

# Chapter 14

## Mineral Resources

### 14.1 Overview

This chapter describes the setting and potential impacts on mineral resources from the Proposed Project. Information used to prepare this section includes the following resources prepared by the California Department of Conservation (CDOC): the California Geological Survey (CGS) Information Warehouse (CDOC 2016a), the Assembly Bill 3098 List of Mines Regulated under the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA) (CDOC 2016b), Guidelines for Classification and Designation of Mineral Lands (CDOC 2000), Update of Mineral Land Classification: Aggregate Materials in the Western San Diego County Production-Consumption Region (CDOC 1996), and Mineral Land Classification of the Western San Diego County Production-Consumption Region (CDOC 1982). Additional Information sources include: San Diego County General Plan, Conservation and Open Space Element (San Diego County 2011); Alpine Community Plan, San Diego County General Plan (San Diego County 2010); History of Mining in Southern California (San Diego Natural History Museum [SDNHM] 2016); and Mineral Resources On-Line Spatial Data (U.S. Geological Survey [USGS] 2016).

### 14.2 Regulatory Setting

#### 14.2.1 Federal Laws, Regulations and Policies

No federal laws, regulations, or policies apply to mineral resources and the Proposed Project.

#### 14.2.2 State Laws, Regulations and Policies

##### Surface Mining and Reclamation Act

The SMARA requires that the State Mining and Geology Board identify, map, and classify aggregate resources throughout California that contain regionally significant mineral resources. Designations of land areas are assigned by CDOC and CGS following analysis of geologic reports and maps, field investigations, and using information about the locations of active sand and gravel mining operations. Local jurisdictions are required to enact planning procedures to guide mineral conservation and extraction at particular sites and to incorporate mineral resource management policies into their general plans.

#### 14.2.3 Local Laws, Regulations, and Policies

As a State agency, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) generally is not subject to local laws and land use and zoning regulations; however, local laws, regulations, and policies are considered here for the evaluation of potential mineral resource impacts that

1 could result from the Proposed Project to the extent that they may inform the analysis and  
2 allow for full disclosure of potential impacts.

### 3 **San Diego County General Plan**

4 The Conservation and Open Space Element of the General Plan (County of San Diego 2011a)  
5 describes three general categories of important mineral resources, including construction  
6 materials, industrial and chemical mineral materials, and metallic and rare materials. The  
7 continued availability of construction aggregate for the development of roads, homes,  
8 buildings, and other infrastructure is considered essential to the economy of the County.  
9 Urban development has encroached upon many existing and potential future sites for mining  
10 construction aggregate. Few new mining sites have been recently permitted in the County  
11 and the aggregate production rate from existing local mining sites has not kept pace with  
12 demand. To meet demand, substantial volumes of aggregate are being imported from  
13 quarries located outside of San Diego County. Due to increased transportation costs, the price  
14 for aggregate in the County is among the highest in the State of California. The total permitted  
15 area of local mining facilities contains less than a 50-year supply of aggregate for the County.  
16 Thus, maintaining access to mineral resources, especially the remaining undeveloped land  
17 that has been classified as Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ)-2 (an area where significant mineral  
18 deposits are present or where it is indicated that a high likelihood for their presence exists)  
19 by the CDOC is important for the future economic activity of the County.

20 The following General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element goal and policy may  
21 be applicable to the Proposed Project:

- 22       ▪ **Goal COS-10: Protection of Mineral Resources.** The long-term production of mineral  
23 materials adequate to meet the local County average annual demand, while  
24 maintaining permitted reserves equivalent to a 50-year supply, using operational  
25 techniques and site reclamation methods consistent with SMARA standards such that  
26 adverse effects on surrounding land uses, public health, and the environment are  
27 minimized.
- 28       ▪ **Policy COS-10.1 – Siting of Development.** Encourage the conservation (i.e.,  
29 protection from incompatible land uses) of areas designated as having substantial  
30 potential for mineral extraction. Discourage development that would substantially  
31 preclude the future development of mining facilities in these areas. Design  
32 development or uses to minimize the potential conflict with existing or potential  
33 future mining facilities. For purposes of this policy, incompatible land uses are  
34 defined by SMARA Section 3675.

### 35 **Alpine Community Plan**

36 The Alpine Community Plan (County of San Diego 2011b) is a subcomponent of the  
37 County General Plan that implements the goals and policies of the County General Plan  
38 for the Alpine area. The Conservation Element of the Alpine Community Plan identifies  
39 Resource Conservation Areas (RCA) as localities worthy of special efforts to protect  
40 important natural resources. One of the criteria used in identifying RCAs was areas  
41 containing mineral resources, which would require conservation measures to ensure  
42 future availability. The Proposed Project site is not located in an RCA. Mineral resource-

1 related goals and policies of the Conservation Element of the Alpine Community Plan that  
2 may be applicable to the Proposed Project include:

- 3       ▪ **Goal 1** – Promote the well-planned management of all valuable resources, natural and  
4       man-made, and prevent the destruction and wasteful exploitation of natural  
5       resources, where feasible.
- 6       ▪ **Policy 1** – Encourage the protection and conservation of unique resources in the  
7       Alpine Planning Area.
- 8       ▪ **Policy 2** – Important plant, animal, mineral, water, cultural and aesthetic resources  
9       in the Alpine Plan area shall be protected through utilization of the Resource  
10      Conservation Area designations and appropriate land usage.

### 11 **14.3 Environmental Setting**

12       The California Gold Rush of the mid-1800s led to mineral exploration throughout southern  
13       California. Although gold deposits in the County were not extensive enough to warrant large  
14       volume mining, high-quality gemstones were discovered east of San Diego in the foothills and  
15       upper elevations of the Peninsular Ranges, which are also known as the Santa Ana, San  
16       Jacinto, and Laguna Mountains. Tourmaline, kunzite, morganite, topaz, garnet, aquamarine,  
17       lepidolite, and quartz are found in San Diego County. The gemstones are a result of cataclastic  
18       metamorphism associated with the mechanical deformation of the Farallon plate after being  
19       subducted under the North American plate. This type of metamorphism is restricted to a  
20       narrow band along the subduction zone (SDNHM 2016).

21       The Project site has not been included in the study area for studies included in the CDOC's  
22       SMARA Mineral Lands Classification portal (CDOC 2016a); however, it is approximately 4  
23       miles west of the study area identified in a mineral land classification study of aggregate  
24       materials in the Western San Diego County Production-Consumption Region (CDOC 1982).  
25       The Proposed Project site is located approximately 9 miles from the nearest area designated  
26       as MRZ-2. To be classified by the CDOC as a regionally or statewide significant mineral  
27       resource, a mineral deposit must be actively mined under a valid permit or meet CDOC-  
28       defined criteria of marketability and threshold value as specified in the CDOC's Guidelines for  
29       Classification and Designation of Mineral Lands (CDOC 2000). An update of the CDOC's 1982  
30       study of the Western San Diego County Production-Consumption Region prepared by CDOC  
31       (1996) did not result in the mapping of any new MRC-2 zones closer to the Proposed Project.

32       The mine located closest to the Project site was identified as the Palo Verde Desiltation and  
33       Reclamation Project, a specialty sand and fill dirt mining operation at Palo Verde Lake, for  
34       which reclamation is in progress, based on available information from the CDOC (2016b). A  
35       review of the CDOC's current list of mines regulated under SMARA (CDOC 2016c) identified  
36       the closest active mine as the Turvey Decomposed Granite (DG) Pit, which is located in Alpine,  
37       at the intersection of Dunbar Lane and Alpine Boulevard, approximately 9 miles from the  
38       Proposed Project site.

39       The U.S. Geologic Survey Mineral Resource Data System identifies a historic quartz  
40       production site, the Lowrey Deposit, located approximately 0.7 mile east of the Proposed  
41       Project site. Additionally, a potential stone production site, Ajax Deposit, is identified  
42       approximately 1.1 miles southeast of the Project site (USGS 2016).

## 1 **14.4 Impact Analysis**

### 2 **14.4.1 Methodology**

3 This section describes the potential impacts of the Proposed Project related to mineral  
4 resources. This evaluation considers the extent to which the Proposed Project would result  
5 in the loss of known mineral resources or locally-important mineral resource recovery sites.  
6 Effects are evaluated qualitatively based on available information on existing facilities and  
7 current demand in the Project Area.

### 8 **14.4.2 Criteria for Determining Significance**

9 Based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines and professional expertise, it was  
10 determined that the Proposed Project would result in a significant impact on mineral  
11 resources if it would:

- 12 A. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value  
13 to the region and the residents of the State; or
- 14 B. Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site  
15 delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan.

### 16 **14.4.3 Environmental Impacts**

#### 17 **Impact MR-1: Loss of Availability of a Known Mineral Resource (No 18 Impact)**

19 No mineral resources are known to occur at the Proposed Project site. Project activities would  
20 not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource. There would be no impact.

#### 21 **Impact MR-2: Loss of Availability of a Locally Important Mineral Resource 22 Recovery Site (No Impact)**

23 The Proposed Project is not located on, or in the vicinity of, a locally-important mineral  
24 resource recovery site, nor would it result in the loss of such a site. There would be no impact.