,608	12.0%	64,875	68.0%	97,763	50.7%

Note: SCAG data includes the Project Area as well as unincorporated portions of the Santa Clarita Valley. The numbers shown here for 2020 and 2035 are SCAG projections. The Antelope Valley Area Plan will not be built out within the SCAG RTP/SCS horizon of 2035.

<sup>1</sup> Historic data from the SCAG 2008 RTP.

<sup>2</sup> SCAG 2012–2035 RTP/SCS.

### Related Planning Programs

#### *Los Angeles County Housing Element*

The Housing Element is one of seven mandatory elements of the County's General Plan. The Housing Element provides an overview of demographics, household, housing stock, economic, and regulatory factors affecting housing development and affordability within the Project Area. The Housing Element sets forth a series of goals and implementing policies to address a variety of housing issues, including identifying vacant and underutilized sites to accommodate the County's Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). The RHNA is a state-mandated number of units by income category for which a jurisdiction must identify adequate development potential. The Los Angeles County Housing Element, 2014–2021, identifies adequate sites. It was adopted by the County Board of Supervisors and certified by the California Department of Housing and Community Development on May 1, 2014. The Housing Element will guide housing development through 2021. This time frame applies to all housing elements in the SCAG region.

#### *Regional Growth Management Policies: SCAG*

SCAG is recognized by the state and federal governments as the regional planning agency for the six-county south coast region that includes Los Angeles County. In 2004, SCAG adopted a voluntary regional growth strategy known as the Compass Blueprint. SCAG's Compass Blueprint is an advisory or voluntary plan that promotes mixed-use development, better access to jobs, conservation of open space, public/private partnerships, and user-fee infrastructure financing, improving the capacity and efficiency of movement of goods, reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT), improving air quality, improving housing availability and affordability, renovating urban cores, and creating over 500,000 high-paying jobs (SCAG 2007).

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In 2012, the Regional Council of SCAG adopted the 2012–2035 RTP/SCS to increase mobility for the region’s residents and visitors (SCAG 2012). Furthermore, the 2012–2035 RTP/SCS commits to reducing emissions from transportation sources to comply with SB 375, improving public health, and meeting the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. The SCS envisions combining transportation and land use elements in order to achieve emissions reduction targets set by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) (SCAG 2014).

#### 5.13.2 Thresholds of Significance

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project would normally have a significant effect on the environment if the project would:

- P-1 Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure).
- P-2 Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere or displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

#### 5.13.3 Relevant Area Plan Goals and Policies

The following is a list of the goals and policies of the Proposed Project that would reduce potentially adverse effects concerning population and housing.

##### Land Use Element

**Goals LU 1:** A land use pattern that maintains and enhances the rural character of the unincorporated Antelope Valley.

- **Policy 1.1:** Direct the majority of the unincorporated Antelope Valley’s future growth to rural town center areas, rural town areas, and identified economic opportunity areas.
- **Policy 1.4:** Ensure that there are appropriate lands for commercial and industrial services throughout the unincorporated Antelope Valley sufficient to serve the daily needs of rural residents and to provide local employment opportunities.

**Goal LU 5:** A land use pattern that decreases greenhouse gas emissions.

- **Policy LU 5.1:** Reduce the total amount of potential development requiring vehicle trips in the unincorporated Antelope Valley.

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- **Policy LU 5.2:** Encourage the continued development of rural town centers that provide for the daily needs of surrounding residents, reducing the number of vehicle trips and providing local employment opportunities.
- **Policy LU 5.3:** Preserve open space areas to provide large contiguous carbon sequestering basins.
- **Policy LU 5.4:** Ensure that there is an appropriate balance of residential uses and employment opportunities within close proximity of each other.

### 5.13.4 Environmental Impacts

The following impact analysis addresses thresholds according to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines of significance. The applicable thresholds are identified in brackets after the impact statement.

Buildout projections for the Proposed Project are shown in previous Table 3-2, *Buildout Projections for the Proposed Project*. The Proposed Project buildout includes 106,180 residential dwelling units, 405,410 residents, and 134,351 jobs.

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**Impact 5.13-1: The Proposed Project would directly result in population growth in the Project Area. [Threshold P-1]**

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**Impact Analysis:** The estimated buildout population of the Proposed Project is 405,410 residents, which is expected to occur sometime after 2035. SCAG projects the population in the Project Area plus unincorporated parts of the Santa Clarita Valley to increase to 302,005 by 2035. The mixture of land uses and densities prescribed in the Proposed Project can accommodate the growth projected by SCAG by 2035; therefore, the project is consistent with SCAG's RTP/SCS.

The Proposed Project accommodates up to 106,180 housing units, and although buildout is not expected to occur by 2035, the opportunities for housing development provided in the Proposed Project are consistent with SCAG growth projections for 104,815 units in the Project Area and unincorporated portions of the Santa Clarita Valley by 2035. The housing and population growth allowed under the Proposed Project is consistent with SCAG projections and do not constitute a significant adverse environmental impact.

The Proposed Project buildout accommodates up to 134,351 jobs at full buildout. This growth is expected to occur over a long period of time, well beyond the 2035 timeframe that is used by SCAG for planning purposes. However, the amount of growth allowed is consistent with SCAG's projection of 97,763 jobs by 2035 for the Project Area and only the unincorporated areas within the Santa Clarita Valley.

### Proposed Area Plan Land Use Element

As described above in Section 5.13.3, the Proposed Area Plan includes land use policies to promote the development of housing appropriate for this rural area, provide adequate housing opportunities for all segments of the community, and maintain a balance of jobs and housing units. These policies are consistent

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with regional and statewide efforts to coordinate housing, land use, transit, and other types of infrastructure planning included in Assembly Bill 32 and State Bill 375.

#### Jobs-Housing Balance

Jobs-housing balance is achieved by increasing opportunities for people to work and live in close proximity. The ratio is expressed as the number of jobs divided by the number of housing units. SCAG uses the jobs-housing balance as a general tool for analyzing where people work, where they live, and how efficiently they can travel between the two. In the Project Area, the existing jobs-housing balance in 2013 is 1.3. The jobs-housing balance of the Proposed Project buildout is also 1.3. One of the most cited studies of jobs-housing balance recommends 1.3 to 1.7 as the range for an ideal jobs-housing balance (Ewing 1996). Table 5.13-5 compares the existing housing unit, population, employment, and jobs-housing balance data with the Proposed Project buildout. Since the Proposed Project maintains an appropriate balance between jobs and housing, no significant impacts are anticipated.

**Table 5.13-5 Existing Profile and Proposed Project Buildout Projections**

Existing (2013)				Proposed Project Buildout (Post 2035)			
Units	Population	Employment	Jobs/Housing Ratio	Units	Population	Employment	Jobs/Housing Ratio
24,739	93,490	31,838	1.3	106,180	405,410	134,351	1.3
Change from Existing				81,441	311,920	102,513	N/A

Source: County of Los Angeles Department of Regional Planning, 2014.

#### Impact 5.13-2: Project implementation would not result in the displacement of people and/or housing. [Threshold P-2]

**Impact Analysis:** The Project Area is developed with a variety of land uses including residential, commercial, industrial, and open space. The Proposed Project would allow existing uses to continue even where new zoning and land use designations are proposed under the Proposed Project. None of the existing uses would be forced to be removed or relocated as a result of the project implementation. Compliance with the Proposed Project will facilitate the development of a variety of housing types by providing a supply of land that is adequate to accommodate SCAG growth projections.

#### 5.13.5 Cumulative Impacts

The cumulative projects in the Antelope Valley would have the potential to result in a significant cumulative impact if they would, in combination, directly or indirectly induce substantial population growth. The planning documents, such as general plans prepared by cities, would be subject to regional plans such as SCAG's Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) and the RTP/SCS, similar to the Proposed Project. The general plans of adjacent jurisdictions have been prepared to be consistent with the population forecast of the regional planning documents. Thus, these projects would accommodate anticipated future growth, not induce new growth, similar to the Proposed Project.

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As discussed in Section 4.4, Assumptions Regarding Cumulative Impacts, the cumulative impact area for the Proposed Project is SCAG's North Los Angeles County Subregion, which includes the Project Area, the unincorporated Santa Clarita Valley, as well as the incorporated cities of Lancaster, Palmdale, and Santa Clarita. Cumulative growth projections for the North Los Angeles County Subregion are shown in Table 5.13-6.

As shown in Table 5.13-6, the Proposed Project would be adequate to accommodate SCAG's planned growth through 2035; therefore, it is unlikely that the Proposed Project would induce population growth in surrounding jurisdictions. In addition, the jobs/housing ratio for the Proposed Project is 1.3, which is better than the 0.94 jobs/housing ratio projected by SCAG for the region in 2035. This is a beneficial impact of the Proposed Project. Since cumulative projects would be required to comply with applicable land use plans governing regional growth, a significant cumulative impact would not occur. Therefore, the Proposed Project, in combination with other cumulative growth in SCAG's North Los Angeles County subregion, would not contribute to a significant cumulative population and housing impact.

**Table 5.13-6 Cumulative Growth Projections Existing, 2035, and Post-2035**

	Existing	2035 <sup>2</sup>	Post-2035 <sup>1</sup>	Projected Growth Rate
<b>Project Area</b>				
Housing Units	24,739 <sup>1</sup>	N/A	106,180	76.8%
Population	93,490 <sup>1</sup>	N/A	405,410	77.0%
Employment	31,838 <sup>1</sup>	N/A	134,351	76.4%
Jobs/Housing Ratio	1.3	—	1.3	—
<b>North Los Angeles County Subregion</b>				
Housing Units	200,636 <sup>2</sup>	304,241	N/A	34.1%
Population	651,929 <sup>2</sup>	946,557	N/A	31.1%
Employment	213,899 <sup>2</sup>	321,743	N/A	33.6%
Jobs/Housing Ratio	0.94	0.94	—	—
<b>Project Area as a Percent of Total</b>				
Housing Units	12.3%	—	34.9%	—
Population	14.3%	—	42.8%	—
Employment	14.9%	—	41.8%	—

Notes: The Proposed Project will not be built out within the SCAG RTP/SCS horizon of 2035. N/A = Data not available.

<sup>1</sup> County of Los Angeles 2014.

<sup>2</sup> SCAG 2012–2035 RTP/SCS.

### 5.13.6 Existing Regulations and Standard Conditions

Housing Elements are subject to the rules and regulations prescribed under the following California Government Code Sections:

- Housing Element Statutes §§ 65580–65589.9, 65751–65761 (including the Housing Accountability Act), and 65589.5–65589.6

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- Prohibition on discrimination against affordable housing: § 65008
- Statute of limitations: § 65009
- Regional transportation plans: §§ 65080–65086.5
- No net loss statute: § 65863
- Least cost zoning statute: §§ 65913–65913.2
- Density bonus law: §§ 65915–65918

#### 5.13.7 Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Without mitigation, the following impacts would be less than significant: 5.13-1 and 5.13-2.

#### 5.13.8 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

#### 5.13.9 Level of Significance After Mitigation

No significant impacts were identified with regard to population and housing.

#### 5.13.10 References

- California, State of. 2013. Employment Development Department. Historical Data for Cities and Census Designated Places Annual Average, 2013. Sacramento, California.
- Department of Finance. 2013. E-5 Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties, and the State—January 1, 2011–2013. State of California.
- Department of Regional Planning. 2013a. Los Angeles County Housing Element, 2014–2021. Los Angeles County, California.
- . 2013b. Antelope Valley Area Plan Update Background Report. Los Angeles County, California.
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- Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). 2012, April. 2012–2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). <http://rtpscscs.scag.ca.gov/Pages/default.aspx>.
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