



## CHAPTER 9

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### LAND USE

Introduction

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### INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes existing and planned land uses in the Santa Clarita Valley and identifies impacts of the recommended project. Due to the minor nature of the proposed upgrades at the SWRP and VWRP, the setting discussion that follows focuses mainly on the VWRP site and vicinity, as well as the Santa Clarita Valley as a whole. Only the potential land use impacts associated with these upgrades are addressed in this chapter.

Existing and planned land uses and relevant general plan policies for the VWRP and vicinity were compiled using information obtained during a site visit, information prepared by the Districts, general plans, relevant general plan and zoning maps, tax assessor data, and zoning ordinances.

Plans relevant to the VWRP site and the Santa Clarita Valley region include the County General Plan (including the *Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan*), City General Plan, *Forest Plan for the Angeles National Forest*, and *Forest Plan for the Los Padres National Forest*.

### SETTING

#### Santa Clarita Valley Existing Land Uses

As of January 1990, the corporate boundaries of the City of Santa Clarita encompassed approximately 25,619 acres. Approximately 46 percent (12,303 acres) of the city's total land area was undeveloped. Single-family residential development accounted for 38 percent of the total city land area. Industrial and commercial development accounted for five percent (1,236 acres) and three percent (806 acres) of the city's total land area, respectively. Other uses, such as public and institutional, college, open space, and mining, comprised the remaining eight percent. Communities within the city include Newhall, Valencia, Saugus, and Canyon Country,

with the subcommunities of Sand Canyon and Placerita Canyon.

The unincorporated area of the Santa Clarita Valley encompasses approximately 80,291 acres, with 76 percent (60,889 acres) of that area undeveloped. Single-family residential land use accounts for five percent (4,038 acres) of the total unincorporated land, with all residential development accounting for 12 percent of the land uses. Oil fields account for another five percent (4,058 acres), while industrial activities account for one percent (798 acres), and commercial land use accounts for one percent (1,075 acres). The communities of Pico Canyon, Castaic, Val Verde, and Hasley Canyon are located within the unincorporated portion of the valley.

#### Land Use Designations

The basic land use designations, according to Los Angeles County and the City of Santa Clarita, are described below.

- *Industrial:* The industrial category includes both heavy manufacturing and light industrial located in industrial, research, and development parks. Light industrial activities include warehousing and some types of assembly work.
- *Commercial:* The commercial category includes both general commercial and commercial recreation businesses that offer goods for sale to the public (retail) and service and professional businesses housed in offices (accountants, architects, etc.). Retail and commercial businesses include those that serve local needs, such as neighborhood markets and dry cleaners and those that serve city or regional needs such as Six Flags Magic Mountain Amusement Park, auto dealers, and furniture stores.
- *Residential:* Residential areas are those areas primarily composed of housing. This category is

further divided to describe the type of housing units, including: single-family, multiple-family, mixed single and multiple-family, mobile homes, and senior housing.

- *Government:* This category includes government buildings (federal, state, county, and city), libraries, schools, and other public institutions.

## **Valencia Water Reclamation Plant**

### ***Existing Land Uses***

The VWRP is located on a 19-acre site in unincorporated Los Angeles County. The site is composed of four parcels and is bisected by an abandoned railroad right-of-way. Existing land uses in the vicinity of the VWRP site are depicted in Figure 9-1. Based on Los Angeles County Tax Assessor data, the following land uses surround the plant site:

- *North of the Site:* Adjacent to the VWRP site to the north is a large, partially vacant parcel. Immediately adjacent to the VWRP the parcel is vacant, but farther to the north, a portion of the parcel is in use for agricultural production.
- *East of the Site:* The eastern boundary of VWRP site is The Old Road. A service station and vacant commercial land is between The Old Road and the Golden State Freeway. East of the Golden State Freeway are commercial warehouses and office buildings.
- *South of the Site:* The southern boundary of the VWRP site is also The Old Road. In between The Old Road and the Golden State Freeway is a hotel and vacant commercial land.
- *West of the Site:* A portion of the western boundary of the VWRP site is formed by the same vacant parcel that borders the plant on the north. To the west of the residential parcel is the Santa

Clara River. West of the Santa Clara River is the parking area for the Six Flags Magic Mountain Amusement Park. To the southwest, the land use adjacent to the VWRP is designated miscellaneous utility, pumping plant, or state property and no structures are visible.

### ***Existing Zoning***

The VWRP site is zoned for heavy agriculture (A25). Zoning designations for the surrounding area are shown in Figure 9-2 and are described below.

- *North of the Site:* The parcel to the north of the VWRP site has dual zoning of heavy agriculture and restricted heavy manufacturing.
- *East of the Site:* Zoning designations east of the VWRP site include commercial manufacturing east of The Old Road and restricted heavy manufacturing east of Golden State Freeway.
- *South of the Site:* Zoning designations south of the VWRP site between The Old Road and the Golden State Freeway include heavy agriculture and unlimited commercial.
- *West of the Site:* Zoning designations west of the VWRP site include heavy agriculture and commercial recreation.

## **IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES OF THE 2015 PLAN ALTERNATIVES**

### **Criteria for Determining Significance**

Based on Appendices G and I of the State CEQA Guidelines, the land use impacts are considered significant if the project would result in any of the following:

- A conflict with existing land uses on or adjacent to the project site.

- A conflict with zoning or general plan land use designations.
- A conflict with applicable policies from relevant planning documents.
- A conflict with established recreation uses or convert open space to developed uses.
- A conflict with existing access to properties.

Impacts that do not meet one or more of the above criteria are considered less than significant. The following is a discussion of the potential land use related impacts of the recommended project based on State CEQA guidelines and professional practice.

## The Recommended Project

### *VWRP Expansion Construction Impacts*

**Impact:** *Construction Adjacent to a Conservation Easement.* A conservation easement was granted to the State of California, Department of Fish and Game as a provision of an August 6, 1992, streambed alteration agreement for the VWRP Stage IV expansion retaining wall project. The easement consists of approximately three acres of land located along the western boundary of the VWRP site. See Figure 9-3 for a diagram of the conservation easement.

The conservation easement requires that the property will be retained forever in a natural state, and that the use of the property will be confined to such activities, including without limitation, those involving the conservation, protection, restoration, and enhancement of native species. Therefore, if construction activities resulting from the expansion of the VWRP impact the conservation easement, this would be considered a significant impact.

However, the design of the expansion specifies that no associated structures will be any closer than ten feet to the conservation easement. The ten foot buffer allows space for construction activities without disruption of the conservation easement. Furthermore, the design drawings and specifications will clearly delineate the easement and will instruct all contractors hired to construct the expansion to refrain from entering the easement for construction activities or staging. Therefore, this impact is considered less than significant.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation is required.

### *VWRP Expansion Operations Impacts*

**Impact:** *Conflict with Existing Land Uses on or Adjacent to the Project Site.* As noted, the expansion will take place in two phases and in two locations on the VWRP site. The first phase, Stage V, will be built alongside already existing facilities on the southern portion of the site. The Stage VI expansion is planned to be located on land directly adjacent to the existing VWRP facilities. This land currently houses no permanent structures and is occasionally used for materials storage or for construction staging activities. As shown on the land use map, Figure 9-1, the area north of the site is currently vacant. To the west, the expansion will be buffered from adjacent land uses by the conservation easement. The eastern and southern portions of the site are bounded by roads and highways. Therefore, this impact is considered less than significant since the expansion is to either occur alongside similar structures or adjacent to compatible land uses.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation is required.

### *SWRP and VWRP Upgrade Operations Impacts*

**Impact:** *Conflict with Existing Land Uses on or Adjacent to the Project Site.* As indicated, the

proposed upgrades will be integrated into existing facilities. Therefore, any new structure will be located proximate to existing facilities and localized to the existing sites, which are already being used for wastewater treatment facilities. Furthermore, as described above, the VWRP site is surrounded by compatible uses. Similarly, the SWRP is bounded by compatible uses. As a result, this impact is considered less than significant.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation is required.

**No Project Alternative**

Under the No Project Alternative, no new construction would be performed at the VWRP, therefore, no impacts related to land use would occur under this alternative.