

5.11 Mineral Resources

Based on Appendix G of the State *CEQA Guidelines* and comments received during the Notice of Preparation (NOP) public comment period, this section evaluates the Project's potential impacts to the loss of availability of mineral resources of value to the state, region, or City. No written comments regarding mineral resources were received in response to the NOP. No oral comments regarding mineral resources were made at the August 26, 2015 scoping meeting.

5.11.1 Setting

For decades, mining operations have not been active within the City. There are scattered areas within the City and its Sphere of Influence that have deposits of feldspar, silica, limestone and other rock products. All of the known areas with potential for economically feasible mining have been excavated and all that is left are the past remnants of mining activities, including some located on the Project site. (GP 2025 FPEIR, p. 5.10-2)

E. L. Yeager Construction Company filed a conditional use permit (CUP) for a surface mining operation to excavate primarily decomposed granite for exporting and using the overburden soils for on-site fill. The CUP was amended a number of times between 1982 and 1987. The operation was broken into phases: Phase 1A (30 acres), Phase 1B (14 acres), Phase 2 (15 acres), and Phase 3 (25 acres). These phases encompassed portions of the proposed Project site, portion of the adjacent property now located within the Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park and a portion of what is now the Ralph's Distribution Facility, which is located south of the Project site.

The areas of mining were to be leveled to a uniform slope of 1.7% downward to the south. In 1985 it was estimated that the surface mining project would last approximately three years. However, in 1987 the City Council approved another review of the conditions of approval of the surface mining operation permitting this use to continue. A condition of the 1987 review noted that the grading plan for the operation was to indicate that no excavation was to occur on the Phase 3 site, which was to be preserved. It is not known when the mining operation was completed.

As a result of the California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975, the City has designated the area located between Market Street and Mission Boulevard between the Santa Ana River and Lake Evans as a state-classified mineral resource zone (MRZ-2). While this area was once suitable for mining operations, the surrounding urban environment establishes inappropriate conditions for extraction and transport of mineral resources. This zone now includes open space, the Camp Evans Boy Scout Camp and a portion of Fairmount Park. (GP 2025 FPEIR, p. 5.10-2) As shown on Figure OS-1 of the GP 2025, the eastern half of the City is within an area designated MRZ-3. These mitigation resource zone designations are defined under State Regulations, below.

5.11.2 Related Regulations

Federal Regulations

There are no federal regulations regarding mineral resources applicable to the proposed Project.

State Regulations

Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975

The California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA) requires that all cities incorporate into their general plans mapped mineral resources designations approved by the State Mining and Geology Board. SMARA was enacted to limit new development in areas with significant mineral deposits. The State Geologist classifies land in California based on availability of mineral resources. Because available aggregate construction material is limited, five designations have been established for the classification of sand, gravel, and crushed rock resources:

- **SZ:** Scientific Resource area containing unique or rare occurrences of rocks, minerals, or fossils that are of outstanding scientific significance.
- **MRZ-1:** Mineral Resource Zone 1 – adequate information indicates that no significant mineral deposits are present or likely to be present.
- **MRZ-2:** Mineral Resource Zone 2 – adequate information indicates that significant mineral deposits are present or there is a high likelihood for their presence and development should be controlled.
- **MRZ-3:** Mineral Resource Zone 3 – the significance of mineral deposits cannot be determined from the available data.
- **MRZ-4:** Mineral Resource Zone 4 – there is insufficient data to assign any other MRZ designation.

The classification system is intended to ensure consideration of statewide or regionally significant mineral deposits by the City in planning and development administration. These mineral designations are intended to prevent incompatible land use development on areas determined to have significant mineral resource deposits. Permitted uses within a mineral resource zone include mining, uses that support mining such as smelting and storage of materials, or uses that will not hinder future mining such as grazing, agriculture, large lot rural development, recreation, silviculture¹ and open space.

Mineral Resources and Mineral Hazards Mapping Program

California's Mineral Resources and Mineral Hazards Mapping Program (MRMHMP) provides data about nonfuel mineral resources, naturally occurring mineral hazards (such as asbestos,

¹ Silviculture is the practice of controlling the establishment, growth, composition, health, and quality of forests and woodlands to meet diverse needs and values on a sustainable basis.

radon, and mercury), and historic mining activities throughout the state. The MRMHMP is divided into two projects; the Mineral Resources Project, which provides information about California's nonfuel mineral resources, and the Mineral Hazards Project, which maps and monitors minerals related to public health and safety concerns.

Local Regulations

Riverside General Plan 2025

The GP 2025 does not contain any objectives and policies regarding mineral resources.

5.11.3 Thresholds of Significance

The City has not established local CEQA significance thresholds as described in Section 15064.7 of the State *CEQA Guidelines*. Therefore, significance determinations utilized in this section are from Appendix G of the State *CEQA Guidelines*. A significant impact will occur if implementation of the proposed Project will:

- (Threshold A) 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; and/or
- (Threshold B) 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.

5.11.4 Project Design Features

Project design features refer to ways in which a project will reduce or avoid potential impacts through the design. The proposed Project does not include any design features with regard to mineral resources.

5.11.5 Environmental Impacts before Mitigation

Threshold A: *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 site, along with the eastern half of the City, is within MRZ-3, which indicates the significance of mineral deposits cannot be determined from the available data. The Project does not propose the extraction of mineral resources. There are no known mineral resources on the Project site. It is known that during the 1980's the site was used for granite mining and noted above. The surrounding land uses, which are residential, industrial, and the Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park, are incompatible with mining operations (SMGB, p. 7). For these reasons Project impacts with regard to the loss of a known mineral resource with region- or state-wide value will be **less than significant**.

Threshold B: *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?*

Because there are no specific areas within the City or its Sphere of Influence which have locally-important mineral resource recovery sites (GP 2025 FPEIR, p. 5.10-6), there will be **no impacts** with regard to the loss any locally-important mineral resources.

5.11.6 Proposed Mitigation Measures

An EIR is required to describe feasible mitigation measures which could minimize significant adverse impacts (State *CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15126.4). Implementation of the proposed Project will not result in any potentially significant impacts to mineral resources; therefore, mitigation measures are not necessary.

5.11.7 Environmental Impacts after Mitigation Measures are Implemented

No mitigation measures are necessary regarding the Project's impacts to mineral resources. Impacts were found to be **less than significant**.

5.11.8 References

In addition to other documents, the following references were used in the preparation of this section of the DEIR:

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| GP 2025 | City of Riverside, <i>General Plan 2025</i> , certified November 2007 with subsequent amendments to various elements. (Available at http://www.riversideca.gov/planning/gp2025program/general-plan.asp , accessed June 17, 2015.) |
| GP 2025
FPEIR | City of Riverside, <i>General Plan 2025 Program Environmental Impact Report</i> (SCH# 2004021108), certified November 2007. (Available at http://www.riversideca.gov/planning/gp2025program/ , accessed June 17, 2015.) |
| SMGB | California Department of Conservation, State Mining and Geology Board, <i>Guidelines for Classification and Designation of Mineral Lands</i> , January 2000. (Available at http://www.conservation.ca.gov/smgb/guidelines/documents/classdesig.pdf , accessed June 17, 2015.) |