

5.11 MINERAL RESOURCES

This section of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) evaluated potential impacts to mineral resources from implementation of the General Plan.

5.11.1 Environmental Setting

Minerals are defined as any naturally occurring chemical elements or compounds, formed from inorganic processes and organic substances. Movable minerals or an “ore deposit” is defined as a deposit of ore or mineral having a value materially in excess of the cost of developing, mining, and processing the mineral and reclaiming the project area. The conservation, extraction, and processing of mineral resources are an integral part of development and economy of the City.

Mineral Resource Classification

The California Geological Survey Mineral Resources Project provides information about California’s non-fuel mineral resources. The Mineral Resources Project classifies lands throughout the state that contain regionally significant mineral resources, as mandated by the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) of 1975. Non fuel mineral resources include metals such as gold, silver, iron, and copper; industrial metals such as boron compounds, rare-earth elements, clays, limestone, gypsum, salt and dimension stone; and construction aggregate, including sand, gravel, and crushed stone. Development generally results in a demand for minerals, especially construction aggregate. Urban preemption of prime deposits and conflicts between mining and other uses throughout California led to passage of the SMARA, which requires all cities and counties to incorporate in their general plans the mapped designations approved by the State Mining and Geology Board.

The classification process involves the determination of Production-Consumption (P-C) Region boundaries, based on identification of active aggregate operations (production) and the market area served (Consumption). The P-C regional boundaries are modified to include only those portions of the region that are urbanized or urbanizing and are classified for their aggregate content. An aggregate appraisal further evaluates the presence or absence of significant sand, gravel, or stone deposits that are suitable sources of aggregate. The classification of these mineral resources is a joint effort of the state and the local governments. It is based on geologic factors and requires that the State Geologist classify the mineral resources area as one of the four Mineral Resource Zones (MRZs), Scientific Resource Zones (SZ), or Identified Resource Areas (IRAs), described below.

- **MRZ-1:** A Mineral Resource Zone where adequate information indicates that no significant mineral deposits are present or likely to be present.
- **MRZ-2:** A Mineral Resource Zone where adequate information indicates that significant mineral deposits are present, or a likelihood of their presence and development should be controlled.
- **MRZ-3:** A Mineral Resource Zone where the significance of mineral deposits cannot be determined from the available data.
- **MRZ-4:** A Mineral Resource Zone where there is insufficient data to assign any other MRZ designation.
- **SZ Areas:** Containing unique or rare occurrences of rocks, minerals, or fossils that are of outstanding scientific significance shall be classified in this zone.



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- **IRA Areas:** County or State Division of Mines and Geology Identified Areas where adequate production and information indicates that significant minerals are present.

As part of the classification process, an analysis of site specific conditions is utilized to calculate the total volume of aggregates within individually identified Resource Sectors. Resource Sectors are those MRZ-2 areas identified as having regional or statewide significance. Anticipated aggregate demand in the P-C Regions for the next 50 years is then estimated and compared to the total volume of aggregate reserves identified within the P-C Region.

Existing Conditions

Mineral Resource Zones

The City of Menifee is in the San Bernardino P-C Region, in which aggregate mineral resource zones were last mapped by the California Geological Survey in 2008. The following MRZs are mapped in the City of Menifee and are shown on Figure 5.11-1, *Mineral Resource Zones*.

- **MRZ-1:** 308 acres in northwest part of City near the northwest corner of Sun City.
- **MRZ-3:** 22,017 acres, almost three-quarters of the City. Most of the eastern, southern, and northwestern parts of the City are designated MRZ-3.
- **Urban Area:** 7,488 acres consisting of most of the central and north-central and parts of the western portion of the City. Urban areas are not defined as mineral resource zones because mining in these areas is already precluded by urban development.

Mines

No active mines are mapped within the City of Menifee on the Mines Online map maintained by the California Office of Mine Reclamation. One inactive sand and gravel mine, Mine ID No. 91-33-0087, is near the southwest corner of SR-74 and Sherman Road in the community of Romoland (OMR 2012).

Regulatory Setting

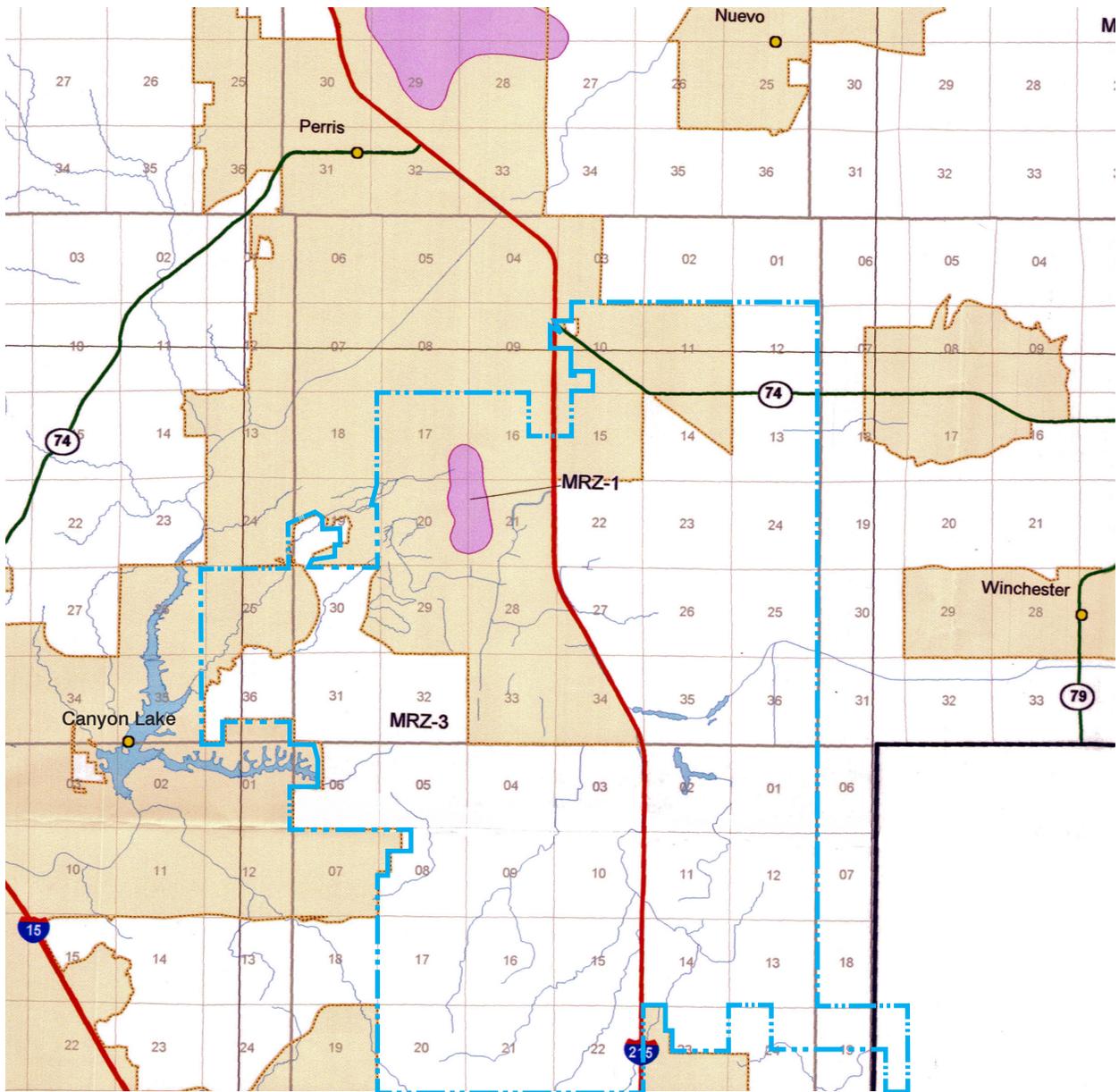
State laws, regulations, plans, or guidelines that are potentially applicable to the Menifee General Plan are summarized below.

State

The Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975, California Public Resources Code Sections 2710 et seq., requires the State Mining and Geology Board to designate areas of known or likely presence of significant mineral resources; all cities and counties in California must incorporate such designated mineral resource zones into their general plans.

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Mineral Resource Zones



--- City Boundary

MRZ-1 - Area where available geologic information indicates that little likelihood exists for the presence of significant mineral resources.

MRZ-3 - Areas containing known or inferred mineral occurrences of undetermined mineral resource significance.

Urban Area



Source: CGS 2008

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5.11.2 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:

- M-1 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.
- M-2 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.

5.11.3 Environmental Impacts

The following impact analysis addresses thresholds of significance for which the Initial Study disclosed potentially significant impacts. The applicable thresholds are identified in brackets after the impact statement.

IMPACT 5.11-1: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MENIFEE GENERAL PLAN WOULD NOT RESULT IN THE LOSS OF AVAILABILITY OF A KNOWN MINERAL RESOURCE. [THRESHOLDS M-1 AND M-2]

Impact Analysis:

Mineral Resource Zones

No known significant mineral resources have been designated in the City of Menifee. As shown in Figure 5.11-1, *Mineral Resources Zones*, the MRZs mapped in the City include MRZ-1, MRZ-3, and Urban Area. The only areas in the San Jacinto Basin¹ that have been designated MRZ-2—that is, where significant mineral resources are known to exist or are considered very likely to exist—are two areas northwest of Lake Elsinore totaling approximately 465 acres, approximately six miles west of the City’s western boundary. MRZ-2-designated areas in the San Bernardino P-C Region are in the Upper Santa Ana River Valley near the Santa Ana River and tributaries of the river flowing southward from the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mountains, and in the San Gorgonio Pass area east of the City of Banning in the Whitewater River watershed (CGS 2008). Therefore, based on current MRZ designations in the San Jacinto Basin, including the City of Menifee, it is unlikely that significant mineral resources would be designated in Menifee in the foreseeable future. General Plan buildout would not cause a loss of availability of known significant mineral resources.



General Plan–Designated Mineral Resource Sites

Neither the Riverside County General Plan nor the proposed Menifee General Plan designate mining sites in the City of Menifee. General Plan buildout would not cause a loss of availability of mining sites designated in the City or county general plans. No active mines are mapped in the City on the Mines Online map maintained by the Office of Mine Reclamation (OMR 2012). Mining would also be incompatible with the existing and future land uses of the City.

Impacts would be similar under the Expanded EDC Scenario.

¹ The San Jacinto Basin is the lowland portion of the San Jacinto River Watershed west of the San Jacinto Mountains.

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5.11.4 Existing Regulations and Standard Conditions

- Surface Mining and Reclamation Act: California Public Resources Code Sections 2710 et seq.

Relevant General Plan Policies

Relevant Menifee General Plan policies are in the Open Space and Conservation Element and are listed in Appendix C of this EIR.

5.11.5 Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Upon implementation of regulatory requirements Impact 5.11-1 would be less than significant under the proposed General Plan and the Expanded EDC Scenario.

5.11.6 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

5.11.7 Level of Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be less than significant.