5.6 LAND USE AND PLANNING

SUMMARY

The City of Santa Clarita’s General Plan land use designations on the project site include Private Education (PE), Residential Low (RL), Open Space (OS), and Specific Plan–Open Space (SP-OS). An amendment to the Land Use and Circulation Elements of the Santa Clarita General Plan is required for consistency with the proposed uses. The land use designation for that portion of The Master’s College north of Placeritos Boulevard is currently RL and would be changed to PE, which is consistent with the land use designation for the college south of Placeritos Boulevard. The 12.5-acre area south of the proposed Dockweiler Drive extension where 54 condominium units are proposed is currently designated as PE and would be amended to the RM (Residential Moderate) designation. The Circulation Element would be amended with this application because it currently designates Dockweiler Drive as a six-lane Major Highway. With this amendment, Dockweiler Drive would be designated as a four-lane Secondary Highway and the specific alignment defined. Traffic volumes expected on Dockweiler Drive are consistent with the Secondary Highway designation. This is also to limit grading on the ridgeline that traverses the project site. Additionally, the designation would assure that the roadway width is consistent with the current portion of the street to the east of the project area, and that the reduction in width would also allow for a feasible and safe installation due to the anticipated grade of the street.

A Zone Change is needed to ensure the general plan and zoning designations for the project site are consistent. Areas to be changed with this entitlement request include the area directly south of the proposed extension of Dockweiler Drive, which would be subdivided and developed with 54 condominium units in the future, and the northernmost portion of The Master’s College campus bordered by Placeritos Boulevard to the south and Quigley Canyon Road to the west. The area to be developed with 54 condominium units is currently zoned PE (Private Education) and with the zone change request would be designated Residential Moderate (RM) for consistency with the proposed residential use. The northernmost portion of The Master’s College campus is zoned RL and would change to PE because existing buildings on this portion of the project site are currently used by the college for instructional activities.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

City of Santa Clarita General Plan

The Land Use Element of the General Plan:

plays the central role in correlating all land use issues into a set of development policies. While all General Plan elements carry equal weight, the Land Use Element is often perceived as the single most representative element of the General Plan. The element serves as a guide for future
The Land Use policies set forth goals, policies, and objectives that cover a wide range of issues including, slopes, preservation of ridgelines (Ridgeline Preservation and Hillside Preservation Ordinance), infrastructure, water, seismic and flood hazards, the Oak Tree Ordinance, and other constraints. These goals and policies contained on pp. L-22 to L-34 of the General Plan are incorporated by reference. In accordance with Section 15125 (d) of the State CEQA Guidelines requires that only those inconsistencies between the proposed project and the General Plan be addressed.

The General Plan Land Use Map indicates that the project site is designated as Private Educational (PE), Residential Low (RL), Open Space (OS), and Specific Plan–Open Space (SP-OS). The land use designations for the project are depicted in Figure 5.6-1, Existing General Plan Land Use.

The Santa Clarita General Plan Land Use Element indicates that the designation Private Educational (PE) includes “privately held colleges with major land area. The purpose of this designation is to allow colleges to continue to expand their operations consistent with uses normally found on college campuses. All operations must meet requirements of the Unified Development Code and other applicable municipal ordinances and policies.”

The Santa Clarita General Plan Land Use Element indicates that the designation Residential Low (RL) “is the single-family home category with a mid-range density of 2.2 dwelling units per gross acre. The density range for this category may, on the larger lots, permit the keeping of horses and related animals. Development on smaller lots of 0.5 acre and less may not be allowed to keep horses and related animals, unless located within the Placerita Canyon Special Standards District, which permits up to two horses or other similar animals on a lot of land which has a minimum area of 5,000 square feet. Housing developed in this category is expected to be single-family detached homes in a tract setting and larger lot homes may be built to suit, or semi-custom tract homes.”

The Santa Clarita General Plan Land Use Element Specific Plan–Open Space designation is applied to land designated as open space, principally to William S. Hart Park, the Veteran’s Historic Memorial Plaza, and Creekview Park, and is subject to open space regulations of the Santa Clarita Unified Development Code (UDC).

The Santa Clarita General Plan Land Use Element indicates that the Open Space land use designation applies to mostly publicly owned land within the planning area. The designation applies to all publicly owned land such as City parks, County parks, forest lands, wilderness preserves, floodplains, Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs), publicly owned corporation yards, publicly owned fire stations, police stations, and other similarly owned facilities and lands.

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City of Santa Clarita Unified Development Code

The Unified Development Code (UDC) establishes standards for zoning, subdivisions, hillside development, ridgeline modification, grading and oak trees. The Code sets forth the details and standards for each of the zone designations.

Zoning

For the Residential Low (RL) designation, the Santa Clarita Unified Development Code states, “this zone is intended for single-family detached homes at a density of up to 2.2 dwelling units per gross acre. The keeping of horses and related animals as an accessory use is generally found in this zone.”

For the Private Education (PE) designation, the Santa Clarita Unified Development Code states that “the purpose of the Private Education (PE) zone is based upon the general plan objectives and the following general purposes: to encourage the existing private colleges to maintain and expand their facilities, to provide a specialized zone which promotes and encourages the continuation and development of private higher institutions of learning, and to permit the development of college related uses in conjunction with and necessary for the operation of private colleges, including but not limited to administrative offices, dormitories, conference facilities, libraries and research facilities.”

For the Open Space (OS) and Specific Plan–Open Space (SP-OS) designations, the Santa Clarita Unified Development Codes states that “the purpose of the Open Space (OS) zone is to implement the general plan objectives of providing protection in the areas of fire, geologic, seismic or flood hazards through restriction of intensive uses; promoting the retention of open space for recreational use and for the protection of natural resources; and promoting the preservation of open spaces, protection of natural features, offering view to residents and maintaining open areas where flood, fire, geologic and seismic conditions may endanger public health and safety.”

Subdivision

The State Subdivision Map Act, in concert with the City’s adopted Subdivision Ordinance, establishes the requirements for review and approval of the subdivision of land within the City of Santa Clarita. A tentative tract map is required for any subdivision of land consisting of more than four lots for residential purposes.

Hillside Development, Ridgeline Modification and Grading

Both the Unified Development Code (Chapter 17.29) and the Ridgeline Preservation and Hillside Development Ordinance (Chapter 17.80), establish grading procedures for development within the City
of Santa Clarita. The purpose of these regulations is to ensure that developments, grading and landscaping are sensitive to the natural topography and major landforms.

**Oak Trees**

Chapter 17.17, Section 17.17.090 of the UDC is intended to protect and preserve oak trees within the planning area because they are considered a valuable aesthetic and ecological resource. The UDC specifies that no person shall cut, prune, remove, relocate, endanger, damage, or encroach into the protected zone of any oak tree on any public or private property within the City except in accordance with the conditions of a valid oak tree permit issued by the City.

**Surrounding Land Uses**

The project site is predominantly surrounded by low-density single-family residential uses and open space. To the north of the project site are low-density single-family uses. To the west of the project site are open space, low-density single-family residential and some multi-family residential uses. To the south of the project site are low-density single-family residential uses. To the east of the project site is open space and low-density single-family residential uses further east. Figure 5.6-1 depicts the general plan and Zoning designations of surrounding land uses.

**PROJECT IMPACTS**

**Significance Threshold Criteria**

According to the City of Santa Clarita Environmental Guidelines, a project would have a significant effect on the environment if it would

- conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (Including but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect;

The project applicant is requesting the approval of the following discretionary applications or actions from the City of Santa Clarita:

- **The Master's College Master Plan 07-001.** The 10-year master plan would provide a conceptual land use plan, development regulations, design guidelines, and programs to ensure that the college campus is developed in a manner consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the City, The Master's College, and the community. Specific development proposals contained in the master plan are summarized in Table 2.0-1, Proposed Campus Development, of this EIR. The master plan has been prepared in accordance with the City of Santa Clarita General Plan and would serve as an implementing framework for the General Plan as it affects the project site. The City Council is the approval authority for master plans. Both the Planning Commission and City Council must hold
public hearings on the contents of a proposed master plan, as prescribed in Section 17.01.100 of the Santa Clarita Unified Development Code (UDC). Planning Commission review is advisory to the City Council and includes recommendations on required findings.

- **General Plan Amendment 04-009.** An amendment to the Land Use and Circulation Elements of the Santa Clarita General Plan is required for consistency with the existing and proposed uses. The land use designation for that portion of the college north of Placeritos Boulevard is currently RL (Residential Low) and would be changed to PE (Private Education), which is consistent with the land use designation for the College south of Placeritos Boulevard. The area between the proposed Dockweiler Drive extension and Metropolitan Water District property where 54 condominium units are proposed is currently designated as PE and would be amended to the RM (Residential Moderate) designation to allow for the attached residential units. The Circulation Element would be amended with this application because it currently designates Dockweiler Drive as a 6-lane Major Highway. With this amendment, Dockweiler Drive would be designated as a 4-lane Secondary Highway and the specific alignment would be defined. This is to limit grading on the ridge that the alignment of Dockweiler Drive traverses within the project area and accommodate the volume of traffic anticipated, which would not require a Major Highway designation. Additionally, the designation as a 4-lane Secondary Highway would assure that the roadway width is consistent with the current portion of the street to the east of the project area, and that the reduction in width will also allow for a feasible and safe installation due to the anticipated grade of the street.

- **Zone Change 04-006.** A Zone Change is required to ensure the general plan and zoning designations of the project area are consistent. This entitlement will change the area that will be subdivided and developed for multi-family attached residences, currently zoned PE (Private Education). This area is proposed to be designated RM (Residential Moderate) for consistency with the proposed residential use. The portion of the college north of Placeritos Boulevard is currently zoned RL (Residential Low). This property would be re-zoned to PE to ensure consistency with the existing buildings on the site used by the college for instructional uses. Existing and proposed uses within this portion of campus would remain consistent with the Placerita Special Standards District.

- **Tentative Tract Map 66503.** Tentative Tract Map (TTM) 66503 includes the subdivision of 81.55 acres to create 17 residential lots, two homeowner’s association (HOA) lots, five college lots, two public roadways, one water quality basin lot, and three open space lots. TTM 66503 would allow for the creation of 54 attached condominium residential units for future development, lots dedicated for open space purposes, and portions of the Dockweiler and Deputy Jake Drive extensions. A 12.6-acre swath of land owned by the MWD bisects the area included in TTM 66503. Under TTM 66503, dated May 21, 2008, Lots 1 through 5 would remain under the ownership of The Master’s College. Lots 6, 7, 11, 12, and both public roadways would be dedicated to the City of Santa Clarita. The residential lots (lots 8 through 10) will be prepared and graded as part of this application but the construction of the condominium units will occur in the future. The lots would be sold to a home development company and subsequent development plans will be reviewed by the Planning Division to ensure consistency with approvals and architectural compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood. The proposed condominium development would consist of 16 groups of three and four unit townhome clusters that would range between two and three stories, with a building height not to exceed 33 feet. The proposed condominium units would be required to adhere to the UDC multi-family standards related to setbacks, parking, open space, storage space, and landscaping. An HOA responsible for maintaining the property would be run by the residents of the new condominium community. The soil moved during site preparation would be used for the development of the proposed main campus.
5.6 Land Use and Planning

entrance on Dockweiler Drive, and installation of the portion of Dockweiler Drive for which the applicant is responsible.

- **Conditional Use Permit 04-031.** The proposed project requires approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow residential building heights up to three stories. Proposed residential buildings within the 54-unit residential condominium development would not exceed three stories or 35 feet in height.

- **Ridgeline Alteration Permit 07-001.** The project site is within the City’s Ridgeline Preservation (RP) Overlay Zone. The RP overlay zone applies to areas identified on the adopted ridgeline map on file in the City’s Planning Division. Any development, including but not limited to, grading permits, building permits and land use entitlements, indicated on the ridgeline map and located within the upper two-thirds of the overall height of the ridgeline from its base is subject to a ridgeline alteration permit. A Ridgeline Alteration Permit is required because the extension of Dockweiler Drive, new main campus entrance, and several proposed buildings would require the modification of the upper two-thirds of the non-linear but roughly east/west trending ridgeline located between Placerita Canyon Road and Newhall Creek. **Figure 2.0-5, Existing Ridgeline,** shows the location of the ridgeline within the project site.

- **Hillside Review Permit 04-010.** A Hillside Development Review Permit is required for development on any site where the average cross slope of the property exceeds 10 percent. The average cross slope for the project site is 23.2 percent. Chapter 17.80, Hillside Development Ordinance, of the Santa Clarita Unified Development Code (UDC) contains development regulations applicable to all projects relating to grading permits, building permits, parcel maps, tentative tract maps, conditional use permits, plans for development review, zone changes and general plan amendments for sites with an average cross slope of 10 percent or greater.

- **Oak Tree Permit 04-050.** An oak tree permit is required because oak trees on or around the project site would be impacted with the development proposed in the master plan and tentative tract map. In total, there are 388 oak trees located on site, including 35 heritage oak trees (any oak tree measuring 108 inches or more in circumference or, in the case of a multiple trunk tree, two or more trunks measuring 72 inches each or greater in circumference, measured at 4.5 feet above the natural grade). The project proposes to remove 79 healthy oak trees (none of which are heritage oaks), encroach into the dripline of 75 healthy oak trees, and encroach into the 5-foot protected zone of 22 healthy oaks. Six of the oak trees surveyed on site have died due to tree failures following the 2005 rainstorms and natural causes.

The discretionary permits described above generally discuss all major aspects of the proposed project, with the exception of the dedication of the southernmost 20.5 acres of The Master’s College property, including the 5-acre improved Creekview Park, to the City of Santa Clarita for future parkland/open space purposes. Creekview Park is currently developed and used as a public facility. Only the transfer of ownership would occur as part of this proposal. However, approval of the TTM 66503 includes the creation of the 20.5-acre parcel that includes Creekview Park, which would be dedicated to the City. Additionally, the removal of the 0.75-million-gallon water tank and replacement with a 5.0-million-gallon water tank would not require a discretionary approval from the City. Approvals related to grading
discussed above would apply to the water tank replacement, as associated grading would occur at the same time as the other proposed actions.

Analysis of these applications is discussed below with respect to land use. However, their more specific impacts with regard to circulation, aesthetics, noise, and air quality are discussed in detail within their respective sections of the EIR.

**Consistency with the City of Santa Clarita General Plan**

The City of Santa Clarita General Plan is the primary policy-planning document, which guides land use in the City. The City General Plan land use designations for the project site include Private Education (PE), Residential Low (RL), Open Space (OS), and Specific Plan–Open Space (SP-OS). The project applicant is requesting a General Plan Amendment to the Land Use and Circulation Elements for consistency with the proposed uses. The land use designation for that portion of the college north of Placeritos Boulevard is currently RL and would be changed to PE, which is consistent with the land use designation for the College south of Placeritos Boulevard. The 4.7-acre area south of the proposed Dockweiler Drive extension where 54 condominium units are proposed for future construction is currently designated as PE and would be amended to the RM (Residential Moderate) designation. The Circulation Element would be amended with this application because it is currently designates Dockweiler Drive as a Major Highway. With this amendment, Dockweiler Drive would be designated as a Secondary Highway. Traffic volumes expected on Dockweiler Drive are consistent with the Secondary Highway designation. This is also to limit grading on the ridgeline that traverses the project site. Additionally, the designation would ensure that the roadway width is consistent with the current portion of the street to the east of the project area, and that the reduction in width will also allow for a feasible and safe installation due to the anticipated grade of the street.

In accordance with Section 17.03.020 of the City of Santa Clarita Unified Development Code, amendments to the general plan require the following:

The City Council shall make one of the following findings:

1. That the proposed changes are consistent with the objectives of this Development Code, the general plan and development policies of the City, in which case the Council shall introduce an ordinance amending the Zoning Map and/or Development Code, whichever is appropriate; or

2. That the proposed changes are not consistent with the objectives of this Development Code, the general plan and development policies of the City, it in which case the Council may deny the application, continue it, and request changes be made to make the proposal consistent, or reject the proposal. If the changes are of a substantial nature, the City Council shall forward the application
back to the Planning Commission for their recommendation on the amended proposal, unless such an amendment had already been considered by the Planning Commission at their hearing.

Project Consistency with City of Santa Clarita General Plan Element Goals and Policies

The general plan contains numerous goals to guide development and uses planned within the City. Table 5.6-1, Consistency with City of Santa Clarita General Plan Elements, provides a detailed analysis of the proposed project’s consistency with applicable goals of the general plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City of Santa Clarita General Plan Implementing Goals and Policies</th>
<th>Consistency of Proposed Project</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 1:</strong> To preserve the character of the communities and the integrity of the Santa Clarita Valley by permitting orderly growth through the synchronization of development with the availability of public facilities needed to support it.</td>
<td><strong>Consistent.</strong> The proposed project would help meet increased demand for educational services, housing and open space as the community grows and provides adequate public facilities, either through development of infrastructure or payment of fees for facilities and services, to the satisfaction of affected public agencies.</td>
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**Goal 2:** To achieve the development of a well balanced, financially sound, and functional mix of residential, commercial, industrial, open space, recreational, institutional and educational land uses.

**Consistent.** The proposed project includes the expansion of the existing college, extension of significant roadway infrastructure, dedication of open space, and an improved 5-acre public park and the development of housing which all helps balance the needs of a growing population related to open space, housing and institutional services.

**Goal 3:** To achieve a balanced physical environment through sensible land use planning and urban design, while establishing the City’s role as a regional center.

**Consistent.** The proposed project has been designed in a sustainable manner that is sensitive to the environment, maximizes use of existing infrastructure, and meets City standards for site planning, architectural design, parking, and pedestrian access. Expanding educational services at this location increases the significance of this site to the region.

**Goal 4:** To ensure that development in the City is consistent with the overall community character and that it contributes in a positive way toward the City’s image.

**Consistent.** The proposed project has been designed with pedestrian pathways/trails, bicycle trails, and incorporates existing equestrian trails. The master plan is consistent with the City’s standards for site planning and architectural design which includes design guidelines that incorporates a craftsman style design to compliment the local setting. In addition, the architecture of the residential housing will be compatible with the surrounding residential neighborhood.
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>City of Santa Clarita General Plan Implementing Goals and Policies</th>
<th>Consistency of Proposed Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 5:</strong> To provide protection of the environmental setting and habitat through the location of land uses and the use of sensitive design.</td>
<td><strong>Consistent.</strong> The proposed project preserves and dedicates Newhall Creek, the surrounding open space and the existing City park to the City of Santa Clarita in perpetuity resulting in a project that is sensitive in design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 6:</strong> To protect and enhance the integrity of existing residential neighborhoods and to provide for affordable housing.</td>
<td><strong>Consistent.</strong> The proposed project will provide for student housing for the college and new residential housing that will maintain the integrity of the existing residential neighborhood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 7:</strong> To preserve the character of the communities and the integrity of the Santa Clarita Valley through orderly development practices and the provision of private and public capital improvements, facilities, and services to support existing and future development.</td>
<td><strong>Consistent.</strong> All public services can serve the proposed project and all improvements shall be built concurrently with development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Community Design Element**

| **Goal 1:** To protect and preserve the scale and character of existing neighborhoods while providing for new development which is consistent with the goals and policies of the general plan. | **Consistent.** The proposed project proposes a mix of low intensity student housing and college uses, roadway extensions, a TTM for the future development of 54 condominium units and open space parcels and parkland/open space dedication to the City which are consistent with the scale and character of the existing uses on the project site and adjacent residential uses in the vicinity of the site. |
| **Goal 2:** To encourage design excellence in the development of all public and private projects in the City. | **Consistent.** The proposed project has been designed to meet the City’s architectural design guidelines with a craftsman style design that compliments the local setting. In addition, the proposed project will be consistent with the Placerita Special Standards District and all development standards of the zone. |
| **Goal 6:** To protect and enhance open space areas that provide visual and aesthetic character and identity to the community. | **Consistent.** As part of the proposed project there will be 20.5 acres of open space dedicated to the City of Santa Clarita which includes an existing 5-acre City-improved park that is currently being leased from the applicant. |
| **Goal 7:** To develop a safe and efficient circulation system that protects and enhances the overall community character. | **Consistent.** The circulation system proposed is consistent with the general plan and will improve circulation and access in the project area and the surrounding community by providing improvements to Dockweiler Drive and Deputy Jake Drive. |
| **Goal 9:** To promote superior landscape design that emphasizes aesthetics, function, and water conservation. | **Consistent.** Project landscaping will be required to be consistent with the City’s adopted standards. |
| **Goal 10:** To achieve architectural themes and forms that promote human scale and provide a comfortable human interaction with buildings. | **Consistent.** Conceptual architectural designs has been proposed for the project site, is consistent with the surrounding developments, and are to scale with nearby neighborhoods. |
The proposed project has been designed with pathways, bicycle, and pedestrian trails. Recreational facilities for students, faculty, and staff are provided on the College’s campus. In addition, the project proposes to dedicate 20.5 acres of open space, including a 5-acre public park to the City of Santa Clarita as part of the approval.

As indicated in Table 5.6-1, the proposed project would not conflict with any applicable goals of the City of Santa Clarita General Plan. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with the applicable goals of the general plan.
Consistency with the Unified Development Code

As discussed above the proposed project includes the following four distinct components:

- The Master’s College Master Plan;
- Extension of Dockweiler Drive from its current terminus near Valle Del Oro, through The Master’s College property south of the main campus, to the western boundary of The Master’s College property. The western terminus of Deputy Jake Drive would then be extended and connected to the Dockweiler extension;
- A Tentative Tract Map (TTM) to allow for the future development of 54 condominium units north of the proposed Deputy Jake Drive extension on 12.53 acres, open space parcels, and portions of the Dockweiler and Deputy Jake Drive extensions; In addition, this component includes a 2.5-acre area that is proposed to be graded for future replacement of the existing 0.75-million-gallon water tank with a 5.0-million-gallon, 32-foot-tall, 132-foot-diameter water tank; and
- The dedication of 20.5 acres of open space within The Master’s College property south of the proposed Deputy Jake extension, including the 5-acre improved Creekview Park, to the City of Santa Clarita for future parkland/open space purposes.

The uses and standards identified in the City’s Private Education (PE) Zone in place at the time of adoption shall apply to the proposed master plan area. All proposed development within the proposed master plan area is subject to the standards and guidelines in the proposed master plan. As part of the application review process, the City of Santa Clarita shall review project submittals for consistency with these standards and guidelines. All permit requests shall be processed in accordance with the procedures established by the City of Santa Clarita Municipal Code and the proposed master plan.

The proposed master plan and Tentative Tract Map 66503 are sufficiently detailed to provide guidance to the Community Development Department of the City of Santa Clarita to review any of the proposed development projects within the boundaries of the site. The extension of Dockweiler Drive from its current terminus near Valle Del Oro, to the western boundary of The Master’s College property south of the main campus would be consistent with the provisions of the Subdivision Map Act as provided for in the UDC. The western terminus of Deputy Jake Drive would then be extended and connected to the Dockweiler Drive extension would also be consistent with the provisions of the Subdivision Map Act as provided for in the UDC. The provision of water tanks would serve not only aspects of the proposed project but also the water needs of the Placerita Canyon community as well, which is consistent with the health and safety provisions contained within the UDC.

Consequently, all elements of the proposed project are consistent with the provisions and intent of the UDC.
MITIGATION MEASURES ALREADY INCORPORATED INTO THE PROJECT

No mitigation measures pertaining to land use have been incorporated into the project.

MITIGATION MEASURES PROPOSED BY THIS EIR

Consistency with the General Plan

As discussed above, the proposed project is consistent with the applicable goals and policies of the general plan, consequently there would be no impacts, and no mitigation is recommended.

Consistency with the Unified Development Code

The Planning Commission/City Council is responsible for the findings made to approve the series of discretionary actions associated with the proposed project, which are supported by documentation provided by the project applicant and this EIR.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

As land use is a site-specific issue in this case, no impacts would occur related to cumulative development.