CHAPTER 9.0

DEER SPRINGS ROAD GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT/CIRCULATION ELEMENT

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9.1 Deer Springs Road General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element Purpose

The General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element (GPA/CE) is proposed to resolve an internal inconsistency between the existing Land Use and Circulation Elements. The inconsistency is due to the fact that buildout according to land use designations included in the existing Land Use Element would result in traffic volumes on Deer Springs Road that exceed the existing Circulation Element major roadway classification. The GPA/CE proposes the reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a four-lane Major Road to a six-lane Prime Arterial from Twin Oaks Valley Road to Champagne Boulevard and elimination of the planned Buena Creek Road extension in the existing Circulation Element to reduce impacts to existing land uses and accommodate vehicle trips along existing roads. The GPA/CE also includes the removal of the planned bicycle path in the existing Circulation Element along the eliminated segment of Buena Creek Road. The GPA/CE does not propose construction of the required improvements as only reclassification of the roadway is proposed at this time to accommodate planned land uses. The roadway would potentially be constructed at the time proposed land uses require the roadway to be widened to six lanes.

This section of the environmental impact report (EIR) provides a stand-alone environmental review for the reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a four-lane Major Road to a six-lane Prime Arterial. The GPA/CE is analyzed separately from the remainder of the project because it is needed to accommodate traffic generated by the adopted Land Use Element of the General Plan, even without additional traffic generated by development of the Merriam project. Analyzing the GPA/CE separately in Chapter 9 provides an environmental review of the potential environmental impacts of the amendment and allows the County to ensure that the Circulation Element of the General Plan is consistent with the existing Land Use Element, as well as the remainder of the Merriam project.

This section is intended to be a program-level analysis, which is used to analyze the effects of the proposed Deer Springs Road reclassification from Major Road to Prime Arterial. Impacts of actual construction of Deer Springs Road to four lanes as part of the Merriam project are analyzed at the project level in the other chapters of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) Impacts of construction that will **not** occur as part of the Merriam project include widening Deer Springs Road from four to six lanes. Impacts associated with the four- to six-lane widening are analyzed at the program level to support the Circulation Element change. Furthermore, since construction of the six-lane portion of the roadway is not proposed at this time, project-level details are not available to allow analysis of project-level impacts of the four-

to six-lane expansion. Project-level impacts will be analyzed when project-level information becomes available and determination of additional California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review requirements also will be made at that time.

9.1.1 General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element Description and Location

9.1.1.1 Precise Location/Boundary

As described in Section 1.2, the Circulation Element Map Amendment (Circulation Element Amendment) consists of an approximately 11,300 linear feet segment of Deer Springs Road extending generally from the I-15 interchange to the San Marcos city limits and elimination of a planned segment of Buena Creek Road extending from the intersection of Sugarbush Drive/Buena Creek Road to Deer Springs Road/Sarver Lane. The location of the Circulation Element Amendment is shown on Figure 9.1.1-A. The study area for the GPA/CE totals approximately 40 acres. Although Deer Springs Road has an overall northeast to southwest orientation, this chapter identifies Deer Springs Road as running north to south for ease of reference.

9.1.1.2 General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element Components

The Circulation Element Amendment proposes three modifications to the County of San Diego Circulation Element: (a) reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a four-lane Major Road to a six-lane Prime Arterial between the I-15 interchange and Twin Oaks Valley Road; (b) elimination of the segment of Buena Creek Road extending westerly from its intersection with Deer Springs Road; and (c) elimination of the planned bicycle path along the eliminated segment of Buena Creek Road described in (b). These modifications to Sheet 2 of 8 (Rainbow/Palomar) of the County of San Diego Circulation Element Map are shown on Figure 9.1.1-B and the existing Circulation Element is shown on Figure 9.1.1-A.

The Circulation Element is used not only to determine roadway classifications but also to support reservation of future right-of-way (ROW). Although alignments shown on the Circulation Element Map may typically vary up to 0.25 mile, the County has selected an alignment and ROW limitations for evaluation of the proposed reclassification of Deer Springs Road to a six-lane Prime Arterial[1]. Figure 9.1.1-C shows the proposed Prime Arterial ROW limits and potential limits of grading for Deer Springs Road compared to the existing ROW limits for the

[1] This alignment is consistent with the actual four-lane alignment proposed and analyzed at a project level of detail in connection with the Merriam project in Chapters 2 through 4 of this EIR.

existing two-lane roadway and the assumed ROW for a four-lane Major Road under the existing Circulation Element. Figure 9.1.1-C also includes the ROW that will be required for the auxiliary lanes near the I-15/Deer Springs Road interchange as part of the roadway reclassification (see Section 9.2.4). A typical ROW width designated for a Prime Arterial is 122 feet (San Diego County Public Road Standards 1999). The proposed centerline for the Prime Arterial alignment would be as shown on Figure 9.1.1-C, which differs at several locations from the centerlines of the existing two-lane roadway and the four-lane Major Road assumed under the existing Circulation Element.

The proposed six-lane Prime Arterial alignment generally follows the alignment of the existing paved two-lane road, except south of Sarver Lane where the roadway has been realigned from the existing two-lane paved road to accommodate typical design speeds for a Prime Arterial. Design speeds from the I-15 interchange to the City of San Marcos boundary will vary from 45 to 65 miles per hour (mph). Ultimate roadway improvement designs would be consistent with County roadway classification requirements for a Prime Arterial, which include striped and raised medians, bike lanes, and foot paths.

A design exception for the alignment of Deer Springs Road is proposed to reduce the curvature of the roadway near south of Sarver Lane from Prime Arterial Standards. The design exception was approved by DPW on August 22, 2008. The design exception process included several alignment alternatives for Deer Springs Road near Sarver Lane to determine the potential hardships associated with potential implementation of each alignment. Through the design exception process the preferred alignment was selected to minimize the potential hardships. The proposed alignment near the Sarver curve includes a 45 mph speed limit with 6% superelevation and a curve radius of 750 feet. This alignment was chosen to minimize impacts to the adjacent properties that would have resulted from the other considered alignments that traversed the eastern side of the existing Deer Springs Road. The proposed alignment will also minimize impacts to parcels with prime agricultural soils and avoid impacts to a historic school house.

For purposes of analysis, the proposed six-lane Prime Arterial alignment of Deer Springs Road was compared to the existing two-lane paved road alignment and the assumed four-lane Major Road alignment under the existing Circulation Element (see Figure 9.1.1-C). Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension and bicycle path were compared to the existing two-lane roadway and the assumed four-lane roadway under the existing Circulation Element (see Figure 9.1.1-D).

The following scenarios are used to assess the potential impacts from the proposed Circulation Element amendment.

Plan-to-Ground – A review of the potential impacts that could occur as a result of designating Deer Springs Road as a six-lane Prime Arterial in comparison to the existing two-lane paved roadway. A daylight line to identify the limits of potential grading for the Prime Arterial was included to assess potential impacts that may occur to on-the-ground resources, including but not limited to, vegetation communities, existing land uses, and cultural resources. The plan-to-ground analysis also compares the impacts of eliminating the planned Buena Creek Road extension and bicycle path to the current condition.

Plan-to-Plan – A review of the potential impacts that could occur as a result re-designating Deer Springs Road as a six-lane Prime Arterial in comparison to its four-lane Major Road designation under the adopted Circulation Element. A daylight line to identify the limits of potential grading for the Prime Arterial was compared to an assumed daylight line for the Major Road to assess the change in potential impacts from the proposed reclassification and alignment of Deer Springs Road. The plan-to-plan analysis also compares the impacts of eliminating the Buena Creek Road extension and bicycle path to the planned improvements under the adopted Circulation Element.

Project Phasing/Grading

In the event that the Merriam Mountains Specific Plan is approved, Deer Springs Road would be constructed to a four-lane roadway between Twin Oaks Valley Road and the I-15 interchange as part of required off-site improvements. The extent and configuration of roadway improvements would be consistent with those required as part of conditions of approval for the Merriam Mountains project. Further widening of Deer Springs Road to its ultimate six-lane alignment consistent with the proposed Prime Arterial classification would likely be completed in multiple phases as the need for additional expansion of the roadway is identified as a result of future development; however, it is not known with certainty when and in what manner the ultimate buildout of Deer Springs Road would occur. As such, construction-level details and exact limits of grading associated with ultimate roadway buildout are not known at this time. The roadway improvements would occur sometime in the future based on need and funding.

Acquisition

Implementation of the GPA/CE will likely require partial and/or full property acquisitions. The roadway reclassification will be used to allow future ROW reservation for a six-lane Prime Arterial; however, the exact footprint of the improvements in relation to existing properties will be evaluated at the time of construction. As seen in Section 1.1.2, the Merriam Mountains project will provide necessary ROW for construction of the portion of Deer Springs Road required as part of the conditions of approval for the project.

9.1.2 Growth Inducement

9.1.2.1 Growth-Inducing Impact of the Circulation Element Amendment

CEQA requires a discussion of the ways in which a Circulation Element amendment could result in an inducement to growth. The CEQA Guidelines (Section 15126.2(d)) identify a project to be growth inducing if it fosters economic or population growth or requires the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Examples of projects that are growth inducing are the expansion of urban services into a previously unserved or underserved area, the creation or extension of transportation links, or the removal of major obstacles to growth.

Typically, the growth-inducing potential of a project would be considered significant if it stimulates human population growth or a population concentration above what is assumed in local and regional land use plans, or in projections made by regional planning authorities. Growth impacts could also occur if the project provides infrastructure or service capacity to accommodate growth levels beyond those permitted by local or regional plans and policies.

9.1.2.2 Growth Caused by Direct and Indirect Project Employment

The widening and operation of Deer Springs Road and elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would not affect the employment patterns in the area. Construction would be temporary and the majority of workers would come from the San Diego area. Outside contractors may also be used who would commute from outside of the County and stay at existing local hotels during construction.

Operation and maintenance would be accomplished by current County employees and/or subcontractors and would, therefore, not create a large number of new jobs. Because the roadway widening would not result in an increase in employment during operation and maintenance, it would not increase the demand for new housing or result in substantial growth.

9.1.2.3 Growth Related to Provision of Rehabilitation, Relocation, and/or Replacement of Existing Infrastructure

The Circulation Element Amendment entails reclassification of Deer Springs Road to accommodate vehicle trips from planned land uses in the County of San Diego's General Plan. The sources of the land use categories used to develop traffic generation were the County of San Diego General Plan and City of San Marcos Land Use Element.

Plan-to-Ground:

The Circulation Element Amendment will include reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a four-lane to a six-lane roadway, an existing two-lane roadway that is currently operating over capacity. The majority of the area adjacent to Deer Springs Road is designated as multiple rural residential with a small portion along the southern portion of Deer Springs Road designated as visitor-servicing commercial, according to the County of San Diego General Plan. Land uses in this area consist of residential uses, a fitness resort, and greenhouses. Roadway reclassification along Deer Springs Road would not provide access to lands that were previously inaccessible. The reclassification of Deer Springs Road is being completed to accommodate traffic from proposed land uses in the General Plan. As seen in Table 9.2.4-2, the proposed reclassification would accommodate vehicle trips from planned land uses to reduce forecast congestion and allow Deer Springs Road to operate at an acceptable level of service (LOS). Depending on the timing of roadway construction (to accommodate six lanes), this may accelerate the rate at which the area is developed; however, the reclassification would not provide facilities or roadway capacity beyond planned growth as demonstrated by the traffic modeling conducted for the GPA/CE. In addition, the proposed GPA/CE does not include construction of the roadway to six lanes; rather, the roadway is being reclassified to accommodate potential future land uses. Since the roadway would not be constructed to six lanes prior to its need to accommodate trips from nearby land uses, the proposed GP ACE would not be growth inducing.

Plan-to-Plan:

The roadway classification provided in the existing Circulation Element results in a failing level-of-service upon buildout of planned land uses in the County of San Diego General Plan Land Use Element. As seen in Table 9.2.4-2, the proposed reclassification would accommodate vehicle trips from planned land uses to reduce forecast congestion and allow Deer Springs Road to operate at an acceptable LOS. The reclassification would not directly or indirectly induce growth, but rather would accommodate the demands of planned land uses, consistent with the County of San Diego and City of San Marcos planned land uses. In addition, the proposed GPA/CE does not include construction of the roadway to six lanes. Rather, the roadway is being reclassified to accommodate planned land uses. Since the roadway will not be constructed to six lanes prior to its need to accommodate trips from nearby land uses, the proposed GPA/CE would not be growth inducing.

The proposed reclassification would not cumulatively exceed official regional or local population projections and would not trigger an increase in population densification beyond that outlined in the County of San Diego and City of San Marcos planned land uses. The proposed reclassification of Deer Springs Road would not be growth inducing.

The proposed removal of the Buena Creek Road extension and bicycle lane identified in the Circulation Element, would not induce growth because the removal does not trigger an increase in population and/or densification. Therefore, the proposed Buena Creek Road extension and associated bicycle lane removal would not induce growth.

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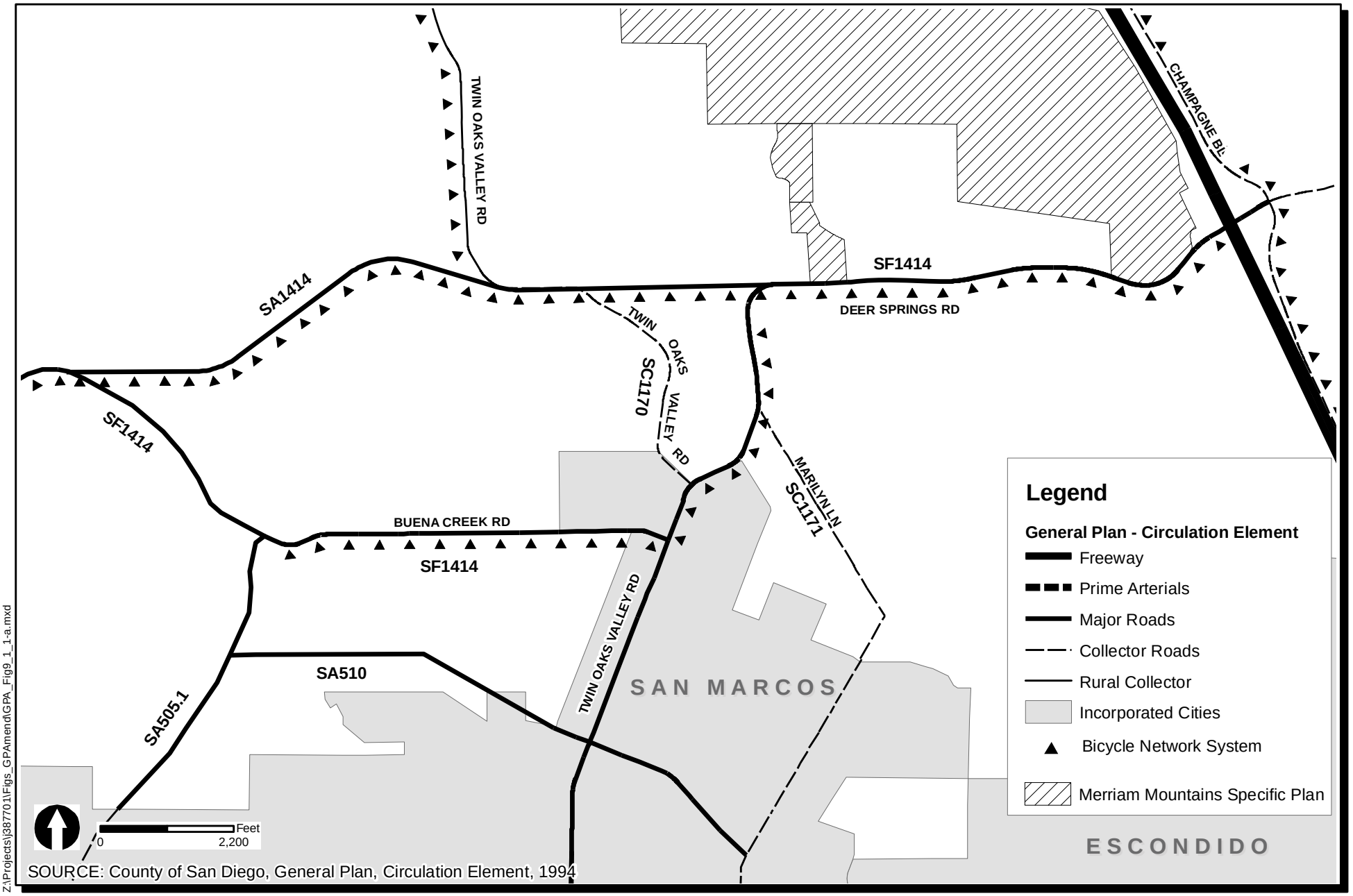

SOURCE: County of San Diego, General Plan, Circulation Element, 1994

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General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element - Deer Springs Road

Existing Circulation Element

FIGURE 9.1.1-A

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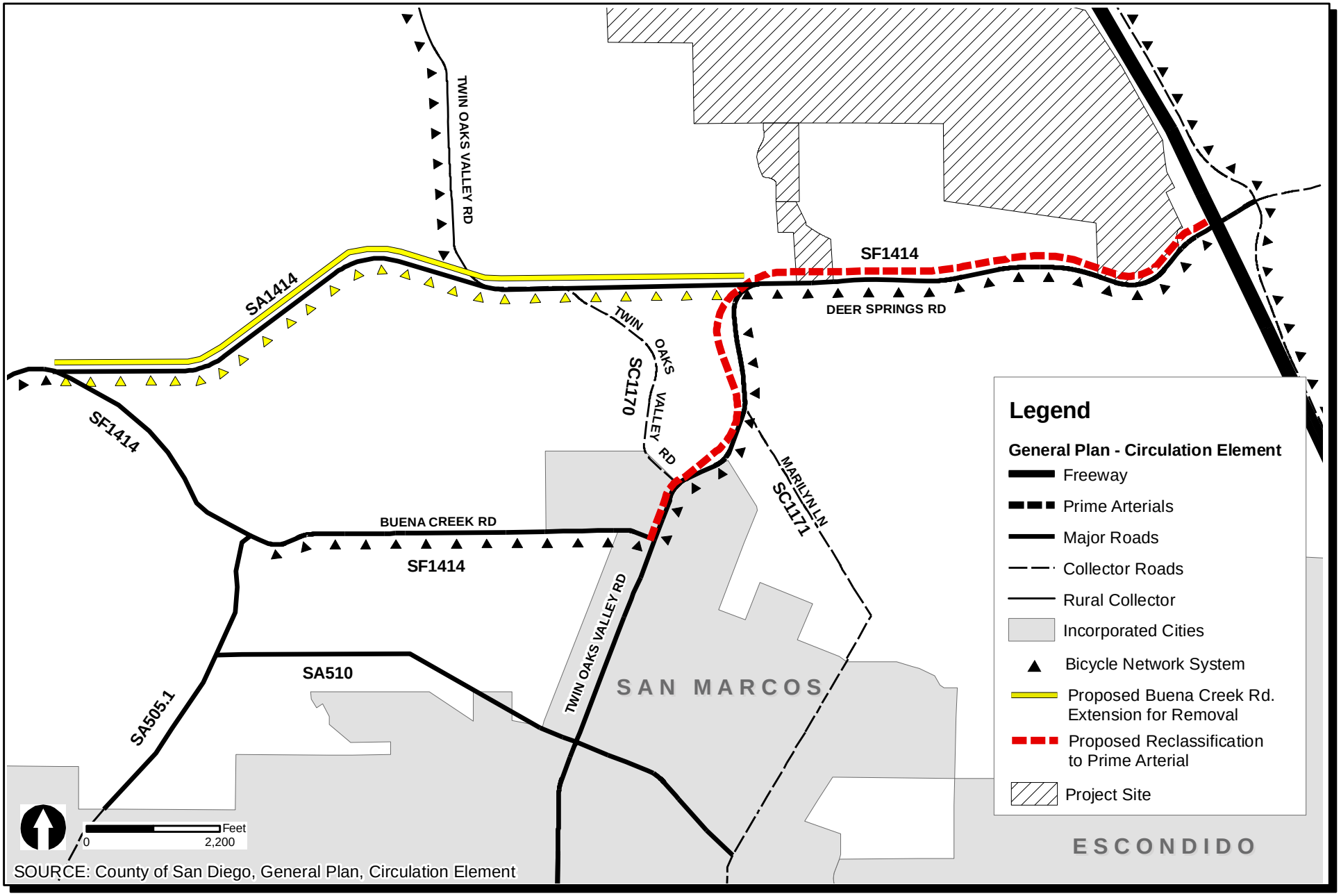

SOURCE: County of San Diego, General Plan, Circulation Element

General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element - Deer Springs Road

Circulation Element Existing and Proposed

FIGURE 9.1.1-B

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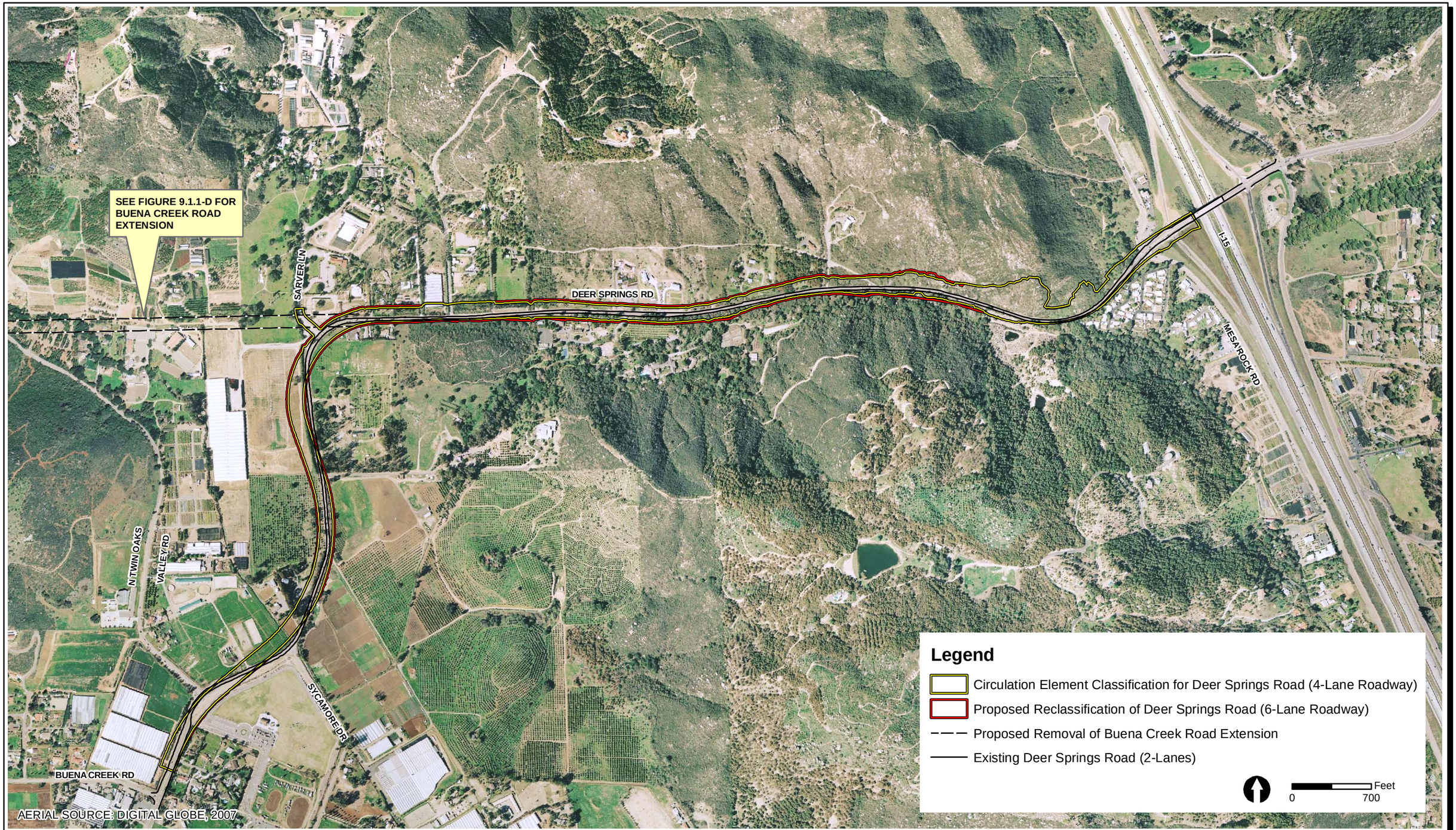

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General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element - Deer Springs Road

Proposed and Existing Limits

FIGURE 9.1.1-C

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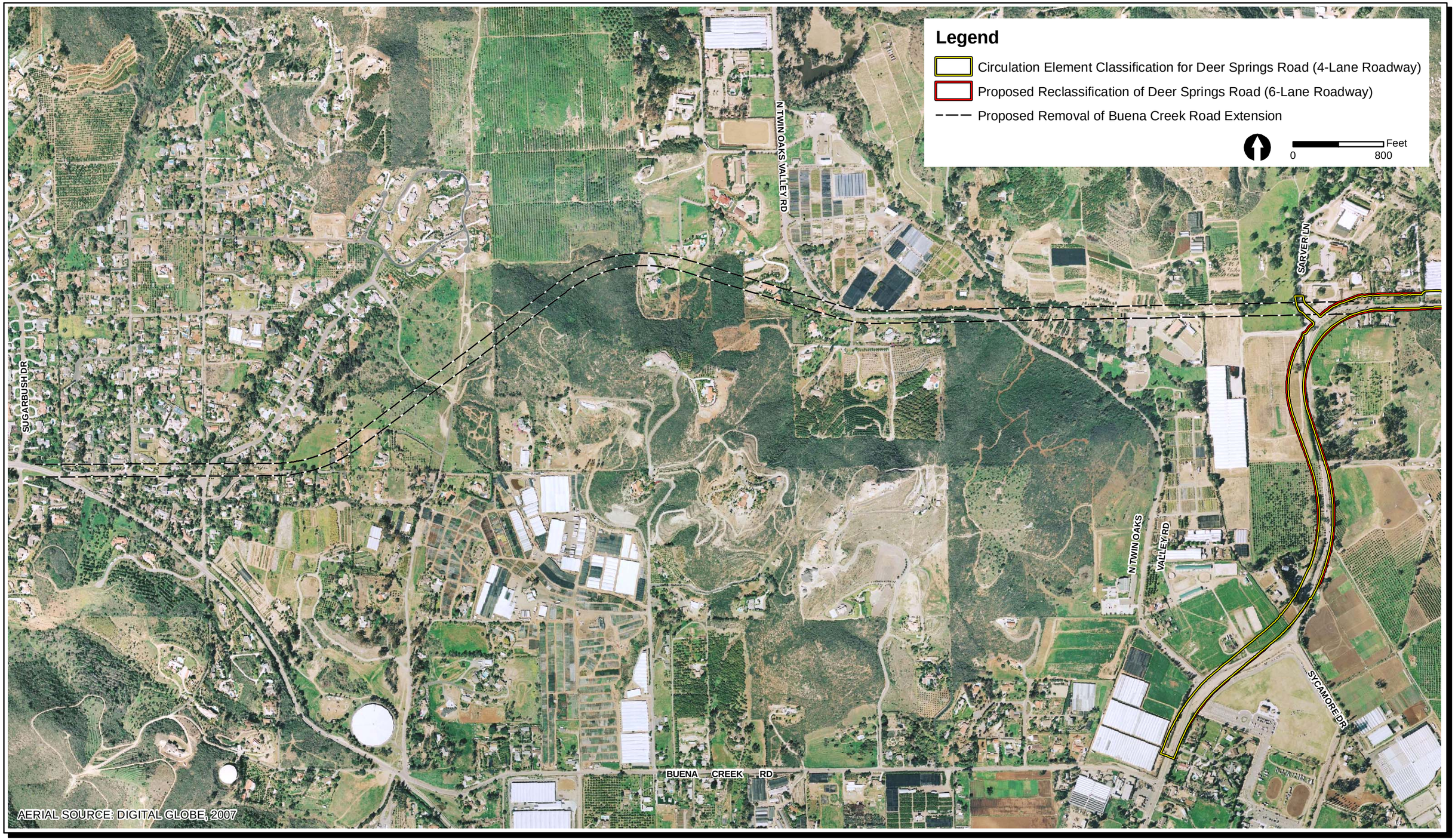

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General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element - Deer Springs Road

Proposed and Existing Limits

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9.1.1-D

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9.2 Significant Environmental Effects that Cannot be Avoided if the Circulation Element Amendment is Implemented

9.2.1 Air Quality

9.2.1.1 Existing Conditions and Regulatory Setting

Refer to Appendix D to this EIR for a discussion of the existing conditions and regulatory setting regarding air quality for the region.

The proposed Circulation Element Amendment would not generate vehicle trips but would accommodate vehicle trips from planned land uses under the Land Use Element of the General Plan. Sensitive receptors have been identified adjacent to Deer Springs Road, which include single-family residences, a mobile home park, and a resort/spa (see Figure 9.1.1-C). Sensitive receptors located adjacent to the Buena Creek Road extension proposed in the General Plan Circulation Element include single-family residences (see Figure 9.1.1-D).

9.2.1.2 Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

Air Quality – Criteria Pollutants

Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines is the basis for the following guidelines for determining significance. The GPA/CE would have a significant adverse affect if it would:

(1) Obstruct or conflict with implementation of the San Diego regional air quality standard (RAQS) or applicable portions of the State Implementation Plan (SIP)

(2) Result in emissions that would violate an existing air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation of federal and state air quality standards

(3) Expose sensitive receptors (e.g., schools, hospitals, resident care facilities, and/or day care centers) to substantial pollutant concentrations

(4) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people

(5) Cause a cumulatively considerable net increase in any criteria pollutant for which the San Diego Air Basin (SDAB) is in nonattainment, including nonattainment under applicable federal or state ambient air quality standards, including particulate matter (PM_{10}) or fine

particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$), or would exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone (O_3) precursors, oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs).

Air Quality – Climate Change

The GPA/CE would have a significant adverse affect on air quality if it would:

(6) Interfere with the State of California's ability to achieve greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals and strategies as identified in assembly bill (AB) 32 and Executive Order S-01-07.

9.2.1.3 Analysis of General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element Effects and Determination of Significance

The following discussion of potential air quality impacts that could result with implementation of the Circulation Element Amendment is based on the understanding that impacts as a result of roadway improvement projects differ in several respects from development projects requiring a different methodology. Land use development, such as residential or commercial uses, generate vehicle trips once in operation, which increases air emissions both locally and within the air basin as a whole. Development projects may also contribute to traffic congestion, which can decrease the efficiency of motor vehicles and cause further increases in GHG emissions.

Proposed roadway reclassifications, do not generate vehicle trips, but rather, accommodate area growth along existing transportation corridors. Long-term emissions are increased by area growth in the air basin. Roadway improvement projects tend to reduce emissions by reducing traffic congestion that would otherwise occur as a result of area growth. However, the diversion of vehicle traffic to the roadway segment can in turn change ambient concentration of air pollutants in the immediate vicinity of the proposed roadway improvements. The proposed Circulation Element Amendment will reduce the long-term generation of emissions by reducing traffic congestion. Therefore, the assessment of long-term air quality impacts from the proposed roadway reclassification will focus on localized impacts and the consistency of the proposed road widening to the applicable air quality plans for the air basin and regional transportation improvement plans. Although the Circulation Element Amendment would accommodate additional vehicle trips, the increased roadway capacity would improve the functioning of the roadway, which would in turn reduce emissions by improving traffic flow and reducing congestion which can exacerbate air quality impacts.

In relation to construction emissions, as noted in Section 9.1.1.2, construction of the ultimate roadway width (six lanes) would most likely be completed in multiple phases appropriate to the development in the area and as TIF fees are accumulated. The improvements may also be

completed in several phases as part of required frontage improvements as future projects that may be located along the roadway are constructed.

Guideline 1: Obstruct or Conflict with RAQS or SIP

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: The Circulation Element Amendment proposes reclassification to Prime Arterial from the existing two-lane roadway to accommodate anticipated traffic along Deer Springs Road upon ultimate buildout of the General Plan Land Use Element. Widening Deer Springs Road itself would not generate vehicle trips that would result in emissions; however, would accommodate anticipated trips from buildout of land uses in the region. The proposed Circulation Element Amendment would accommodate planned land uses under the Land Use Element of the General Plan and, therefore, would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the RAQS or SIP.

Buena Creek Road Extension: The elimination of the planned Buena Creek Road extension would remove a proposed roadway extension from Deer Springs Road to Sugarbush Drive. The roadway extension removal would not be inconsistent with the RAQS or SIP because it would not generate vehicle trips. Furthermore, this extension does not currently exist in this location.

Bicycle Lane: The elimination of the planned bicycle lane along the proposed Buena Creek Road extension would not be inconsistent with the RAQS or SIP because it would not generate vehicle trips. Furthermore, the bicycle lane does not currently exist in this location.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would accommodate anticipated traffic along Deer Springs Road upon ultimate buildout of the General Plan Land Use Element. The proposed widening from four lanes identified in the Circulation Element to six lanes proposed under the General Plan Amendment, would not generate vehicle trips that would result in emissions; however, it would accommodate anticipated trips from buildout of planned land uses in the region. The proposed Circulation Element Amendment would accommodate planned land uses under the Land Use Element of the General Plan and, therefore, would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the RAQS or SIP.

Buena Creek Road Extension: As described under the Deer Springs Road Reclassification, the proposed Circulation Element Amendment will accommodate the land use and growth

assumptions in the San Diego County General Plan that are incorporated in the SIP and/or RAQS. Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension is, therefore, consistent with the RAQS and/or SIP.

Bicycle Lane: The elimination of the bicycle lane along the proposed Buena Creek Road extension would not be inconsistent with the RAQS or SIP because it would not generate vehicle trips beyond the planned growth assumptions of the San Diego County General Plan and the RAQS.

Guideline 2: Violate an Existing Air Quality Standard

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Construction associated with widening Deer Springs Road from the existing two lanes to Prime Arterial standards would result in construction emissions. Construction activities (including dust emissions from soil disturbance, combustion pollutants from on-site construction equipment and from off-site trucks hauling dirt and cement) would create a temporary addition of pollutants to the local air basin. Construction emissions could include CO, VOCs, NO_x, SO_x, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$ from fugitive dust, heavy construction equipment, and construction workers commuting to and from the work site. The principal pollutants emitted during construction would be PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ associated with fugitive dust created during clearing, grubbing, excavation, and grading; demolition of pavement; vehicle travel on paved and unpaved roads; and material blown from unprotected graded areas, stockpiles, and haul trucks. A secondary source of pollutants during construction is the diesel engine exhaust from construction equipment. The principal pollutant of concern is particulate matter, which could be a potential health hazard if construction equipment and truck staging areas were to be located near sensitive receptors. In summary, the ultimate construction of the roadway widening improvements would result in a significant impact to air quality, resulting from an increase in fugitive dust and diesel engine exhaust particulates during construction (Impact GPA/CE-AQ-1). This impact would be direct and short term.

Operational emissions would be associated with traffic using Deer Springs Road and nearby roadways. The Circulation Element Amendment is designed to reduce traffic congestion through the reclassification of Deer Springs Road, which is currently operating below an acceptable LOS. The proposed reclassification would allow Deer Springs Road to operate at an acceptable LOS upon ultimate buildout of planned land uses. Therefore, implementation of the reclassification would reduce projected congestion associated with planned land uses when compared with buildout under the existing two-lane roadway. Operational air quality impacts are considered less

than significant because the proposed reclassification would result in an acceptable LOS on Deer Springs Road, avoiding congestion-related operational air pollutant emissions.

Buena Creek Road Extension: The removal of the Buena Creek Road extension would eliminate the potential for future vehicle trips to occur along the planned extension and would eliminate construction emissions that would have occurred with future construction of this road improvement. Vehicle trips that would have been distributed along the proposed Buena Creek Road extension would be redistributed to nearby roadways, as shown in Table 9.2.4-2. As described in Section 9.2.4, with implementation of required mitigation measures all roadway segments within the study area would operate at an acceptable LOS, demonstrating that elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would not increase traffic congestion, and therefore, would not result in a violation of an existing air quality standard. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant as the Buena Creek Road extension removal would not result in any adverse construction-related and/or operational emissions impacts.

Bicycle Lane: The elimination of the bicycle lane along the proposed Buena Creek Road extension would not violate an existing air quality standard because it would not result in construction-related emissions and/or operational emissions impacts.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Construction-related impacts are anticipated to occur due to the potential use of heavy construction equipment and fugitive dust and emissions from vehicles used during ultimate construction of the roadway. Construction associated with widening Deer Springs Road from the four-lane Major Road standards under the existing Circulation Element to the proposed Prime Arterial classification would result in construction emissions. Given non-attainment for certain criteria pollutants within the San Diego air basin, such construction emissions may violate an existing air quality standard. Impacts associated with construction emissions that would occur from implementation of the proposed Circulation Element Amendment would be potentially significant. This impact would be similar to impact AQ-1 (see previous description of Impact GPA/CE-AQ-1).

Operational emissions would be associated with traffic using Deer Springs Road and roadways nearby. The GPA/CE is designed to reduce existing and projected traffic congestion and would, therefore, also reduce the potential for adverse impacts to the ambient air quality. Therefore, long-term air-quality impacts are considered less than significant.

Buena Creek Road Extension: The elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would remove a planned roadway extension from Deer Springs Road to Sugarbush Drive identified in

the adopted Circulation Element. Construction-related impacts would not occur because the planned roadway extension would be removed. Therefore, the potential for adverse impacts resulting from construction would be less than significant.

Operational emissions would be associated with traffic using the Buena Creek Road extension, which is proposed for removal per the Circulation Element Amendment. The Circulation Element Amendment is designed to reduce existing and projected traffic congestion and would, therefore, also reduce the potential for adverse impacts to the ambient air quality.

Bicycle Lane: The elimination of the proposed bicycle lane along the proposed Buena Creek Road extension would not violate an existing air quality standard because it would not result in construction-related emissions and/or operational emissions impacts.

Although the Circulation Element Amendment is designed to reduce existing and projected traffic congestion, traffic modeling results indicate that two roadway segments (Mountain Meadow Road east of Champagne Boulevard and Twin Oaks Valley Road between Deer Springs Road and Buena Creek Road) would operate below LOS D (see Table 9.2.4-2), in some cases resulting in increased traffic congestion when compared with model results for the existing Circulation Element. In the case of Mountain Meadow Road, LOS F is projected under both the existing Circulation Element and the Circulation Element Amendment with no change in level of congestion anticipated. In the case of Twin Oaks Valley Road, the LOS is projected to be reduced from LOS C to LOS F. This increase in congestion would not result in CO hotspots that would violate an existing air quality standard and no impacts are anticipated.

<u>Guideline 3: Sensitive Receptors</u>

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Sensitive receptors have been identified near the proposed Deer Springs Road Prime Arterial alignment, including single-family residences, a mobile home park, and a resort/spa. As discussed previously, the Circulation Element Amendment would not result in significant pollutant emissions of criteria pollutants or concentrations, compared to the existing two-lane road. Construction activities may expose nearby sensitive receptors to pollutant concentrations. Although, as discussed under Guideline 2, construction emissions would include fugitive dust and diesel exhaust particulates that would exceed an existing air quality standard because the San Diego Air Basin is a non-attainment area for particulates, this exceedance would not result in significant impacts to sensitive receptors because emissions would not exceed a one-in-ten-million health risk threshold with implementation of T-BACT. It is assumed that T-BACT measures would be implemented during construction for the Circulation Element Amendment.

Carbon monoxide (CO) generated from automobile emissions would be the only source of air pollution associated with operation of the roadway. As seen in Section 9.2.4, the roadway reclassification is proposed to reduce projected delays upon ultimate buildout along Deer Springs Road compared to the existing two-lane road, which is currently operating below an acceptable LOS. Therefore, operational impacts are expected to be less than significant.

Buena Creek Road Extension: The proposed roadway extension removal would avoid construction activities and/or operational emissions. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Bicycle Lane: The elimination of the bicycle lane along the proposed Buena Creek Road extension would not impact sensitive receptors because there would be no construction associated with the bicycle lane removal and vehicle trips that might impact sensitive receptors would not be generated.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Sensitive receptors have been identified near the proposed Deer Springs Road Prime Arterial alignment, including single-family residences, a mobile home park, and a resort/spa. As discussed previously, the Circulation Element Amendment would not result in significant pollutant emissions of criteria pollutants or concentrations, compared to the existing Circulation Element. Construction activities may expose nearby sensitive receptors to pollutant concentrations. Although, as discussed under Guideline 2, construction emissions would include fugitive dust and diesel exhaust particulates that would exceed an existing air quality standard because the San Diego Air Basin is a non-attainment area for particulates, this exceedance would not result in significant impacts to sensitive receptors because emissions would not exceed a one-in-ten-million health risk threshold with implementation of T-BACT. It is assumed that T-BACT measures would be implemented during construction for the Circulation Element Amendment.

Buena Creek Road Extension: The proposed Circulation Element Amendment would not result in construction activities and/or operational emissions that could occur under the adopted Circulation Element. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Bicycle Lane: The elimination of the bicycle lane along the proposed Buena Creek Road extension would not impact sensitive receptors because there would be no construction associated with the bicycle lane removal and vehicle trips that might impact sensitive receptors would not be generated.

Guideline 4: Objectionable Odors

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Construction activities to widen Deer Springs Road to a six-lane Prime Arterial might produce odors associated with diesel engines and construction-related machinery. During construction of the roadway, there would be odors typically occurring during asphalt paving operations. These odors would be of short duration and would affect residents near the work area, but not a substantial number of people. Thus, odor impacts would be less than significant.

Buena Creek Road Extension: The proposed deletion of the Buena Creek Road extension removes the planned alignment of Buena Creek Road and does not involve any construction-related emissions; therefore, no odors would result.

Bicycle Lane: The proposed reclassification removes the planned bike path. As construction will not occur, no odors would result from the bicycle lane removal.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Construction activities to widen Deer Springs Road to a six-lane Primate Arterial from the adopted Major Road classification may produce odors associated with diesel engines and construction-related machinery. These odors may be somewhat less than those associated with widening Deer Springs Road from a two-lane to a six-lane roadway, as discussed under the plan-to-ground scenario. These odors would be of short duration and could affect residents near the work area, but not a substantial number of people. Thus, odor impacts would not be significant.

Buena Creek Road Extension: The proposed removal of the Buena Creek Road extension would not result in construction activities and/or operational emissions that could occur under the adopted Circulation Element. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Bicycle Lane: Construction associated with removal of the bike path will not occur; no odors will result from its elimination.

Guideline 5: Cumulatively Considerable Net Increases in Criteria Pollutants that are in Non-Attainment

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: The San Diego air basin is currently in non-attainment status for ozone and suspended fine particulates. The Circulation Element Amendment would represent a contribution to a cumulatively considerable potential net increase in emissions throughout the air basin. The amendment itself would not result in any predicted increases in traffic volumes in the area; therefore, there is no net emissions increase associated with implementation. Rather, the purpose of the proposed reclassification is to improve traffic flow and reduce traffic congestion along Deer Springs Road by improving the overall circulation of roadways in the County of San Diego as growth occurs. The Circulation Element does not involve changes in diesel truck or bus routes, or changes in the natural environment. Reclassification of the roadway segment would, therefore, not cause or contribute to a new violation or increase the frequency or severity of existing air quality violations.

Buena Creek Road Extension: The proposed deletion of the Buena Creek Road extension would not result in construction or operational (vehicle) emissions because the deletion of this segment would eliminate the potential for future construction of the Buena Creek Road extension. Therefore, the Buena Creek Road extension removal would not cause or contribute to a new violation or increase the frequency or severity of existing air quality violation standards.

Bicycle Lane: Construction and/or operational emissions associated with removal of the bicycle lane will not occur. Therefore, the bicycle lane removal would not cause or contribute to a new violation or increase the frequency or severity of existing air quality violation standards.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: The proposed reclassification from the adopted Major Road Classification to a six-lane Prime Arterial would not result in any predicted increases in traffic volumes in the area; therefore, there is no net emissions increase associated with implementation. Rather, the purpose of the proposed reclassification is to improve traffic flow and reduce traffic congestion along Deer Springs Road that would occur under the adopted Circulation Element by improving the overall circulation of roadways in the County of San Diego as growth occurs. Reclassification of the roadway segment would, therefore, not cause or contribute to a new violation or increase the frequency or severity of existing air quality violations, compared to the existing Circulation Element.

Buena Creek Road Extension: The proposed deletion of the Buena Creek Road extension would not result in construction or operational (vehicle) emissions because the deletion of this segment would eliminate the potential for future construction of this portion of the roadway. Therefore, the Buena Creek Road extension removal would not cause or contribute to a new violation or increase the frequency or severity of existing air quality violation standards.

Bicycle Lane: Construction and/or operational emissions associated with removal of the bicycle lane will not occur. Therefore, the bicycle lane removal would not cause or contribute to a new violation or increase the frequency or severity of existing air quality violation standards.

Guideline 6: Interfere with Ability to Achieve GHG-Reduction Goals and Strategies

Assessment of the long-term air quality and global climate change impacts as a result of roadway improvement projects differs in several respects from development projects requiring a different methodology. Land use development, such as residential or commercial uses, generates vehicle trips once in operation, which increases air pollution and GHG emissions both locally and within the air basin as a whole. Development projects may also contribute to traffic congestion, which can decrease the efficiency of motor vehicles and cause further increases in air pollutant and GHG emissions.

Proposed roadway improvements do not generate vehicle trips, but rather, accommodate area growth and divert vehicle trips to the locality of the roadway segment. Long-term air pollutant and GHG emissions are increased by area growth in the air basin. Roadway improvement projects tend to reduce air pollutant and GHG emissions by reducing traffic congestion that would otherwise occur as a result of area growth. However, the diversion of vehicle traffic to the roadway segment can in turn change ambient concentration of air pollutants in the immediate vicinity of the proposed roadway improvements. The proposed Circulation Element Amendment will reduce the long-term generation of GHG emissions by reducing traffic congestion. The assessment of long-term air quality impacts from the proposed improvements will focus on localized impacts and the consistency of the proposed road widening to the applicable air quality plans for the air basin and regional transportation improvement plans.

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: As discussed previously, the proposed Circulation Element Amendment would not generate GHG emissions and would reduce congestion along Deer Springs Road that would occur under the adopted Circulation Element and existing two-lane roadway. Therefore, the Circulation Element Amendment would result in less-than-significant

impacts related to GHG emissions as the project would not contribute GHG emissions and would reduce existing traffic congestion along Deer Springs Road.

Construction measures that reduce construction emissions presented in Section 9.2.1.4 may also reduce GHG emissions generated by future roadway widening. Implementation of this mitigation measure, along with environmental commitments to reduce combustion emissions during construction, including GHG emissions, is consistent with current GHG-emission reduction strategies relevant to construction and no further reduction strategies are recommended.

Buena Creek Road Extension: The proposed reclassification would not result in construction-related emissions because the Buena Creek Road extension is proposed to be deleted from the Circulation Element. Therefore, there will be no potential for future construction of this road.

Bicycle Lane: The proposed bicycle lane removal would not result in construction and/or project-related emissions. Therefore, the bicycle lane removal would not generate GHG emissions that may interfere with the ability to achieve GHG-reduction goals and strategies.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: The proposed Circulation Element Amendment would not generate GHG emissions because the reclassification of the roadway would reduce congestion by providing additional roadway capacity to relieve projected congestion. Therefore, impacts associated with GHG emissions would be less than significant as the amendment would not contribute GHG emissions and would reduce projected traffic congestion along Deer Springs Road.

Construction measures that reduce construction emissions presented in Section 9.2.1.4 may also reduce GHG emissions generated by the proposed roadway widening. Implementation of this mitigation measure, along with environmental commitments to reduce combustion emissions during construction, including GHG emissions, is consistent with current GHG-emission reduction strategies relevant to construction and no further reduction strategies are recommended.

Buena Creek Road Extension: The proposed reclassification would not result in construction and/or operational emissions associated with the Buena Creek Road extension. Therefore, the Buena Creek Road extension removal would not generate GHG emissions that may interfere with the ability to achieve GHG-reduction goals and strategies.

Bicycle Lane: The proposed bicycle lane removal would not result in construction and/or operational emissions. Therefore, the bicycle lane removal would not generate GHG emissions that may interfere with the ability to achieve GHG-reduction goals and strategies.

Summary of General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element Impacts

GPA/CE-AQ-1 Emissions associated with particulate matter from fugitive dust and diesel engine exhaust associated with construction activities from widening Deer Springs Road to the ultimate six-lane designation under the Circulation Element Amendment.

9.2.1.4 Mitigation Measure

M- GPA/CE-AQ-1 To reduce the potential for emissions associated with construction of roadway improvements, the construction contractor shall adhere to all San Diego County Air Pollution Control District rules and regulations, which will likely include such measures as minimizing the idling time of construction equipment, wetting down exposed soils to reduce dust, and covering haul trucks. Although compliance with existing regulations is not typically regarded as mitigation, at this program level of analysis, compliance with existing regulations is considered to be appropriate mitigation since more information on which construction techniques will be applied in the future is not known at this time.

9.2.1.5 Conclusion

Construction-related impacts are anticipated to occur due to the potential use of heavy construction equipment and fugitive dust and emissions from vehicles associated with construction (Impact GPA/CE-AQ-1). Mitigation Measure M- GPA/CE-AQ-1 has been identified to reduce these potential impacts. Applicable regulations for construction emission reduction measures would likely change from existing regulations prior to the potential construction of the six-lane roadway. Construction emissions would likely remain significant and unavoidable even with the recommended mitigation measures because short-term emissions levels would not be reduced to a level below significance given non-attainment for certain criteria pollutants within the San Diego air basin. The Circulation Element Amendment would not result in any other significant unavoidable impacts to air quality.

9.2.2 Noise

A Noise Impact Analysis was completed for the proposed GPA/CE and is included in Appendix L to this EIR.

9.2.2.1 Discussion of Existing Noise Conditions

Deer Springs Road has an existing traffic volume ranging from approximately 11,000average daily trips (ADT) to 22,000 ADT (LLG Engineers 2008). Traffic volumes for Deer Springs Road under the existing Circulation Element would range from 51,000 ADT to 62,000 ADT. Existing noise levels along Deer Springs Road range up to approximately 75 dB CNEL immediately adjacent to the edge of this two-lane road.

Noise-sensitive receptors located within the vicinity of the Deer Springs Road corridor include single-family residences, a resort/spa, and a mobile home park. Noise-sensitive receptors located within the vicinity of the proposed Buena Creek Road extension removal include single-family residences.

9.2.2.2 Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

Relevant guidelines for significant noise impacts associated with the Circulation Element Amendment are as follows:

1) The exterior noise level due to vehicular traffic impacting a noise-sensitive area should not exceed the following values: 60 A-weighted decibels (dBA), except if the existing or projected noise level without the project is 58 dBA or greater, a 3 dBA is allowed up to the maximum permitted by Federal Highway Administration Standards.

2) Exposure of a proposed on-site residence to community noise equivalent level (CNEL) of 45 dB or greater in a habitable interior room

3) Exposure of existing noise-sensitive areas to noise 10 dB CNEL over existing noise levels and County noise standards

4) Exposure of noise-sensitive land uses (Category 1, 2, or 3) to ground-borne vibration levels equal to or in excess of the ground-borne vibration and noise impact levels listed in Table 9.2.2-1.

9.2.2.3 Analysis of General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element Effects and Determination of Significance

Future traffic noise levels were calculated using the California Department of Transportation's (Caltrans') SOUND32 traffic noise prediction model with California vehicle noise emission factors. Future year 2030 traffic volumes were used in the noise model. The future year 2030 traffic volume with the GPA/CE is projected to range to a maximum of approximately 62,000 ADT along Deer Springs Road (see Table 9.2.4-2) (Linscott, Law and Greenspan 2009).

For purposes of analysis, two roadway scenarios were evaluated to determine the potential noise impacts that may occur from reclassification of Deer Springs Road to a six-lane Prime Arterial under the Circulation Element Amendment:

Existing Noise Levels – Existing noise levels resulting from vehicle trips associated with the existing two-lane roadway in comparison to noise levels that would occur under the proposed reclassification and alignment (see Figure 9.2.2-A). The noise-level contour distances are based on level topography, soft site sound propagation conditions.

Adopted Circulation Element Noise Levels – Noise levels resulting from a four-lane Major Road and assumed alignment under the adopted Circulation Element in comparison to noise levels that would occur under the proposed roadway reclassification and alignment (see Figure 9.2.2-B). The noise-level contour distances are based on level topography, soft site sound propagation conditions.

<u>Guideline 1: Exposure of On- and Off-Site Sensitive Receptors to Noise Exceeding 60 dB</u>

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: The Plan-to-Ground scenario compares the change in noise from the existing two-lane roadway to the proposed Prime Arterial classification along Deer Springs Road. The Circulation Element Amendment would expose several residences adjacent to the Deer Springs Road alignment to noise levels in excess of 60 dB CNEL as a result of the proposed roadway widening to six-lane Prime Arterial standards that would place vehicle generated noise in closer proximity to sensitive receptors than the existing two-lane road (see Figure 9.2.2-A) and greater future traffic volumes as compared to the existing volumes. Therefore, the roadway reclassification would likely result in impacts to single-family residences, a mobile-home park, and a resort/spa, which are considered sensitive receptors (see Figure 9.2.2-A). This exposure of sensitive receptors to noise levels exceeding 60 dB CNEL would result in a significant impact (Impact GPA/CE-NOI-1).

Buena Creek Road Extension: The Buena Creek Road extension would not result in noise impacts to sensitive receptors because the roadway alignment does not currently exist and no improvements are proposed along the alignment identified in the adopted Circulation Element.

Bicycle Lane: The bicycle lane removal is not applicable because noise standards do not apply to bicycle lanes. No impact would result.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: The proposed reclassification along Deer Springs Road from the adopted classification (four-lane Major Road) to a six-lane Prime Arterial would result in exposure of sensitive receptors to noise levels in excess of 60 dB CNEL (see Figure 9.2.2-B).However, the Circulation Element Amendment roadway reclassification would result in a slightly lower noise level and would thereby impact fewer sensitive receptors along Deer Springs Road with the reclassification in comparison to the adopted Circulation Element Major Road classification. This is because the reclassification would have a reduced number of vehicle trips in comparison to the existing General Plan roadway classification. The reduced traffic volume along Deer Springs Road under the proposed GPA/CE would be the result of the elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension that would redistribute planned trips along Deer Springs Road to other nearby roadway segments. Even though there would a reduction in the traffic volume along this roadway segment, the exposure of sensitive receptors to noise levels exceeding 60 dB CNEL would result in a significant impact (see Impact GPA/CE-NOI-1).

Buena Creek Road Extension: The proposed reclassification includes the removal of the Buena Creek Road extension west of the Deer Springs Road/Sarver Lane curve from the Circulation Element Map. As seen in Figure 9.2.2-C, the planned extension would introduce a roadway in an area that currently consists of single-family residential and agricultural land uses. The proposed Circulation Element Amendment would not change existing noise conditions in this area. Instead, the proposed Circulation Element Amendment would eliminate the potential for noise impacts to sensitive receptors that would occur under the currently adopted Buena Creek Road extension.

Bicycle Lane: The bicycle lane removal is not applicable because noise standards do not apply to bicycle lanes. No impact would result.

Guideline 2: Exposure of a Proposed On-Site Residence to CNEL of 45 dB or Greater in a Habitable Interior Room

Guideline 2 is not applicable because the Circulation Element Amendment does not affect any proposed on-site residences. No impact would result.

Guideline 3: Exposure of Existing Noise-Sensitive Areas to Noise 10 dB CNEL Above Existing Noise Levels and County Noise Standards

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Noise-sensitive receptors include any residence, hospital, school, hotel, resort, library, or any other facility where quiet is an important attribute of the environment. Noise modeling was completed for permanent noise-sensitive receptors adjacent to Deer Springs Road that could be impacted due to the increase in vehicular trips accommodated by the road widening. Based on a traffic volume increase, the existing noise level would increase by approximately 4 dB CNEL. Thus, the existing noise-sensitive receptors would not be subjected to noise 10 dB CNEL over existing noise levels due to the traffic volume increase. It should be noted that future projects that may be located adjacent to the roadway improvement area will be required to complete a noise evaluation at the time the projects are proposed to identify site-specific impacts and mitigation measures. Due to the existing noise levels associated with traffic along Deer Springs Road, residences would not be subjected to noise 10 dB CNEL over existing noise levels. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

The noise levels generated by construction equipment would vary greatly depending upon factors like the type and specific model of the equipment, the operation being performed, and the condition of the equipment. The average sound level of the construction activity also depends upon the amount of time that the equipment operates and the intensity of the construction, which would occur during the County's allowable hours of operation.

The primary noise source from the widening of Deer Springs Road would most likely result from construction equipment, including a scraper, graders, loaders, pavers, heavy trucks, crew and delivery trucks, water trucks, and roller compactors.

Several homes and sensitive receptors are located adjacent to Deer Springs Road. Construction activities would occur in close proximity to these existing sensitive receptors. Given the location of sensitive receptors from proposed reclassification improvements, construction equipment associated with roadway improvements would likely generate a one-hour average noise level, exceeding the one-hour 75 dB construction noise standard in the County Noise Ordinance.

Drilling and blasting may also generate significant noise impacts to sensitive receptors along Deer Springs Road. Therefore, the construction noise would result in a significant noise impact at existing residences (Impact GPA/CE-NOI-2).

Buena Creek Road Extension: The Buena Creek Road extension is not applicable in relation to a plan-to-ground analysis because the roadway alignment does not currently exist and no improvements are proposed along the alignment identified in the adopted Circulation Element. No impact would result.

Bicycle Lane: The bicycle lane removal is not applicable because noise standards do not apply to bicycle lanes. No impact would result.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: As seen in Figure 9.2.2-B, noise levels under the current adopted Circulation Element classification in comparison to the proposed reclassification would be similar. Based on a traffic volume decrease (see Table 9.2.4-2), the noise level would also decrease. Thus, the existing noise-sensitive receptors would not be subjected to noise 10 dB CNEL over existing noise levels due to the traffic volume decrease. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

The Circulation Element Amendment in comparison to the adopted Circulation Element would likely result in the same noise impact during construction as implementation of the existing Circulation Element (see Impact GPA/CE-NOI-2).

Buena Creek Road Extension: Removal of the Buena Creek Road extension would eliminate the potential to expose sensitive receptors to noise levels in excess of 10 dB CNEL over existing noise levels. There are currently minimal noise sources located in close proximity to sensitive receptors along the proposed alignment. Therefore, it is likely under the adopted Circulation Element that impacts would occur along the alignment of the proposed extension. The reclassification proposes removal of the Buena Creek Road extension, thereby eliminating the potential for an adverse noise impact. No impact would result.

Bicycle Lane: The bicycle lane removal is not applicable because noise standards do not apply to bicycle lanes. No impact would result.

Guideline 4: Ground-Borne Vibration Levels

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Ground-borne vibration and noise information related to construction activities has been collected by Caltrans (2004). Information from Caltrans indicates that continuous vibrations with a peak particle velocity of approximately 0.1 inches/second begin to annoy people. Due to the nature of construction activities and the distance from sensitive receptors, ground-borne vibration is not expected to result in continuous vibration levels that typically annoy people (less than 0.1 in/sec); therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Buena Creek Road Extension: The Buena Creek Road extension is not applicable in relation to a plan-to-ground analysis because the roadway alignment does not currently exist and no improvements are proposed along the alignment identified in the adopted Circulation Element. No impact would result.

Bicycle Lane: The bicycle lane removal is not applicable because noise standards do not apply to bicycle lanes. No impact would result.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: As mentioned in the plan-to-ground discussion, construction activities are not expected to result in continuous vibration levels that typically annoy people. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Buena Creek Road Extension: The Buena Creek Road extension is not applicable in relation to a plan-to-plan analysis for ground-borne vibration levels because the roadway alignment is proposed for removal. No impact would result.

Bicycle Lane: The bicycle lane removal is not applicable because noise standards do not apply to bicycle lanes. No impact would result.

Summary of General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element Impacts

The following noise impacts have been identified for the GPA/CE:

GPA/CE-NOI-1 Impacts resulting from the exposure of sensitive receptors to noise levels in excess of 60 dB CNEL for plan-to-ground and plan-to-plan scenarios.

GPA/CE-NOI-2 Impacts resulting from noise generated by construction activities associated with roadway widening.

9.2.2.4 Mitigation Measures

M- GPA/CE-NOI-1. Noise impacts to noise-sensitive land uses shall be mitigated through compliance with the Noise Element of the General Plan and the County's Noise Ordinance, which may include construction of sound walls and/or berms.

M- GPA/CE-NOI-2 Noise impacts to noise-sensitive land uses generated by construction shall be mitigated through compliance with the Noise Element of the General Plan and the County's Noise Ordinance, which may include construction of temporary sound walls, limiting the hours of construction operations, and maintaining the mufflers on construction equipment.

9.2.2.5 Conclusion

Impact GPA/CE-NOI-1 would be partially mitigated by implementation of Mitigation Measure M-GPA/CE-NOI-1. However, it is unclear whether noise levels could feasibly be reduced to below 60 dB since noise analysis requires detailed plan and profile information and this level of information is not available for the proposed General Plan Amendment. Plan and profile information is necessary to accurately model noise contours in relation to roadway elevations and sensitive receptor locations. This information is also necessary to determine the feasibility of mitigation measures, such as noise walls or berms. In addition, accurate noise analysis requires current knowledge of sensitive receptor locations. The proposed GPA/CE roadway may not be constructed for many years and sensitive receptor locations at that time may differ. Due to this uncertainty, significant and unavoidable noise impacts would result.

The widening of Deer Springs Road would result in a short-term construction noise impact (Impact GPA/CE-NOI-2). Noise impacts would primarily occur during grading when the roadbed is being prepared. Mitigation Measure M-GPA/CE-NOI-2 would reduce potential short-

term construction impacts to a level below significance because construction noise levels could be reduced through the placement of temporary sound walls adjacent to sensitive receptors. It should be noted that the duration of the significant construction noise impact at any one residence would be limited because the equipment would operate with various load cycles and would be moving to different locations.

Table 9.2.2-1
Guidelines of Significance for
Ground-Borne Vibration and Noise Effects[1]

Land Use Category	Ground-Borne Vibration Impact Levels (in/sec rms)		Ground-Borne Noise Impact Levels (dB re 20 micro Pascals)	
	Frequent Events[1]	Infrequent Events[2]	Frequent Events[1]	Infrequent Events[2]
Category 1: Buildings where low ambient vibration is essential for interior operations (research and manufacturing facilities with special vibration constraints).	0.0018[3]	0.0018[3]	Not applicable	Not applicable
Category 2: Residences and buildings where people normally sleep (hotels, hospitals, residences, and other sleeping facilities).	0.0040	0.010	35 dB	43 dB
Category 3: Institutional land uses with primarily daytime use (schools, churches, libraries, other institutions, and quiet offices).	0.0056	0.014	40 dB	48 dB
Concert halls, TV studios, and recording studios	0.0018	0.0018	25 dB	25 dB
Auditoriums	0.0040	0.010	30 dB	38 dB
Theaters	0.0040	0.010	35 dB	43 dB

Notes:

1 Frequent Events are defined as more than 70 vibration events per day. Most rapid transit projects fall into this category.

2 Infrequent Events are defined as fewer than 70 vibration events per day. This category includes most commuter rail systems.

3 This criterion limit is based on levels that are acceptable for most moderately sensitive equipment, such as optical microscopes. Vibration sensitive manufacturing or research will require detailed evaluation to define acceptable vibration levels. Ensuring lower vibration levels in a building often requires special design of the HVAC systems and stiffened floors.

4 Vibration sensitive equipment is not sensitive to ground-borne noise.

5 For historic buildings and ruins, the allowable upper limit for continuous vibration to structures is identified to be 0.056 in/sec rms. Transient conditions (single-event) would be limited to approximately twice the continuous acceptable value.

6 For Categories 2 and 3 with occupied facilities, isolated events, such as blasting, are significant when peak particle velocity (PPV) exceeds 1 in/sec. Non-transportation vibration sources, such as impact pile drivers or hydraulic breakers, are significant when their PPV exceeds 0.1 in/sec. More specific criteria for structures and potential annoyance were developed by Caltrans (2004) and will be used to evaluate these continuous or transient sources in San Diego County.

9.2.3 Cultural Resources

Data regarding cultural resources were obtained through a literature review, record search, and field survey conducted by Gallegos and Associates, as detailed in the July 2007 Cultural Resource Report provided in Appendix H to this EIR. A records search and general site observation were also completed in areas that could be potentially impacted from the revised alignment but were not previously identified (Gallegos and Associates 2008).

9.2.3.1 Discussion of Existing Conditions Relating to Cultural Resources

Cultural resource sites identified as CA-SDI-4558 and CA-SDI-9822, both of which are within the Deer Springs Road corridor, have been previously tested and identified as significant under the County of San Diego and CEQA criteria. This is on the basis of human remains and a pictograph feature at CA-SDI-9822, and because CA-SDI-4558 included bedrock milling features, and foundations from remains of residential structures.

Previously Recorded Sites

CA-SDI-4558. Site CA-SDI-4558 was relocated as part of the July 2007 cultural study and two additional bedrock milling features were identified. This site appears to be in the same condition as reported by Cook et al. (1977). One foundation was identified in the central portion of the site, and another foundation was identified adjacent to the north of the site. Both foundations appear to be the remains of residential structures that were described by Cook et al. (1977). Disturbance noted includes foot traffic, the construction of Deer Springs Road, construction of houses, paved access roads, grading, agricultural use, and trash dumping.

CA-SDI-9822. Site CA-SDI-9822 was relocated during the current survey. Bedrock milling features and the rock with the red pigment pictograph were relocated. Surface artifacts noted included debitage, pottery, a ceramic pipe, and burned bone. Rodent disturbance, modern trash dumping, and foot traffic were also noted. A protective fence installed by Palomar College is still in place around most of the site area; however, the fence has been partially torn down along Deer Springs Road. The southern portion of site, north of Deer Springs Road, is currently eroding into the road.

9.2.3.2 Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

The following guidelines will be considered substantial evidence that a significant impact to cultural resources would occur if:

1) The GPA/CE, as designed, causes a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical or archaeological resource as defined in Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines

2) The GPA/CE is inconsistent with the County Resource Protection Ordinance (RPO) relative to prehistoric and historic sites

3) The GPA/CE, as designed, disturbs any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.

9.2.3.3 Analysis of General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element Effects and Determination of Significance

Guideline 1: Change in Significance to an Historical or Archaeological Resource

Sites CA-SDI-4558 and CA-SDI-9822 are identified as significant under CEQA. The Circulation Element Amendment has the potential to disturb or damage these sites.

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification:
CA-SDI-4558: Site CA-SDI-4558 is located immediately adjacent to the existing two-lane roadway and is classified as an historic resource under CEQA. A portion of this site would be directly impacted by Deer Springs Road improvements if the roadway were improved to a Prime Arterial classification (Impact GPA/CE-CR-1). If the roadway were constructed to its ultimate classification of six lanes, a portion of this site could be avoided and placed within an open space easement; however, indirect impacts would occur from construction, increased accessibility, and the potential for pot-hunters/looters (Impact GPA/CE-CR-2).

CA-SDI-9822: Site CA-SDI-9822 is located adjacent to the existing two-lane roadway and is classified as an historical resource under CEQA and likely contains burned bone. A portion of this site would be directly impacted by Deer Springs Road improvements if the roadway were improved to a Prime Arterial classification (Impact CR-3). If the roadway were constructed to its ultimate classification of six lanes, a portion of this site could be avoided and placed within an open space easement; however, indirect impacts would occur from construction, increased accessibility, and the potential for pot-hunters/looters (Impact CR-4).

As seen in the Cultural Resources Letter Report (Gallegos & Associates, December 2008 (Appendix H to this EIR)), field surveys were not able to be completed for portions of the

roadway improvements located within private property due to access restrictions. Therefore, in the absence of field surveys in areas with restricted access, a significant impact could potentially occur due to the presence of unknown cultural resources in the location of ultimate road disturbance (Impact CR-5).

Buena Creek Road Extension: The Buena Creek Road extension is not applicable in relation to a plan-to-ground analysis because the roadway alignment does not currently exist and no improvements are proposed along the alignment identified in the adopted Circulation Element. No impact would result.

Bicycle Lane: An analysis in relation to the bicycle lane removal is not relevant to cultural resource impacts because no ground disturbance would occur. No impact would result.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification:
CA-SDI-4558: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would increase the ground disturbance required to improve the roadway from its planned condition. CA-SDI-4558 is located immediately adjacent to the existing two-lane roadway and is classified as an historic resource under CEQA (see Impacts GPA/CE-CR-1 and GPA/CE-CR-2).

CA-SDI-9822: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would increase the ground disturbance required to improve the roadway from its planned condition. Site CA-SDI-9822 is located adjacent to the existing two-lane roadway and is classified as an historical resource under CEQA (see Impacts CR-3 and CR-4).

Buena Creek Road Extension: The Buena Creek Road extension would be removed under the proposed reclassification. The removal of the proposed extension would eliminate the potential for disturbance of cultural resources that may be present along the proposed alignment. No impact would result.

Bicycle Lane: An analysis in relation to the bicycle lane removal is not relevant to cultural resource impacts because no ground disturbance would occur. No impact would result.

Senate Bill 18. Consultation meetings were held at the County of San Diego Department of Planning and Land Use to address Native American concerns on November 9, 2004 (see Appendix H to this EIR) and September 26, 2007; June 3, 2008; and January 26, 2009, in relation to sites CA-SDI-4558 and CA-SDI-9882 associated with off-site improvements required for the Merriam Mountains SP. Following the September meeting, a field trip to the cultural sites

was initiated by the County on October 5, 2007. At the time the roadway is potentially widened to six lanes, the County will be required per senate bill (SB) 18 to contact the Native American Heritage Commission to request information and/or input regarding Native American concerns either directly or indirectly associated with Deer Springs Road improvements, in addition to notification that has occurred to date for the Merriam Mountains SP. Refer to Appendix H to this EIR for a discussion of SB 18 consultation in relation to sites CA-SDI-4558 and CA-SDI-9882.

Guideline 2: General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element's Consistency with RPO

The GPA/CE is a General Plan Amendment and RPO does not apply to General Plan amendments. Therefore, the guideline does not apply and is not addressed in this chapter.

Guideline 3: Disturbance to Human Remains

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification:
CA-SDI-4558: Per site testing and surface evaluation, there is a low potential for human remains to be located within the site limits. The surface evaluation and testing noted little bone or shell recovered. In the event that burned boned was present, the preservation was poor due to past site disturbance. Although no human remains or potential grave goods were identified during site testing, CEQA Guidelines require provisions for accidental discovery of human remains. In the event that unknown human remains are discovered, a grading monitoring and recovery program will be implemented during construction per County and state requirements.

CA-SDI-9822: Surface artifacts within the limits of the cultural site include burned bone. The exact limits of the burned boned location are unknown due to past site disturbance and accessibility restrictions. Therefore, the roadway would be located in an area where there is potential for the disturbance of human remains and impacts would be significant (see Impact CR-3).

Buena Creek Road Extension: The Buena Creek Road extension is not applicable in relation to a plan-to-ground analysis because the roadway alignment does not currently exist and no improvements are proposed along the alignment identified in the adopted Circulation Element. No impact would result.

Bicycle Lane: An analysis in relation to the bicycle lane removal is not relevant to cultural resource impacts because no ground disturbance would be required. No impacts would result.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification:
CA-SDI-4558: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would increases the ground disturbance required to improve the roadway from its planned condition. Per site testing and surface evaluation, there is a low potential for human remains to be located within the proposed disturbance limits. The surface evaluation and testing noted little bone or shell recovered. In the event that burned boned was present, the preservation was poor due to past site disturbance. Although no human remains or potential grave goods were identified during site testing, CEQA Guidelines require provisions for accidental discovery of human remains. In the event that unknown human remains are discovered, a grading monitoring and recovery program will be implemented during construction per County and state requirements.

CA-SDI-9822: The reclassification of Deer Springs Road would increase the ground disturbance to improve the roadway from Major Road to Prime Arterial. Surface artifacts within the limits of the cultural site include burned bone. The exact limits of the burned boned location are unknown due to past site disturbance and accessibility restrictions. Therefore, the roadway would be located in an area where there is the potential for the disturbance of human remains and impacts would be significant (see Impact CR-3).

Buena Creek Road Extension: The Buena Creek Road extension would be removed under the proposed reclassification. The removal of the proposed extension would eliminate the potential for disturbance of human remains that may be present along the proposed alignment. No impact would result.

Bicycle Lane: An analysis in relation to the bicycle lane removal is not relevant to disturbance of human remains because ground disturbance would occur with the proposed limits for a Prime Arterial roadway. No impacts would result beyond those identified under the discussion of the Deer Springs Road reclassification.

Summary of Impacts

The following cultural resource impacts have been identified:

GPA/CE-CR-1 Direct impacts to a portion of site CA-SDI-4558 due to improvements to Deer Springs Road would be considered significant.

GPA/CE-CR-2 Indirect impacts to site CA-SDI-4558 due to improvements to Deer Springs Road and increased accessibility would be considered significant.

GPA/CE-CR-3 Direct impacts to a portion of site CA-SDI-9822 due to improvements to Deer Springs Road, which may contain human remains would be considered significant.

GPA/CE-CR-4 Indirect impacts to site CA-SDI-9822 due to improvements to Deer Springs Road and increased accessibility would be considered significant.

GPA/CE-CR-5 Potential to discover unknown resources that have not been recorded would be significant should the potential for cultural resources be identified.

9.2.3.4 Mitigation Measures

Appendix H to the August 2007 Merriam Mountains EIR recommended the following mitigation measures for impacts to cultural resources as a result of roadway widening along Deer Springs Road.

M- GPA/CE-CR-1a A grading monitoring and data recovery program for Site CA-SDI-4558 shall be completed as shown in the Cultural Resources Report, prepared by Gallegos and Associates, dated July 2007 (see Appendix H to the EIR).

M- GPA/CE-CR-1b All cultural resources excavated or removed from Site CA-SDI-4558 during grading and construction will be curated as described in Appendix H.

M- GPA/CE-CR-2a All areas designated as environmentally sensitive during construction will be fenced and have clean fill capping where possible, as well as minor capping where possible, as described in Appendix H.

M- GPA/CE-CR-2b The two significant sites will be placed in open space easements and monitored as described in Appendix H to this EIR and Appendix T to the Merriam Mountains Specific Plan Draft EIR, dated August 2007.

M- GPA/CE-CR-3 A grading monitoring and data recovery program for Site CA-SDI-9822 shall be completed as detailed in the Cultural Resources Report, prepared by Gallegos and Associates, dated July 2007.

M- GPA/CE-CR-4 All areas designated as environmentally sensitive will be temporarily fenced during construction and have minor capping as needed, as

described in Appendix H. The site will be placed in open space easement and monitored as described in M-GPA/CE-CR-2b.

M- GPA/CE-CR-5 A field survey will be completed prior to issuance of grading permits for widening to six lanes to determine if any unrecorded cultural sites are located within those portions of the proposed alignment on restricted private property that were not surveyed. If significant sites are identified, appropriate measures will be implemented potentially including data recovery as recommended by the project archaeologist in consultation with the County and consistent with the CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 (c) and (f).

9.2.3.5 Conclusion

Implementation of the roadway reclassification would result in significant unavoidable impacts to sites CA-SDI-4558 and CA-SDI-9822 (Impacts GPA/CE-CR-1 and GPA/CE-CR-3), which are both considered significant historical resources under CEQA. Implementation of Mitigation Measures M-GPA/CE-CR-1a, M-GPA/CE-CR-1b, and M-GPA/CE-CR-3 would include a grading monitoring and data recovery program; however, impacts would remain significant and unavoidable because portions of the historical sites would be directly impacted. Indirect impacts to sites CA-SDI-4558 and CA-SDI-9822 have been identified as Impacts GPA/CE-CR-2 and GPA/CE-CR-4. Mitigation Measures M-GPA/CE-CR-2a, M-GPA/CE-CR-2b, and M-GPA/CE-CR-4 would reduce indirect impacts to a level below significance through measures such as the placement of temporary fencing to prevent access to the sites and minor capping. In the absence of field surveys conducted within restricted areas, a significant impact could potentially occur (Impact GPA/CE-CR-5). Mitigation Measure M-GPA/CE-CR-5 would ensure a field survey is completed prior to issuance of grading permits for widening to six lanes to determine if any unrecorded cultural sites are located within those portions of the proposed alignment on restricted private property that were not surveyed. Implementation of M-GPA/CE-CR-5 would reduce impacts to a level below significance because the area that could not be accessed to complete a field survey will be surveyed to determine whether cultural resources not previously recorded are located within the area proposed for roadway widening and measures consistent with CEQA Guidelines will be implemented.

9.2.4 Transportation/Circulation

This evaluation of traffic impacts incorporates the results of the traffic modeling completed by Linscott, Law and Greenspan (LLG) in January 2009 (Appendix M to this EIR). Applicable information from traffic modeling is summarized below.

The proposed alignment for Deer Springs Road between Sarver Lane and Twin Oaks Valley Road was determined through the design exception request process. A design exception was proposed along this portion of the roadway because the design speed for a Prime Arterial could not be accommodated along the existing two-lane roadway alignment. The roadway configuration provided in the GPA/CE for a Prime Arterial roadway classification was approved through the design exception process by DPW on August 22, 2008.

The design exception request included several alignment alternatives for Deer Springs Road near Sarver Lane. The design exception request included a review of the potential hardships that would be included with the implementation of eight different alignments of the roadway between Sarver Lane and Twin Oaks Valley Road. The proposed alignment includes a 45 mph with 6 percent superelevation and a curve radius of 750 feet. This alignment has been chosen to avoid substantial impacts to existing and proposed land uses adjacent to Deer Springs Road, which would result from other alternatives traversing the eastern side of the existing Deer Springs Road. The alignment will also avoid impacts to prime agricultural parcels (some identified as Williamson Act parcels), and impacts to an historic school house. Figure 9.2.2-D includes a conceptual striping plan for the six-lane roadway alignment.

9.2.4.1 Discussion of Existing Conditions Relating to Transportation/Circulation

The following general description of roadways affected by the Circulation Element Amendment is based on road classifications of the County of San Diego Circulation Element and City of San Marcos Circulation Element.

Deer Springs Road is classified as a Major Road (with bicycle network) on the County of San Diego's Circulation Element. Deer Springs Road is currently a two-lane roadway. Parking is generally prohibited. The shoulders are unimproved. Deer Springs Road has both horizontal and vertical curves. The posted speed limit ranges from 45 to 55 mph. No bike lanes are currently provided. The southern terminus of Deer Springs Road is at Twin Oaks Valley Road.

Twin Oaks Valley Road is classified as a Major Road north of Borden Road, and as a Prime Arterial south of Borden Road on the City of San Marcos Circulation Element. Twin Oaks

Valley Road is currently a two-lane undivided roadway with a two-way left-turn lane and a 45 mph posted speed limit from Twin Oaks Valley Road to Cassou Road.

Buena Creek Road is classified as a Major Road (with bicycle network) on the County of San Diego's Circulation Element. Buena Creek Road is a rural two-lane roadway fronting farmland and residential property, with bicycle lanes and a 50 mph posted speed limit. The adopted Circulation Element proposes an extension from Deer Springs Road to Sugarbush Drive (see Figure 9.1.1-B).

South Santa Fe Avenue is classified as a Major Road on the County of San Diego's Circulation Element. South Santa Fe Avenue is currently a two-lane roadway with a center two-way left turn lane. Parking is generally prohibited. The posted speed limit is 45 mph. Specifically, South Santa Fe Avenue from Woodland Drive to Buena Creek Road was included in the analysis.

North Centre City Parkway is classified as a Collector Road (with bicycle network) on the County of San Diego's Circulation Element. North Centre City Parkway is currently a two-lane roadway. Parking is generally prohibited. The shoulders are unimproved. North Centre City Parkway has rural characteristics. The posted speed limit is 55 mph. The following sections of North Centre City Parkway were included in the analysis:

- Mountain Meadow Road to I-15 ramps
- I-15 ramps to Country Club Lane.

Monte Vista Drive is a two-lane roadway on the County of San Diego's Circulation Element. Curbside parking is generally not allowed, and the posted speed limit is 45 mph in the GPA/CE vicinity. Specifically, Monte Vista Drive from Foothills Drive to Buena Creek Road was included in the analysis.

Mesa Rock Road is an unclassified roadway on the County of San Diego's Circulation Element. It is currently constructed as a two-lane undivided roadway. Parking is prohibited. There is no posted speed limit. Specifically, Mesa Rock Road from Deer Springs Road to North Centre City Parkway was included in the analysis.

Champagne Boulevard is classified as a Collector Road (with bicycle network) on the County of San Diego's Circulation Element. Champagne Boulevard is currently constructed as a two-lane roadway. Parking is generally prohibited and the shoulders are unimproved. Champagne Boulevard has rural characteristics. The posted speed limit is 55 mph. The following sections of Champagne Boulevard were included in the anaylsis:

- Old Castle Road to Lawrence Welk Drive
- Lawrence Welk Drive to Mountain Meadow Road.

9.2.4.2 Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

The relevant guideline for significant transportation/circulation impacts associated with the Circulation Element Amendment is as follows:

> 1. The proposed Circulation Element Amendment would result in roadway segments operating at LOS E or LOS F due to redistribution of ADT from the proposed reclassification along Deer Springs Road and the Buena Creek Road extension removal.

This significance guideline for the affected portion of the circulation system within the County of San Diego is based on the County's 1993 Public Facilities Element and most recent amendment approved on October 15, 2008. The San Diego County Guidelines for Determining Significance (2006) state that a significant impact could occur if the project would either: (a) reduce the LOS below D on abutting intersections or segments of circulation element roads, or (b) significantly impact congestion on such roads that are currently operating at an LOS E or F.

9.2.4.3 Analysis of General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element Effects and Determination of Significance

<u>Guideline 1: Result in Roadway Segments Operating at LOS E or LOS F Due to Redistribution of ADT</u>

To evaluate whether roadway segments would operate at LOS E or F with implementation of the proposed Circulation Element Amendment two traffic models were completed:

- Current Circulation Element – Year 2030 Analysis with Existing Circulation Element Classification – Includes the General Plan Update land uses based on SANDAG regional traffic forecasts within the County of San Diego with Deer Springs Road classified as a four-lane Major Road, which is consistent with the currently adopted Circulation Element. The model also includes the Buena Creek Road extension at Sarver Lane.
- General Plan Amendment Circulation Element Amendment – Year 2030 Analysis with Proposed Circulation Element Reclassification. Includes the General Plan Update land uses based on SANDAG regional traffic forecasts within the County of San Diego with Deer Springs Road classified as a six-lane Prime Arterial. The Buena Creek Road extension at Sarver Lane is not included.

A traffic model was obtained from SANDAG, entitled "SANDAG County of San Diego General Plan Update Spinoff Forecast (September 2008)." The model has been developed over time as part of the General Plan Update process and reflects the most accurate information available to model projected traffic volumes, including the current adopted Circulation Elements for both the City of Escondido and the City of San Marcos. The traffic model was used to determine the projected traffic volumes on Deer Springs Road and nearby roadways.

Table 9.2.4-2 identifies the LOS that would occur for roadway segment operations for both the currently adopted Circulation Element and proposed Circulation Element Amendment.

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: A plan-to-ground analysis is not necessary for this significance guideline because the guideline relates to LOS due to redistribution of traffic at buildout of the General Plan. This significance guideline is addressed only under the Plan-to-Plan analysis that follows.

Buena Creek Road Extension: A plan-to-ground analysis is not necessary for this significance guideline because the guideline relates to LOS due to redistribution of traffic at buildout of the General Plan. This significance guideline is addressed only under the Plan-to-Plan analysis that follows.

Bicycle Lane: A plan-to-ground analysis is not necessary for this significance guideline because the guideline relates to LOS due to redistribution of traffic at buildout of the General Plan. This significance guideline is addressed only under the Plan-to-Plan analysis that follows. .

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification and Buena Creek Road Extension: As seen in Table 9.2.4-2, the proposed reclassification of Deer Springs Road and removal of the Buena Creek Road extension would result in roadway segments operating at an acceptable LOS with the exception of Twin Oaks Valley Road (Deer Springs Road to Buena Creek Road) and Mountain Meadow Road (east of Champagne Boulevard). In the case of Mountain Meadow Road, the roadway is projected to operate at LOS F under both the existing and proposed Circulation Elements and no reduction in LOS would occur as a result of the proposed Circulation Element Amendment. LOS on Twin Oaks Valley Road would be reduced from C to F with the proposed Circulation Element Amendment. This is due to redistribution of traffic associated with the elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension. As seen in Table 9.2.4-2, the proposed Circulation Element Amendment would result in significant impacts along Twin Oaks Valley Road from Deer Springs

Road to Buena Creek Road, which is located within the City of San Marcos (Impact GPA/CE-TR-1).

Bicycle Lane: The proposed removal of the Buena Creek Road bicycle path would reduce the potential for regional connectivity. The proposed reclassification would not preclude the County from providing additional bicycle routes to provide regional connectivity in the future. The proposed Circulation Element Amendment would also provide a bicycle lane along Deer Springs Road similar to that identified under the adopted Circulation Element from I-15 south to Twin Oaks Valley Road. Therefore impacts would be less than significant.

Summary of Impacts

The following transportation/circulation impact has been identified:

GPA/CE-TR-1 An increase in ADT resulting in Twin Oaks Valley Road (Deer Springs Road toBuena Creek Road segment) operating below an acceptable LOS, which would be considered significant.

9.2.4.4 Mitigation Measure

M- GPA/CE-TR-1 The County of San Diego will coordinate with the City of San Marcos regarding a GPA to the City's Circulation Element to incorporate a reclassification of Twin Oaks Valley Road to accommodate planned land uses.

9.2.4.5 Conclusion

The Circulation Element Amendment does not trigger the thresholds of significance for any road segments with the exception of Twin Oaks Valley Road (Deer Springs Road to Buena Creek Road segment) (Impact GPA/CE-TR-1). Mitigation Measure M- GPA/CE-TR-1 calls for the County of San Diego to coordinate with the City of San Marcos regarding a GPA to the City's Circulation Element to accommodate the vehicle trips associated with planned land uses. However, there is no assurance that the City of San Marcos would process or approve a GPA and the impact is therefore conservatively determined to be significant and unavoidable.

Table 9.2.4–1
Existing Segment Operations

Segment	Existing Roadway Class [a]	LOS E Capacity (ADT) [b]	Existing	
			Volume (ADT) [c]	LOS
Deer Springs Road				
Twin Oaks Valley Rd. to Meadow Park Ln.	2 Ln. Coll.	16,200	18,400	F
Meadow Park Ln. to Merriam Mountains Pkwy.	2 Ln. Coll.	16,200	16,300	F
Merriam Mountains Pkwy. to Mesa Rock Rd.	2 Ln. Coll.	16,200	16,300	F
Mesa Rock Rd. to I-15 SB Ramps	2 Ln. Coll.	16,200	22,300	F
I-15 SB Ramps to I-15 NB Ramps			14,900	E
I-15 NB Ramps to Champagne Blvd.	4 Ln. Coll.	34,200	11,800	A
Mountain Meadow Road				
East of Champagne Blvd.	4 Ln. Coll.	34,200	7,200	A
Twin Oaks Valley Road [d]				
Solar Ln. to Deer Springs Rd.	2 Ln. Coll.	16,200	2,300	B
Deer Springs Rd. to Buena Creek Rd. [h]	Town Coll. [e]	19,000	16,600	E
Buena Creek Rd. to Cassou Rd.	Town Coll. [e]	19,000	18,200	E
Cassou Rd. to La Cienega Rd.	4 Ln. Art. [f]	40,000	19,350	B
La Cienega Rd. to Windy Wy.	4 Ln. Art. [f]	40,000	24,500	C
Windy Wy. to Borden Rd.	Town Coll. [g]	19,000	24,500	F
Borden Rd. to Richmar Ave.	Town Coll. [e]	19,000	30,000	F
Richmar Ave. to San Marcos Blvd.	4 Ln. Art. [f]	40,000	28,300	D
San Marcos Blvd. to SR 78 WB Ramps	6 Ln. Prime Art. [g]	60,000	41,500	C
Mesa Rock Road				
Deer Springs Rd to N. Centre City Pkwy	2 Ln. Coll.	16,200	900	A
Buena Creek Road				
S. Santa Fe Ave. to Monte Vista Dr.	2 Ln. Coll.	16,200	10,900	D
Monte Vista Dr. to Deer Springs Rd.	2 Ln. Coll.	16,200	10,600	D
Monte Vista Drive				
Foothills Dr. to Buena Creek Rd.	2 Ln. Coll.	16,200	8,700	D
Champagne Blvd				
Old Castle Rd to Lawrence Welk Dr	2 Ln. Coll.	16,200	5,500	C
Lawrence Welk Dr to Mountain Meadow Rd	2 Ln. Coll.	16,200	6,600	C
North Centre City Pkwy				
Mountain Meadow Rd to I-15 Ramps	2 Ln. Coll.	16,200	5,900	C
I-15 Ramps to Country Club Dr.	4 Ln. Coll.	34,200	12,100	A
South Santa Fe Ave.				
Woodland Dr to Buena Creek Rd	2 Ln. Coll.	16,200	18,900	F

a. Existing roadway includes on-the-ground roadway operations and does not include the existing Circulation Element classification.
b. Capacity of roadway facility for LOS E based on County of San Diego and City of San Marcos facilities.
c. Existing volume.
d. All of Twin Oaks Valley Road within the City of San Marcos except the section of Twin Oaks Valley Road north of Deer Springs Road.
e. The roadway is one lane in each direction with a center turn lane. No appropriate roadway classification exists in the City of San Marcos roadway classification. Hence, the County of San Diego classification of Town Collector was assumed.
f. Four-Lane Secondary Arterial, City of San Marcos.
g. Six-Lane Prime Arterial, City of San Marcos
h. Roadway segment located within the City of San Marcos

Table 9.2.4-2
Year 2030 ADT Comparison
General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element

Segment	Current Circulation Element [a]				Circulation Element General Plan Amendment [b]			
	Year 2030 Roadway Class	LOS E Capacity (ADT)	Volume (ADT)	LOS	Year 2030 Roadway Class	LOS E Capacity (ADT)	Volume (ADT)	LOS
Deer Springs Road								
Twin Oaks Valley Rd. to Meadow Park Ln. [c]	4 Ln. Major Rd.	37,000	51,100	F	6 Ln. Prime Art.	57,000	44,000	C
Meadow Park Ln. to Merriam Mountains Pkwy.	4 Ln. Major Rd.	37,000	51,100	F	6 Ln. Prime Art.	57,000	44,000	C
Merriam Mountains Pkwy. to Mesa Rock Rd.	4 Ln. Major Rd.	37,000	51,100	F	6 Ln. Prime Art.	57,000	44,000	C
Mesa Rock Rd. to I-15 SB Ramps	4 Ln. Major Rd.	37,000	62,900	F	6 Ln. Prime Art.	67,000 [d]	55,000	D
I-15 SB Ramps to I-15 NB Ramps	4 Ln. Major Rd.	37,000	62,200	F	6 Ln. Prime Art.	67,000 [d]	59,000	D
I-15 NB Ramps to Champagne Blvd.	4 Ln. Major Rd.	37,000	56,300	F	6 Ln. Prime Art.	67,000 [d]	52,000	C
Mountain Meadow Road								
East of Champagne Blvd.	4 Ln. Major Rd.	37,000	39,500	F	4 Ln. Major Rd.	37,000	38,700	F
Twin Oaks Valley Road								
North of Deer Springs Rd. [c]	2 Ln. Rural Coll.	16,200	5,000	C	2 Ln. Rural Coll.	16,200	7,100	C
Deer Springs Rd. to Buena Creek Rd. [e]	4 Ln. Major Art.	40,000	26,700	C	4 Ln. Major Art.	40,000	43,900	F
Buena Creek Rd. to Cassou Rd. [e]	4 Ln. Major Art.	40,000	18,200	B	4 Ln. Major Art.	40,000	21,100	C
Cassou Rd. to Borden Rd. [e]	4 Ln. Major Art.	40,000	17,400	B	4 Ln. Major Art.	40,000	20,100	C
Borden Rd. to Richmar Ave. [e]	6 Ln. Prime Art.	60,000	21,700	B	6 Ln. Prime Art.	60,000	25,000	B
Richmar Ave. to San Marcos Blvd. [e]	6 Ln. Prime Art.	60,000	30,000	B	6 Ln. Prime Art.	60,000	34,000	C
San Marcos Blvd. to SR 78 WB Ramps [e]	6 Ln. Prime Art.	60,000	47,400	D	6 Ln. Prime Art.	60,000	51,000	D
Mesa Rock Road								
South of Deer Springs Road	2 Ln. Coll.	16,200	3,100	B	2 Ln. Coll.	16,200	3,300	B
Buena Creek Road								
S. Santa Fe. Ave. to Monte Vista Dr.	4 Ln. Major Rd.	37,000	33,000	D	4 Ln. Major Rd.	37,000	24,200	B

Table 9.2.4-2 (Continued)

Segment	Current Circulation Element [a]				Circulation Element General Plan Amendment [b]			
	Year 2030 Roadway Class	LOS E Capacity (ADT)	Volume (ADT)	LOS	Year 2030 Roadway Class	LOS E Capacity (ADT)	Volume (ADT)	LOS
Monte Vista Dr. to Deer Springs Rd. [c]	4 Ln. Major Rd.	37,000	12,800	A	4 Ln. Major Rd.	37,000	22,700	B
Monte Vista Drive								
Foothills Dr. to Buena Creek Rd.	4 Ln. Major Rd.	37,000	20,000	B	4 Ln. Major Rd.	37,000	18,500	B
Champagne Boulevard								
Gopher Canyon Rd. to Lawrence Welk Dr.	4 Ln. Major Rd.	37,000	23,400	B	4 Ln. Major Rd.	37,000	24,600	B
Lawrence Welk Dr. to Mountain Meadow Rd.	4 Ln. Major Rd.	37,000	20,100	B	4 Ln. Major Rd.	37,000	20,700	B
North Centre City Parkway								
Mountain Meadow Rd. to Jesmond Dene Rd.	4 Ln. Major Rd.	37,000	31,400	D	4 Ln. Major Rd.	37,000	32,500	D
Jesmond Dene Rd. to Country Club Dr.	4 Ln. Major Rd.	37,000	25,000	C	4 Ln. Major Rd.	37,000	26,300	C
South Santa Fe Avenue								
Woodland Dr. to Buena Creek Rd.	4 Ln. Major Rd.	37,000	30,900	D	4 Ln. Major Rd.	37,000	31,200	D

Notes:

a. General Plan Update for all land uses, four-lane Deer Springs Road and with extension of Buena Creek Road to Deer Springs Road (at Sarver Lane).

b. General Plan Update for all land uses, six-lane Deer Springs Road and no extension of Buena Creek Road to Deer Springs Road (at Sarver Lane).

c. Majority of the roadway is within the County of San Diego.

d. Estimated capacity with auxiliary lanes between Mesa Rock Road and Champagne Boulevard. The auxiliary lanes were determined to be required to allow the nearby intersection to operate at an acceptable LOS. It may be noted that the Merriam Mountains EIR recommends the addition of auxiliary lanes as a mitigation measure. Additional ROW for the required auxiliary lanes has been included in the proposed footprint provided in Figure 9.1.1-C.

e. Roadway segments located in the City of San Marcos. Balance of the roadways are in the County of San Diego.

The projected traffic volumes would decrease along Deer Springs Road from Twin Oaks Valley Road to Champagne Boulevard with implementation of the proposed Circulation Element Amendment. The traffic volumes would decrease along this roadway segment because the elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would redistribute the traffic to other existing roadways than was originally anticipated along Deer Springs Road.

Source: Linscott, Law and Greenspan 2009.

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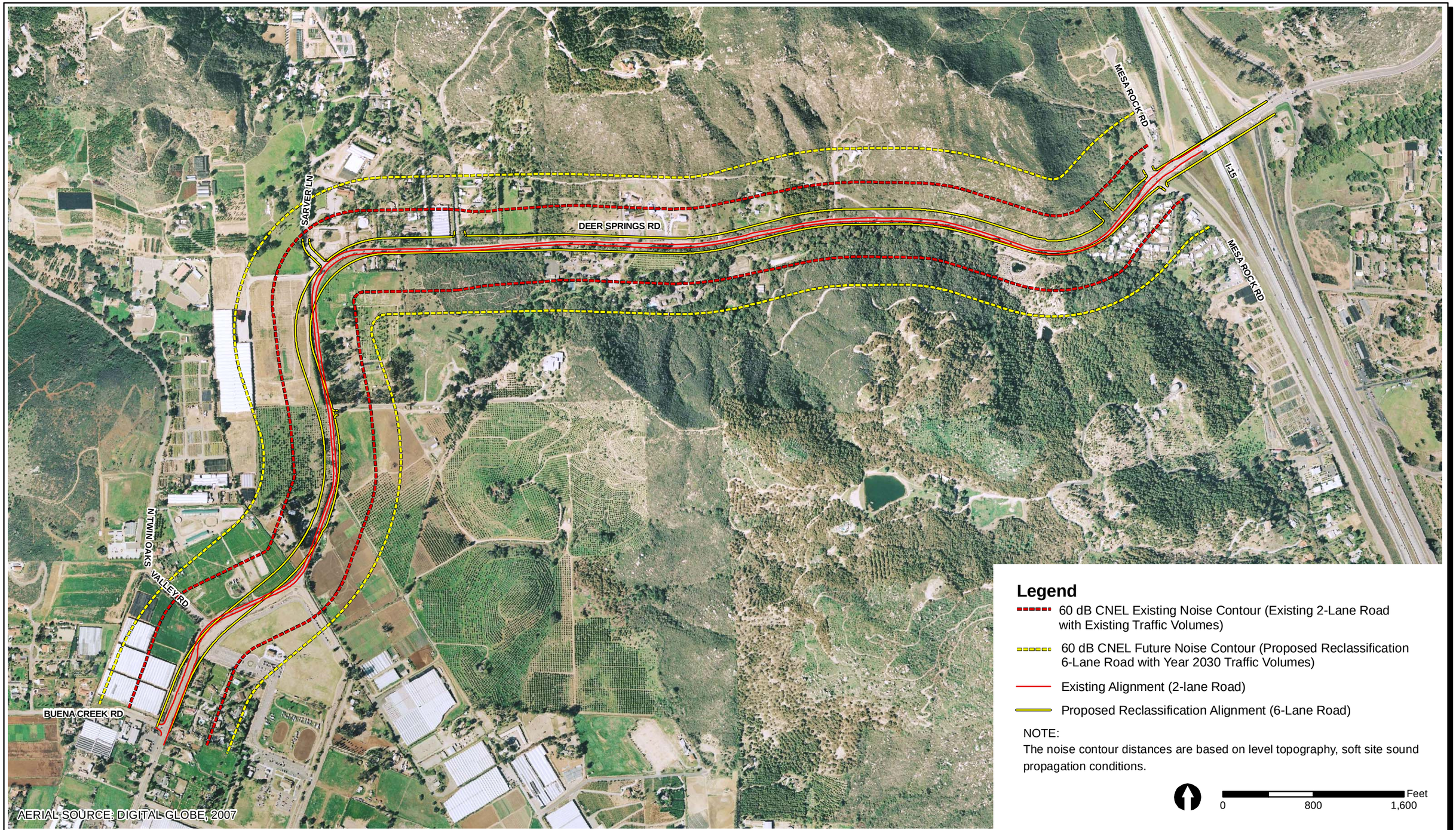

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General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element - Deer Springs Road

Existing and Future 60 dB CNEL Noise Contours - Plan to Ground

FIGURE
9.2.2-A

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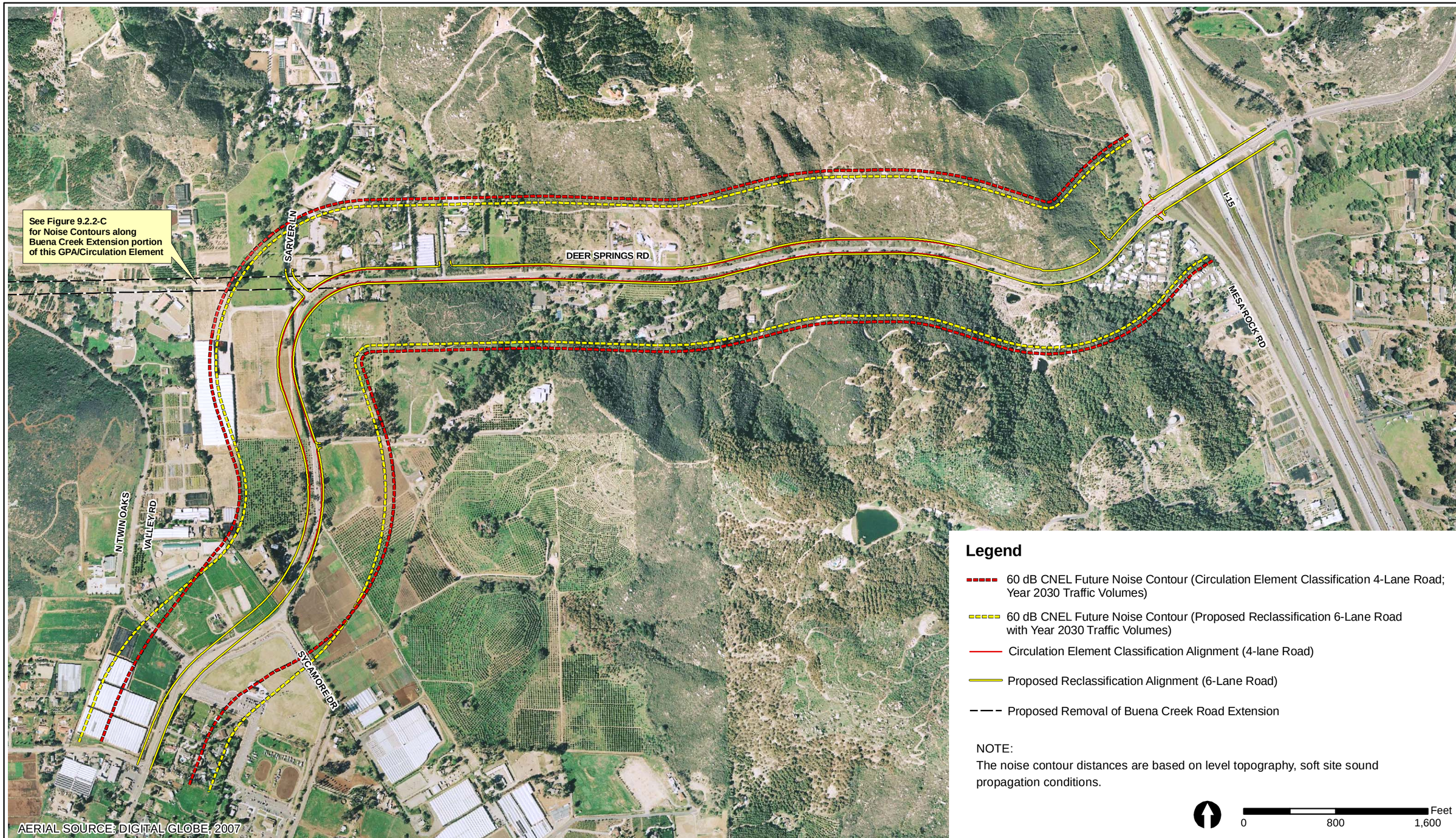

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General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element - Deer Springs Road

Future 60 dB CNEL Noise Contours - Plan to Plan

FIGURE
9.2.2-B

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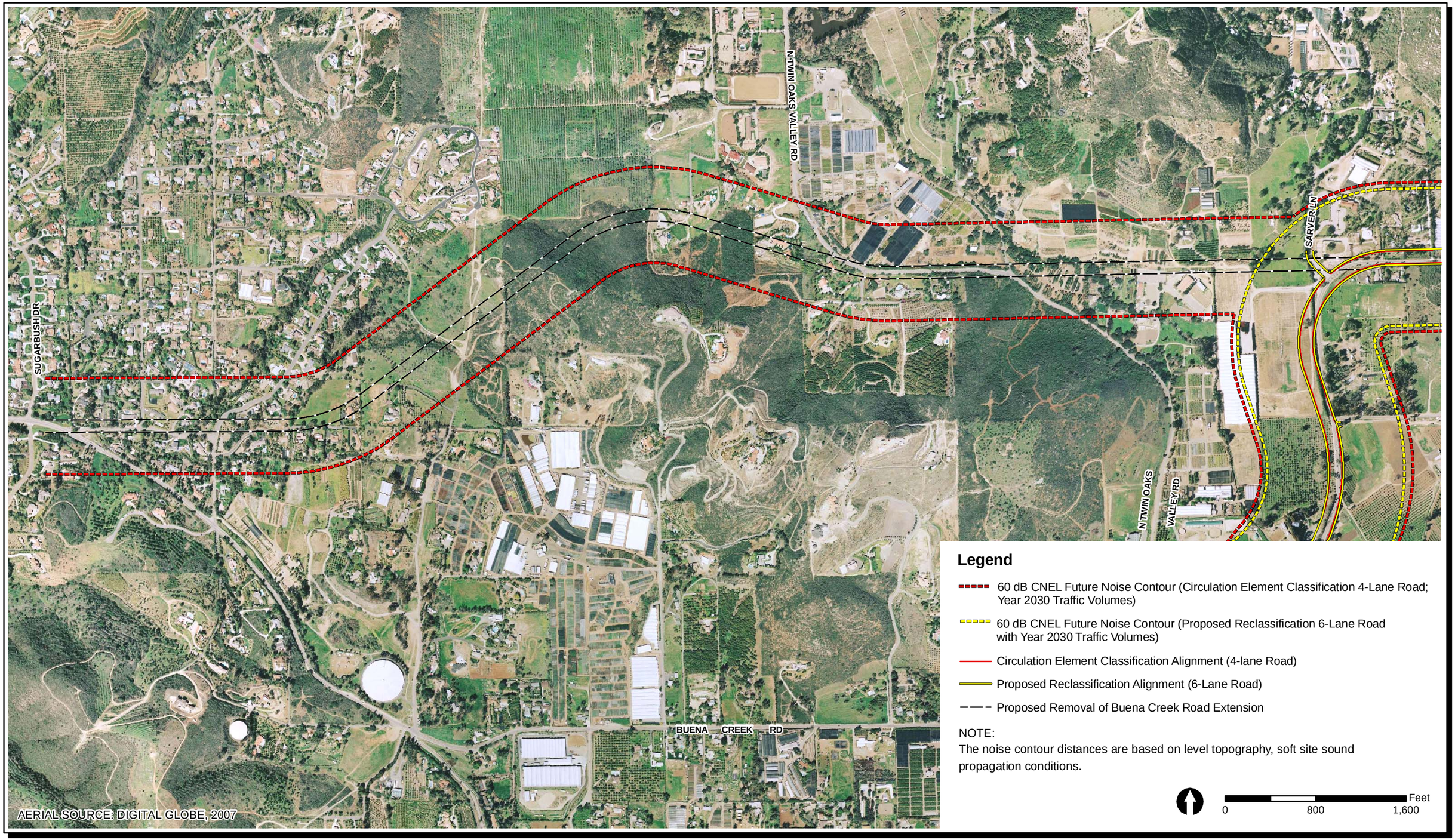

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General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element - Deer Springs Road

Existing Circulation Element 60 dB CNEL Noise Contours - Buena Creek Road Extension

FIGURE
9.2.2-C

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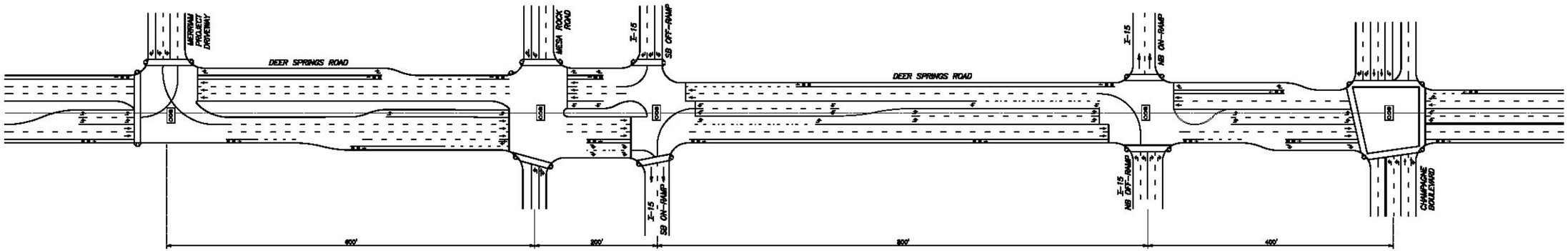
Notes:

Alternative I – All Intersections Coordinated
Alternative II – Intersections Coordinated with a single controller for the Mesa Rock Road & I–15 Southbound Ramps intersections.



Legend:

– Traffic Signal

– Bike Lane

NOT TO SCALE
SOURCE: LINSCOTT LAW GREENSPAN, December 2008

Alternative I & II Conceptual Striping Plan

FIGURE
9.2.2-D

MERRIAM MOUNTAINS
SPECIFIC PLAN EIR

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9.3 Significant Environmental Effects that Can be Mitigated

9.3.1 Biological Resources

This evaluation of impacts to biological resources incorporates the results of the Biological Resources Technical Memorandum completed by Dudek in December 2008. Applicable information from Biological Resources Technical Memorandum is summarized below.

9.3.1.1 Existing Conditions and Regulatory Setting

Existing conditions and the regulatory setting in relation to biological resources in the vicinity of the Circulation Element Amendment are as follows.

Vegetation Communities and Habitats

Vegetation communities in the Deer Springs Road ROW for the proposed reclassification are shown on Figures 9.3.1-A through 9.3.1-C. The following vegetation types are located within the proposed alignment for Deer Springs Road: Disturbed Habitat, Urban/Developed, Orchard, Eucalyptus Woodland, General Agriculture, Orchard, Southern Mixed Chaparral, Disturbed Coastal Sage–Chaparral Scrub, Non-Native Grassland, Coast Live Oak Woodland, and Unvegetated Waters of the U.S. Refer to the Biology Technical Report included as Appendix G to the Merriam Mountains Specific Plan Draft EIR, dated August 2007 and the Biological Resources Memorandum (Hayworth 2009, Appendix G to this EIR), for descriptions of these vegetation communities.

Wildlife Resources

Deer Springs Road is an existing heavily travelled two-lane roadway. Sensitive wildlife have not been observed in the ROW and no anecdotal observations of wildlife have been made in the ROW.

Wildlife Corridors

Deer Springs Road is an existing heavily traveled two-lane roadway located in an area with an assortment of land uses that include agricultural, single-family residences, and a resort/spa. There are no wildlife corridors on or across the proposed ROW.

Regional Conservation Planning Context

No current regional conservation planning efforts, such as an approved or pending natural community conservation plan (NCCP) or habitat conservation plan (HCP) contemplate

conservation within the ROW and there are no regional conservation planning issues associated with the proposed Circulation Element Amendment.

9.3.1.2 Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

Vegetation Community/Habitat Impacts

Relevant guidelines for the determination of significance for vegetation community/habitat impacts associated with the GPA/CE are as follows. Impacts of the GPA/CE would be considered significant if:

1. A block of substantially native habitat considered essential to the naturally functioning local or subregional or regional biological environment will be eliminated or substantially degraded such that it no longer provides comparable biological function(s) or value(s)

2. The natural biological diversity and habitat associations are not being preserved in a contiguous, functional habitat area, thereby compromising the long-term health and viability of the ecosystem

3. Any functionally viable component of native or naturalized habitat will be removed or substantially impacted through grading, clearing, and/or other construction activities

4. The functional value of habitat will be "moderately to significantly" degraded either immediately or in the long term, as indicated by one of the following:

   (a.) A substantial decrease in species composition, diversity, or abundance

   (b.) A substantial decline in the biological value or function of the habitat.

5. Any of the following will occur to or within County of San Diego-defined wetlands: removal of associated vegetation; grading; obstruction or diversion of water flow; change in velocity or siltation rate; placement of fill; placement of structures; construction of a road crossing; placement of culverts or other underground piping; any disturbance of the substratum; and/or any activity that may cause a change in species composition, diversity, and abundance.

Wildlife Movement Impacts

Impacts to wildlife movement would be considered significant if:

6. GPA/CE-related improvements or activities within or adjacent to local wildlife corridors, subregional or regional linkages, or other areas used for wildlife movement will:

   (a.) Prevent a substantial proportion of existing wildlife using or relying on the project site from accessing areas considered necessary to their survival (e.g., foraging resources, breeding areas, necessary water sources)

   (b.) Restrict substantial numbers of wildlife from using their natural movement patterns (i.e., those pathways used when given the choice absent human interference)

   (c.) Further constrain a narrow wildlife corridor by reducing width, removing available vegetative cover, creating substantially adverse edge effects, or placing barriers in the movement path

   (d.) Create artificial corridors that do not functionally connect core habitat areas or linkages.

Special-Status Species Impacts

Impacts to special-status species would be considered significant if:

7. Direct, indirect, and/or cumulative impacts may occur that may be detrimental to the regional long-term survival of a County of San Diego special-status animal (those recognized by a government agency or conservation or scientific group as being depleted, potentially depleted, declining, rare, locally endemic, endangered, or threatened (based on scientifically valid criteria), and/or any species nominated for or on a state or federal rare, endangered, or threatened species list within the San Diego subregion) or direct, indirect, and/or cumulative impacts that may reduce the local population of a plant species listed as federally or state-endangered or threatened, and/or listed as a County of San Diego Group A or B plant species or Group C or D plant species, or a County of San Diego-defined special-status habitat (any habitat recognized by a government agency or conservation or scientific group as being depleted, rare, and/or endangered, or otherwise sensitive, based on scientifically valid criteria).

8. Grading, clearing, construction, or other activities (including passive and active recreation, permanent development, or recreational activities) will occur within 4,000 feet

of an active golden eagle nest during the breeding season (February 15 to July 15), such that it would be likely to interfere with normal nesting activities of the eagle (considers impacts that would not be in the line of sight or where natural noise buffering reduces potential impacts to a less-than-significant level).

9. Grading, clearing, and/or construction will occur within the following distances and within the following time periods for one or more of these species:

Species	Distance	Breeding Season
Coastal cactus wren	300 feet from occupied habitat	February 15 to August 15
Coastal California gnatcatcher	300 feet from occupied habitat	February 15 to August 31
Least Bell's vireo	300 feet from occupied habitat	March 15 to September 15
Southwestern willow flycatcher	300 feet from occupied habitat	May 1 to September 1
Tree-nesting raptors	300 feet from occupied habitat	February 15 to July 15
Ground-dwelling raptors	800 feet from occupied habitat	February 15 to July 15

10. Loss of functional raptor foraging habitat (from a subregional perspective).

<u>Indirect Impacts</u>

Indirect impacts would be considered significant if:

11. On- or off-site native habitat will be subjected to substantially adverse urban-type edge effects, including:

    a. Project-generated noise levels in excess of 60 dB during daytime hours and 50 dB during nighttime hours, measured at the edge of native habitats slated for preservation

    b. Artificial light exceeding a level of one-half as bright as a full moon

    c. A drawdown of the groundwater table of 3 feet or more (for groundwater-dependent species or habitats)

    d. Project-generated, unauthorized human encroachment that is substantially detrimental to native flora and fauna, including but not limited to unauthorized clearing, trash dumping, or off-road vehicle traffic within preserve areas

    e. Substantial predation or substantial disruption of natural history activities of native species by unrestrained domestic pets

f. A substantially adverse change in pre-project typical range of moisture levels and/or an increase in the spread of pollution and pesticides

g. A substantial change in the composition of native vegetation caused by invasive plants from adjacent ornamental landscaping

h. Introduction or substantial increase in the populations of pest, disease-carrying, or nuisance species (plants or animals) that may adversely affect native species, future project residents, or adjacent residents.

12. Reduced habitat viability resulted in habitats not directly impacted by the Circulation Element Amendment.

Regulatory Compliance

The following regulatory compliance issues would be considered significant if:

13. The project does not conform to the requirements regarding wetlands, wetland buffers, or sensitive habitat lands as outlined in the County of San Diego RPO.

14. The project does not conform to the goals and requirements of the County of San Diego HLP ordinance or NCCP.

15. The project does not conform to the goals and requirements as outlined in an adopted, applicable HCP, Habitat Management Plan (HMP), Special Area Management Plan (SAMP), or similar regional planning effort.

16. The project does not conform to the goals and requirements of applicable federal or state regulations, including but not limited to the federal Endangered Species Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, Clean Water Act, Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act, and the California Fish and Game Code.

The potential for a component of the Circulation Element Amendment to result in impacts to biological resources was evaluated based on existing mapped biological resources. This evaluation presumes that implementation of the Circulation Element Amendment would involve ground disturbance for roadway widening to the reclassification proposed.

For purposes of analysis, the following was completed:

Plan-to-Ground: Existing two-lane road areas compared to ultimate roadway reclassification width (six-lane Prime Arterial). These assumed limits of grading typical for Prime Arterial roadway improvements; however, final design would likely alter the limits of grading evaluated.

Plan-to-Plan: Existing roadway classification identified in the Circulation Element (four-lane Major Road) along an assumed centerline, compared to the ultimate roadway reclassification width (six-lane Prime Arterial) along the proposed alignment. This analysis incorporated limits of grading typical for Prime Arterial roadway improvements; however, final design would likely alter the limits of grading evaluated.

Under both the plan-to-ground and plan-to-plan analyses, discussion is provided regarding each of the following components of the proposed Circulation Element Amendment: Deer Springs Road widening, Buena Creek Road elimination, and Buena Creek Road bicycle lane elimination.

Vegetation Community/Habitat Impacts

Guidelines 1, 2, and 4: Degradation of Native Habitat and Preservation of Natural Biological Diversity

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Ground disturbance associated with improving Deer Springs Road from the existing two-lane roadway to a Prime Arterial would occur within discontiguous polygons of native or sensitive habitat along an existing heavily travelled roadway. This disturbance would not remove a functionally viable component of native or naturalized habitat.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would have no effect on a functionally viable component of a native or naturalized habitat since no ground disturbance would occur. Ground disturbance that would have been associated with the Buena Creek Road extension would be eliminated.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane would have no effect on a functionally viable component of a native or naturalized habitat since no ground disturbance would occur.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would increase the ground disturbance required to improve the roadway from its planned condition; however, no significant impacts to a functionally viable component of a native or naturalized habitat will occur since roadway improvements would occur along an existing heavily travelled roadway and sensitive habitat impacts would occur within small, discontiguous areas along the existing roadway.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the roadway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element. No impacts are anticipated.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the bikeway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element. No impacts are anticipated.

Guideline 3: Removal of Native or Naturalized Habitat

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Based on conceptual design information, the improvement of Deer Springs Road from the existing two-lane roadway to a Prime Arterial would directly impact 39.5 acres, including approximately 12 acres of habitat identified as sensitive by the County of San Diego. Impacts by vegetation community are summarized in Table 9.3.1-1. Impacts to 12 acres of sensitive habitat are regarded as significant (Impact GPA/CE-BIO-1).

Impacts to the following non-sensitive vegetation communities are not regarded as significant: Disturbed Habitat, Urban/Developed, Orchard, Eucalyptus Woodland, and Intensive Agriculture (see Table 9.3.1-1).

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would not result in direct impacts to biological resources and no impacts will occur. Ground disturbance that would have been associated with the Buena Creek Road extension would be eliminated.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane would not result in direct impacts to biological resources and no impacts will occur.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would increase the ground disturbance required to improve the roadway from its planned condition of four lanes to six lanes. The roadway widening would directly impact 5.3 acres, including approximately 0.9 acres of habitat identified as sensitive by the County of San Diego. Impacts by vegetation community are summarized in Table 9.3.1-1. Impacts to 0.9 acres of sensitive habitat are regarded as significant (see Impact GPA/CE-BIO-1).

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would avoid ground disturbance and direct impacts to biological resources associated with constructing the roadway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element. No impacts will occur.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane would avoid ground disturbance and direct impacts to biological resources associated with constructing the bikeway as currently envisioned by the County's Circulation Element. No impacts will occur.

Guideline 5: Impacts to Wetlands

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Based on conceptual design information, the improvement of Deer Springs Road from the existing two-lane roadway to a Prime Arterial would directly impact 1.3 acres of County wetlands, including 0.8 acre of Coast Live Oak Woodland associated with a stream course and 0.5 acre of Unvegetated Waters of the U.S. (see Table 9.3.1-1). This impact is also identified under Guidelines 1, 2, and 4, and is regarded as significant (see Impact GPA/CE-BIO-1).

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would not result in impacts to wetlands and no impacts will occur. Ground disturbance that would have been associated with the Buena Creek Road extension would be eliminated.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane would not result in impacts to wetlands and no impacts will occur.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would increase the ground disturbance required to improve the roadway from its planned condition and to a Prime Arterial would directly impact 0.3 acres of County wetlands,

including 0.2 acre of Coast Live Oak Woodland associated with a stream course and 0.1 acre of Unvegetated Waters of the U.S. (see Table 9.3.1-1).. This impact is also identified under Guidelines 1, 2, and 4, and is regarded as significant (see Impact GPA/CE-BIO-1).

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the roadway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element, including impacts to County wetlands. No impacts will occur.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the bikeway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element. No impacts will occur.

Wildlife Movement Impacts

Guideline 6: Impacts to Wildlife Corridors and Wildlife Movement

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: The existing two-lane roadway is heavily traveled and is located in an area with an assortment of land uses (single-family residential, agricultural, and resort/spa).

There are a number of existing culverts along the roadway that will likely need to be increased in size to accommodate drainage from the roadway widening. Currently, wildlife has been recorded using the series of three culverts just east of the intersection of Twin Oaks Valley Road and Deer Springs Road (Hayworth 2009 (Appendix G to this EIR)). Culverts along the alignment will be improved for wildlife use because the culverts will need to be upsized to accommodate additional flows from the creation of impervious surfaces associated with roadway widening. The culvert upsizing will provide opportunities for medium-sized mammals that are currently potentially using the culverts to continue using culverts constructed during roadway widening improvements. The proposed culverts will need to be longer and include a larger cross-sectional area, which results in a greater openness ratio to provide opportunity for wildlife movement by mammal species. Thus, the ultimate roadway widening would not further constrain an existing narrow wildlife corridor by reducing width, removing available vegetative cover, creating substantially adverse edge effects, or placing barriers in the movement path. In contrast, the roadway widening would provide opportunities for wildlife movement through increased width of culverts in an area that currently has constraints with traffic volume. Impacts to wildlife movement associated with the proposed Circulation Element Amendment would be less than significant.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would not result in ground disturbance and no impacts to wildlife movement will occur.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane would not result in ground disturbance and no impacts to wildlife movement will occur.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would increase the pavement width required to improve the roadway from its planned condition

Roadway improvements from four to six lanes will result in the need for culverts to be extended along the alignment. The extension of culverts will allow for continued wildlife use. Thus, the ultimate roadway widening is not likely to further constrain an existing narrow wildlife corridor.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the roadway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element. No impacts to wildlife movement will occur.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the bikeway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element. No impacts to wildlife movement will occur.

Special-Status Species Impacts

<u>Guideline 7: Direct, Indirect, and/or Cumulative Impacts that could Affect Long-term Survival of Special-Status Plant and Animal Species</u>

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: A search was conducted using the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) to identify special-status plant and animal species that are known to occur in the vicinity of Deer Springs Road as discussed in the Biology Technical Report included as Appendix G to the Merriam Mountains Specific Plan Draft EIR, dated August 2007, and the December 2008 Biological Resources Technical Memorandum, Appendix G to this EIR. In addition, anecdotal species observations were recorded during general reconnaissance surveys conducted within the ROW. Special-status plant or animal species were not observed within or adjacent to the ROW, nor are they expected given the general lack of suitable habitat within the ROW. In addition, due to the nature of the impacts, which mostly result in the removal of

roadside slivers of suitable habitat and the existing edge effects in these areas, impacts are expected to be less than significant. Because these improvement areas are subject to the Habitat Loss Permit Ordinance, they will be surveyed again prior to any species impacts, and if impacts have not been adequately covered by their associated habitat-based mitigation and breeding season avoidance mitigation presented here, they will be mitigated according to the ordinance. Impacts to special-status species would be less than significant.

Buena Creek Road Extension: No ground disturbance would be associated with elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension and no impacts to special-status species would occur.

Bicycle Lane: No ground disturbance would be associated with elimination of the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane and no impacts to special-status species would occur.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would increase the ground disturbance required to improve the roadway from its planned condition. As seen in the discussion above, under plan-to-ground, special-status plant or animal species were not observed within or adjacent to the ROW, nor are they expected given the general lack of suitable habitat within the ROW. In addition, due to the nature of the impacts, which mostly result in the removal of roadside slivers of suitable habitat and the existing edge effects in these areas, impacts are expected to be less than significant. Because these improvement areas are subject to the Habitat Loss Permit Ordinance, they will be surveyed again prior to any species impacts, and if impacts have not been adequately covered by their associated habitat-based mitigation and breeding season avoidance mitigation, they will be treated consistent with the ordinance. Impacts to special-status species would be less than significant.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the roadway as currently envisioned in the Circulation Element and no impacts to special-status species will occur.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the bikeway as currently envisioned in the Circulation Element and no impacts to special-status species will occur.

Guideline 8: Construction Activities within 4,000 Feet of an Active Golden Eagle Nest

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: There are no active golden eagle nests in the vicinity of the project or within the improvement areas. Since golden eagles generally use existing nests and forage in proximity to their nests, and since there are no active nests known to occur within 4,000 feet of any roadway widening, no impacts to golden eagle will occur.

Buena Creek Road Extension: No ground disturbance would be associated with elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension and no impacts to golden eagle nests will occur.

Bicycle Lane: No ground disturbance would be associated with elimination of the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane and no impact to golden eagle nests will occur.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would increase the ground disturbance required to improve the roadway from its planned condition. There are no active golden eagle nests in the vicinity of the project or within the improvement areas. Since golden eagles generally use existing nests and forage in proximity to their nests, and since there are no active nests known to occur within 4,000 feet of any roadway widening, no impacts to golden eagle will occur.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the roadway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element and no impact to golden eagle nests would occur.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the bikeway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element and no impact to golden eagle nests would occur.

Guideline 9: Impacts to Nesting Birds and Raptors

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: As discussed under Guideline 7, no impacts to special-status wildlife species (including birds) would occur due to widening of Deer Springs Road from the existing two-lane roadway to a Prime Arterial. A number of raptor and small bird species could nest within any of the improvement areas where trees and shrubs are available for placement of nests. Disturbance of the improvement areas where trees and large shrubs are

available for nesting would result in a significant impact if nesting birds are present (Impact GPA/CE-BIO-2).

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would not result in ground disturbance or construction activities that could affect nesting birds and raptors and no impacts will occur.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane would not result in ground disturbance or construction activities that could affect nesting birds and raptors and no impacts will occur.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would incrementally increase the ground disturbance required to improve the roadway. A number of raptor and smaller bird species could nest within any of the improvement areas where trees and shrubs are available for placement of nests. Disturbance of the improvement areas where trees and shrubs are available for nesting would result in a significant impact (see Impact GPA/CE-BIO-2) if nesting birds are present.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the roadway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element and no impacts would occur.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the roadway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element and no impacts would occur.

<u>Guideline 10: Loss of Raptor Foraging Habitat</u>

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Based on conceptual design information, the improvement of Deer Springs Road from the existing two-lane facility to a Prime Arterial would result in direct impacts to 39.5 acres of habitat within discontiguous polygons along an existing heavily travelled roadway. Of this, 7.8 acres could be considered marginally suitable for raptor foraging (agriculture, non-native grassland, disturbed coastal sage scrub (see Table 9.3.1-1)). Loss of this habitat is not regarded as a significant impact with respect to raptor foraging given the existing quality and configuration of the habitat polygons to be disturbed and location of these areas

along an existing heavily travelled roadway without substantial known presence of foraging raptors. Impacts would be less than significant.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would not result in direct impacts to raptor foraging habitat and no impacts will occur.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane would not result in direct impacts to raptor foraging habitat and no impacts will occur.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would increase the ground disturbance required to improve the roadway from its planned condition; however, the existing facility is a heavily travelled roadway and suitable habitat along the roadway does not offer opportunities for substantial raptor foraging. Impacts will be less than significant.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the roadway as currently envisioned by the County Circulation Element. No impacts will occur.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the roadway as currently envisioned by the County Circulation Element. No impacts will occur.

Indirect Impacts

<u>Guideline 11: Result in Adverse Urban-Type Edge Effects</u>

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: The improvement of Deer Springs Road from the existing two-lane roadway to a Prime Arterial would occur along an existing heavily travelled roadway in an area characterized by a mixture of urban-type and rural land uses. No special-status species have been observed along the roadway corridor that would be directly or indirectly affected by improvement of the roadway. Portions of the improved roadway would be adjacent to areas of natural habitat to be preserved in open space as part of the Merriam Mountains project. Landscaping along the improved roadway would incorporate the plant palette consistent with the landscaping plan provided in the SP (Appendix C to the EIR) and identified in the Conceptual Upland and Wetland Revegetation Plans, included in Appendix X to the Merriam Mountains

Specific Plan Draft EIR, dated August 2007, to ensure that invasive species are not introduced that could affect adjacent conserved open space areas. Impacts would be less than significant.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would not involve construction of a roadway and, therefore, not have the potential for urban-type edge effects. No impacts will occur.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane would not involve any construction activity with the potential for urban-type edge effects. No impacts will occur.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would increase ground disturbance required to improve the roadway from its planned condition; however, no significant urban-type edge effects would occur since Deer Springs Road currently exists as an existing heavily travelled roadway, no special-status species have been observed in the vicinity that would be affected by urban-type edge effects, and it is assumed that landscaping of manufactured slopes needed for roadway construction would not include invasive exotic species that could affect adjacent conserved open space areas.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would avoid introduction of a new roadway that could introduce urban-type edge effects and no impact would occur.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane would avoid introduction of a new paved facility that could introduce urban-type edge effects and no impact would occur.

<u>Guideline 12: Habitat Viability Not Directly Impacted</u>

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: As discussed under Guideline 11, improvement of Deer Springs Road from the existing two-lane roadway to a Prime Arterial would not result in urban-type edge effects affecting species and would incorporate native, non-invasive species in landscaping of manufactured slopes. Therefore, direct effects to habitat viability would be less than significant.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would not involve construction of a roadway and would, therefore, not have the potential to result in indirect effects to habitat viability. No impacts will occur.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane would not involve any construction activity with the potential for urban-type edge effects. No impacts will occur.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: As discussed under Guideline 11, reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would not result in urban-type edge effects affecting species and would incorporate native, non-invasive species in landscaping of manufactured slopes. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would avoid introduction of a new roadway that could directly affect habitat viability and no impacts will occur.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane would avoid introduction of a new paved facility that could directly affect habitat viability. No impacts will occur.

Regulatory Compliance

Guideline 13: Conformance to Requirements of RPO

The General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element is a General Plan Amendment and RPO does not apply to General Plan Amendments. Therefore, the guideline does not apply and is not addressed in this Section 9.0.

Guideline 14: Conformance with County HLP Ordinance or NCCP

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Based on conceptual design information, the improvement of Deer Springs Road from the existing two-lane roadway to a Prime Arterial would directly affect 3.5 acres of coastal sage scrub and disturbed coastal sage scrub (Table 9.3.1-1). At the project level, an HLP may be required. This is regarded as a significant impact (Impact BIO-3).

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would not result in any construction activity and there would be no impact with respect to conformance with the County HLP Ordinance or NCCP will occur.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane would not result in any construction activity and there would be no impacts with respect to conformance with the County HLP Ordinance or NCCP will occur.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would increase the ground disturbance required to improve the roadway from its planned condition. Based on conceptual design information, the improvement of Deer Springs Road from the planned four-lane roadway to a Prime Arterial would directly affect 0.4 acre of coastal sage scrub and disturbed coastal sage scrub (Table 9.3.1-1). At the project level, an HLP may be required. This is regarded as a significant impact (Impact GPA/CE-BIO-3).

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would avoid any construction activity and no impacts will occur.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane would avoid any construction activity and no impacts are will occur.

<u>Guideline 15: Conformance with Adopted HCP, HMP, or SAMP</u>

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: There are no adopted HCPs, HMPs, or SAMPs in the vicinity of the Deer Springs Road improvement and no impacts will occur.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would not result in any construction activity and there would be no impacts with respect to conformance with adopted HCPs, HMPs, or SAMPs will occur.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane would not result in any construction activity and there would no impacts with respect to adopted HCPs, HMPs, or SAMPs will occur.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would not result in conflicts with adopted HCPs, HMPs, or SAMPs since there are no such adopted plans in the vicinity of Deer Springs Road.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would avoid any construction activity and no impact will occur.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane would avoid any construction activity and no impact will occur.

Guideline 16: Conformance with State and Federal Requirements

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Based on conceptual design information, improvement of Deer Springs Road from the existing two-lane roadway to a Prime Arterial would not result in impacts that would affect conformance with goals and requirements of applicable federal and state laws. The roadway improvement may result in impacts to wetlands regulated under the federal Clean Water Act and the California Fish and Game Code. Conformance to state and federal regulations regarding impacts to wetlands may be required (Impact GPA/CE-BIO-4). No other impacts with respect to conformance with applicable state and federal laws have been identified.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would not result in any construction activity and there would be no impacts with respect to conformance with applicable state and federal laws.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane would not result in any construction activity and there would be no impacts with respect to conformance with applicable state and federal laws.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would increase the ground disturbance required to improve the roadway from its planned condition and would likely result in slightly greater impacts to wetlands than would occur under the existing Major Road classification. Conformance with state and federal regulations regarding impacts to wetlands would be required (Impact GPA/CE-BIO-4). No other impacts with respect to conformance with applicable state and federal laws have been identified.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would avoid any construction activity and no impact will occur.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane would avoid any construction activity and no impact will occur.

9.3.1.3 Summary of General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element Impacts

The following biological resource impacts have been identified:

Impact GPA/CE-BIO-1 Impacts to sensitive vegetation communities, including wetlands.

Impact GPA/CE-BIO-2 Impacts to nesting raptor and small bird species during construction activities.

Impact GPA/CE-BIO-3 Impacts to disturbed coastal sage scrub requiring an HLP permit.

Impact GPA/CE-BIO-4 Impacts to wetlands requiring conformance with applicable federal Clean Water Act and California Fish and Game Code permit requirements.

9.3.1.4 Mitigation Measures

Based on the results of this first-tier program-level analysis, the following procedure will be required by the County to ensure that prescribed mitigation measures fully reduce identified significant biological resource impacts to below a level of significance. The County will be required to implement these measures as part of subsequent, second-tier review. Mitigation measures are presented below for each significant impact.

M-GPA/CE-BIO-1 For unavoidable permanent impacts to sensitive natural communities including wetlands, the lost habitat shall be mitigated through the conservation or restoration of like-kind habitat in accordance with conservation and mitigation ratios as required by the County as shown in Table 9.3.1-1.

M-GPA/CE-BIO-2 For each phase of grading, a biological survey for nesting bird species must be conducted within the proposed impact area approximately 72 hours prior to ground disturbance. If nesting birds are present, construction activities shall be diverted away from active nests until young birds have fledged.

M-GPA/CE-BIO-3 Prior to Circulation Element Amendment implementation and when more detailed design plans are available, impacts to coastal sage scrub will be mitigated at a 2 to 1 ratio and, if deemed necessary by County DPLU, an HLP permit will be prepared and processed prior to grading for Deer Springs Road construction.

M-GPA/CE-BIO-4 Prior to Circulation Element Amendment implementation and when more detailed design plans are available, impacts to wetlands will be determined along with state and federal permitting requirements for wetlands and, if deemed necessary, state and federal permits will be prepared and processed prior to grading for Deer Springs Road construction. Impacts to wetlands will be mitigated at County of San Diego and applicable agency mitigation requirements.

9.3.1.5 Conclusion

Impacts to sensitive vegetation communities including wetlands (Impact GPA/CE-BIO-1) would be reduced to a level below significance with implementation of Mitigation Measure M-GPA/CE-BIO-1 because through preservation and/or restoration of sensitive vegetation, communities in the functions and values of the habitats affected would be retained and protected.

Potential impacts to nesting bird species (Impact GPA/CE-BIO-2) would be reduced to a level below significance with implementation of Mitigation Measures M-GPA/CE-BIO-2 because nesting bird surveys prior to ground disturbance will identify the avoidance areas for nesting birds and these areas will be avoided until the nesting cycle is complete.

Impacts associated with regulatory compliance (Impacts GPA/CE-BIO-3 and GPA/CE-BIO-4) would be mitigated by obtaining necessary regulatory permits (M-GPA/CE-BIO-3 and M-GPA/CE-BIO-4).

Table 9.3.1-1
Deer Springs Road – Vegetation Communities

Vegetation Type	Plan-to-Ground (acres)	Plan-to-Plan (acres)	Potential Mitigation Ratios	Potential Mitigation Requirement (Plan-to-Ground)	Potential Mitigation Requirement (Plan-to-Plan)
General Agriculture	5.4	0.7	0	0	0
Unvegetated Waters of the U.S.	0.5	0.1	3.0	1.5	0.3
Coast Live Oak Woodland	0.8	0.2	3.0	2.4	0.6
Coastal Sage-Chaparral Scrub	2.5	0.4	2.0	5.0	0.8
Disturbed Coastal Sage-Chaparral Scrub	1.0	0.1	2.0	2.0	0.2
Disturbed Habitat	1.3	0.1	0	0	0
Eucalyptus Woodland	1.6	0.1	0	0	0
Non-native Grassland	1.4	0.1	0.5	0.7	0
Orchard	0.9	0.2	0	0	0
Southern Mixed Chaparral	5.8	0.0	0.5	2.9	0
Urban/Developed	18.3	3.3	0	0	0
Total	*39.5*	*5.3*			

Note: The mitigation ratios provided in the table above are subject to change when the roadway improvement is constructed.

9.3.2 Hydrology and Water Quality

This Section describes potential impacts to hydrology and water quality resulting from the Circulation Element Amendment and incorporates information contained in the *Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP)* (Fuscoe, December 2008) and the *Preliminary Drainage Study for Deer Springs Road* (Fuscoe, February 2009) (see Appendix O and Appendix P to this EIR).

9.3.2.1 Discussion of Existing Conditions Relating to Hydrology and Water Quality

Refer to Appendix P and Appendix O of this EIR for a general discussion of existing conditions and regulatory setting related to Hydrology and Water Quality. The General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element site is located within the Twin Oaks Hydrologic Subarea.

9.3.2.2 Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

The following guidelines of significance will be considered substantial evidence that a significant impact to hydrology and/or water quality would occur if:

1. Violations of any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or conflict(s) with the goals and requirements of applicable federal, state, and local regulations including the Clean Water Act, Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act, County of San Diego Revised Grading Ordinance, County of San Diego Watershed Protection, Stormwater Management and Discharge Control Ordinance;

2. Substantial alteration of the existing drainage pattern of the site or vicinity in a manner that would result in substantial erosion or siltation on site or off site or would substantially increase the rate or manner of surface runoff resulting in flooding on site or off site;

3. Generation of runoff water that would exceed the capacity of the existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or result in substantial additional sources of polluted runoff;

4. Development in a floodway or mapped 100-year floodplain, which would impede or redirect flood flows;

5. The degradation of the water quality of any water course or water body, as listed on the CWA Section 303(d) list and the project will contribute additional pollutants for which the receiving water body is already impaired;

6. An exceedance of applicable Federal or State Drinking Water Standards, for Maximum Contaminant Levels in waters designated in the Basin Plan with a municipal and domestic supply (MUN) beneficial use.

9.3.2.3 Analysis of General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element Effects and Determination of Significance

Guideline 1: Violate any Water Quality Standard

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: The Circulation Element Amendment may result in the transport of sediment and pollutants into local drainage systems during construction from the existing two-lane roadway to the proposed reclassification. In particular, to a roadway, components built during the rainy season could impact water quality as a result of runoff and sediment transport during construction activities. Sediment transport to drainages, creeks, and streams adjacent to the roadway area could result in degradation to water quality. Similarly, fuels, oils, lubricants, and other hazardous substances used during construction could be released and impact surface and groundwater. This is considered a significant water quality impact (Impact GPA/CE-WQ-1a).

Operational use of the proposed six-lane Prime Arterial would continue to introduce petroleum hydrocarbons, heavy metals, rubber, and other vehicular pollution by-products to local drainage systems via runoff from the widened roadway. This increase in runoff could result in degraded downstream water quality. Contaminated runoff could also degrade surface and subsurface water quality for downstream domestic, agriculture, and industrial uses. The widening of Deer Springs Road would increase the area of impermeable surfaces from the existing two-lane roadway. The road widening would affect downstream channel stability through changes in the rate and volume of runoff and other hydraulic changes. As a result, the Circulation Element Amendment has the potential to result in significant water quality impacts following construction in the event improvements are completed to the reclassification designation (Impact GPA/CE-WQ-1b).

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would have no effect on violation of a water quality standard since no ground disturbance would occur. Ground disturbance that would have been associated with the Buena Creek Road extension would be eliminated.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bikeway would not involve any construction activity with the potential for violation of a water quality standard. No impacts are anticipated.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would increase the ground disturbance required to improve the roadway from its planned condition and would likely result in impacts to water quality during construction and operation. This impact is also identified under "Plan-to-Ground" and is regarded as significant (see Impact GPA/CE-WQ-1a and GPA/CE-WQ-1b).

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the roadway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element, including potential impacts to water quality. No impacts are anticipated.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bikeway would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the bikeway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element. No impacts are anticipated.

Guideline 2: Alteration of Existing Drainage

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: The proposed Circulation Element Amendment would increase the total area of impervious surfaces in comparison to the existing two-lane roadway, which would result in an increase in peak runoff for some internal sub-basins. The proposed road widening would include improvement to the existing drainages along Deer Springs Road to accommodate increased flows. These improvements would reduce peak outlet flows, as well as provide treatment to improve water quality. Therefore, a less than significant impact would occur.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the roadway as envisioned in the existing Circulation Element and no impacts are anticipated.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bikeway would avoid ground disturbance associated with construction of the facility as envisioned in the existing Circulation Element and no impacts are anticipated.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would increase ground disturbance required to improve the roadway from its planned condition; however, no impacts with respect to alteration of existing drainages are anticipated since the proposed road widening would include improvements to the existing drainages along Deer Springs Road to accommodate increased flows.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the roadway as envisioned in the existing Circulation Element and no impacts are anticipated.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bikeway would avoid ground disturbance associated with construction of the facility as envisioned in the existing Circulation Element and no impacts are anticipated.

Guideline 3: Exceed Existing or Planned Stormwater Drainage Systems

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: At this point it is unclear whether or not the proposed road widening would generate runoff water that would exceed the capacity of the existing or planned stormwater drainage systems. As a result, the Circulation Element Amendment has the potential to result in significant impacts resulting from increased runoff (Impact GPA/CE-WQ-2).

Buena Creek Road Extension: No impacts are anticipated because there would be no ground disturbance associated with elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension.

Bicycle Lane: No impacts are anticipated because there would be no ground disturbance associated with elimination of the Buena Creek Road bikeway

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would increase ground disturbance required to improve the roadway from its planned condition. As described under the “Plan-to-Ground” scenario, the proposed Circulation Element Amendment has the potential to result in significant impacts resulting from increased runoff (see Impact GPA/CE-WQ-2).

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the roadway as envisioned in the existing Circulation Element and no impacts are anticipated.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bikeway would avoid ground disturbance associated with construction of the facility as envisioned in the existing Circulation Element and no impacts are anticipated.

Guideline 4: Flooding

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: The proposed Circulation Element Amendment would place a portion of Deer Springs Road within the FEMA 100-year floodplain (SanGIS 1997). Upsizing of existing culverts located within the mapped floodplain would ensure that 100-year flows would be conveyed beneath the roadway consistent with the natural drainage patterns. Thus, the upsizing of existing culverts would ensure that flood water displacement would be within acceptable limits of FEMA standards, and the project would not substantially impede or redirect flood flows. Impacts would be less than significant.

In accordance with FEMA procedures, a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) is typically processed with FEMA to ensure that there would be no increase in flooding hazard. Following completion of a project, a final Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) is then processed.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would not result in ground disturbance and no impacts to flooding are anticipated.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek bikeway extension would not result in ground disturbance and no impacts to flooding are anticipated.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would place a portion of Deer Springs Road within the FEMA 100-year floodplain (SanGIS 1997). Extension of culverts located within the mapped floodplain would ensure that 100-year flows would be conveyed beneath the roadway consistent with the natural drainage patterns. Thus, the extension of culverts would ensure that flood water displacement would be within acceptable limits of FEMA standards, and the project would not substantially impede or redirect flood flows. Impacts would be less than significant.

In accordance with FEMA procedures, a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) is typically processed with FEMA to ensure that there would be no increase in flooding hazard. Following completion of a project, a final Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) is then processed.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the roadway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element. No impacts from flooding will occur.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bikeway would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the bikeway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element. No impacts from flooding will occur.

Guideline 5: Impaired Waters

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Construction and operation of the Circulation Element Amendment would not degrade or contribute additional pollutants to any water body listed as an Impaired Water on the CWA Section 303(d) list. A SWPPP would be prepared and implemented, which would describe Best Management Practices (BMPs) that address pollutant source reduction and provide measures/controls necessary to mitigate potential pollutant sources. Following construction, BMPs to reduce runoff, prevent storm water pollution, and conserve natural areas would be put in place. Impacts would be less than significant.

Buena Creek Road Extension: No ground disturbance would be associated with elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension and no impacts to impaired water bodies would occur.

Bicycle Lane: No ground disturbance would be associated with elimination of the Buena Creek Road bikeway and no impacts to impaired water bodies would occur.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would increase the ground disturbance required to improve the roadway from its planned condition; however, no impacts to impaired water bodies would occur as the Circulation Element Amendment would not degrade or contribute additional pollutants to any water body listed as an Impaired Water on the CWA Section 303(d) list.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the roadway as currently envisioned in the Circulation Element and no impacts to impaired water bodies are anticipated.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bikeway would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the bikeway as currently envisioned in the Circulation Element and no impacts to impaired water bodies are anticipated.

Guideline 6: Exceedance of Applicable Drinking Water Standards

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: The groundwater associated with the Twin Oaks Hydrologic Subarea has beneficial uses. It should be noted that none of the watersheds that would receive flows from Deer Springs Road convey flows to a drinking water supply reservoir. Potentially hazardous materials used during construction, such as oils, grease, lubricants, coolant, paints, and solvents, pose a risk to ground water supply if they are released to the ground. Similarly, chemicals and fertilizers used during the operational phase could infiltrate and contaminate groundwater. However, BMPs included in the SWPPP prepared at the time of construction are required to reduce contaminants in both surface and groundwater. Measures such as education, good house-keeping, and inspection of outdoor material storage areas for leaks or potential pollution also reduce generation of contaminants. Therefore, the Circulation Element Amendment will not contribute any contaminants to waters subject to Federal and/or State drinking water standards due to implementation of BMPs required in the SWPPP. Impacts would be less than significant.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would have no effect on the potential to contribute contaminates to waters subject to Federal and/or State drinking water standards since no ground disturbance would occur. Ground disturbance that would have been associated with the Buena Creek Road extension would be eliminated.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bikeway would have no effect on the potential to contribute contaminates to waters subject to Federal and/or State drinking water standards since no ground disturbance would occur. Ground disturbance that would have been associated with the Buena Creek bicycle lane extension would be eliminated.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would increase the ground disturbance required to improve the roadway from

its planned condition; however, exceedance of applicable drinking water standards would not occur due to implementation of BMPs included in the SWPPP prepared at the time of construction, BMPs will likely include both dust control measures consisting of regular application of water on unpaved surfaces, covering spoil piles, placement of rattle plates at points of egress/ingress and installation of the stormdrain inlet protection devices (e.g., gravel bags, filter fabric). These BMPs would minimize contaminants in both surface and groundwater, resulting in less-than-significant impacts to drinking water quality.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would have no effect related to the exceedance of applicable drinking water standards since no ground disturbance would occur. Ground disturbance that would have been associated with the Buena Creek Road extension would be eliminated.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bikeway would have no effect to the exceedance of applicable drinking water standards since no ground disturbance would occur. Ground disturbance that would have been associated with the Buena Creek Road extension would be eliminated.

Summary of Impacts

Impact GPA/CE-WQ-1a Potential short-term impacts may occur to water quality during construction.

Impact GPA/CE-WQ-1b Potential long-term impacts from roadway operation may impact water quality.

Impact GPA/CE-WQ-2 Increase in impervious surfaces may result in exceedance of stormwater drainage system capacity upon completion of roadway improvements.

9.3.2.4 Mitigation Measures

M-GPA/CE-WQ-1a Prior to construction of Deer Springs Road, a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that describes Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be developed and implemented before, during, and after construction to minimize erosion and runoff from construction activities. A General Construction Permit will be required and a Notice of Intent (NOI) submitted to the State Water Resources Control Board. A WDID number will be issued, permitting construction activity stormwater discharge from the site. BMPs required by the

SWPPP would include Erosion Control BMPs, Sediment Control BMPs, Non-Stormwater Management BMPs, and Material Management BMPs.

Construction BMPs shall be specified on project plans and specifications and implemented at all construction areas and staging areas. BMPs shall be implemented to avoid potential contamination of the surface water quality downstream. Measures to avoid runoff from each staging and storage area shall be specified on project plans. Petroleum products, concrete, asphalt or other coating materials, and other materials shall be prevented from entering surface waters.

M-GPA/CE-WQ-1b Permanent BMPs shall be incorporated into project plans and specifications to reduce roadway drainage and storm water runoff velocities before entering, and within, drainages adjacent to the reconstructed roadway. This shall include BMPs or other comparable storm water controls and filtering systems.

M-GPA/CE-WQ-2 Prior to implementation of the Circulation Element Amendment, a drainage study shall be completed in accordance with standards established by the County Department of Public Works. The study shall identify drainage structure improvements necessary to accommodate increased runoff from the Deer Springs Road ROW and to ensure flows are reduced to pre-construction conditions..

9.3.2.5 Conclusion

Impacts to water quality (Impacts GPA/CE-WQ-1a and GPA/CE-WQ-1b) would be reduced to a level below significance with implementation of Mitigation Measures M-GPA/CE-WQ-1a and M-GPA/CE-WQ-1b, which would require that Deer Springs Road construction adhere to a SWPPP and relevant BMPs.

Impacts resulting from capacity exceedance of existing stormwater drainage systems (Impact GPA/CE-WQ-2) would be reduced to a level below significance with implementation of Mitigation Measure M-GPA/CE-WQ-2 which would require preparation of a drainage study to identify drainage structure improvements necessary to accommodate increased runoff from the Deer Springs Road ROW.

9.3.3 Aesthetics

9.3.3.1 Existing Conditions

Deer Springs Road extends from Twin Oaks Valley Road eastward to Interstate 15 (I-15). The roadway is currently constructed as a two-lane road and is approximately 25 feet wide. The shoulders of the roadway are unimproved and the posted speed limit is 45 miles per hour (mph) from Twin Oaks Valley Road to Sarver Lane and 55 mph from Sarver Lane to I-15. Existing average daily traffic (ADT) volumes along Deer Springs Road range from approximately 14,900 to 18,400 ADT (LLG 2009).

Deer Springs Road has an east-to-west orientation between Sarver Lane and I-15. Views of single-family and estate homes located adjacent to the roadway are available along this portion of the roadway. Distant views of ridgelines to the north are mostly interrupted due to mature vegetation located adjacent to the roadway.

Deer Springs Road between Twin Oaks Valley Road and Sarver Lane has a north-to-south orientation. Immediate views for passing motorists include agricultural uses and single-family homes. Views of distant ridgelines to the north are available for a northbound motorist; however, these views are interrupted at various locations along the roadway due to existing mature vegetation consisting of eucalyptus trees located adjacent to the roadway. Distant views for a southbound motorist along this roadway segment that are not interrupted by vegetation located adjacent to the roadway include views of rolling hills to the west, east, and south, located within Twin Oaks Valley.

The combination of these visual elements creates a moderate level of diversity, but also contributes to visual unity, as most of the existing public views for motorists traveling along Deer Springs Road generally consist of scattered single-family estate lots, mature vegetation located adjacent to the roadway, and interrupted views of distant ridgelines within a semi-rural environment.

The Circulation Element Amendment proposes removal of the Buena Creek Road extension as identified in Figures 9.1.1-B and 9.1.1-D. Views along this corridor, if built, would include estate lots, rolling hills, and agricultural land uses.

Policies/Plans

San Diego County Scenic Highway Element

Deer Springs Road is not designated as a scenic highway by the state or by the County of San Diego; there are no designated scenic highways in the vicinity of the proposed reclassification and planned Buena Creek Road extension.

I-15 Corridor Scenic Preservation Guidelines

The I-15 Corridor Scenic Preservation Guidelines apply to the unincorporated portion of the I-15 corridor from the northern Escondido city limits to the Riverside County line. A portion of the Deer Springs Road corridor from the I-15 interchange to 3,800 feet west of Mesa Rock Road is included within the I-15 corridor. These guidelines contain design standards related to site planning, parking and circulation design, lighting, landscape design, public utilities and safety, development for steep topography and natural features, and architecture that are generally not applicable to a program-level analysis for a Circulation Element Amendment.

County of San Diego Resource Protection Ordinance

General Plan Amendments are not subject to the County of San Diego's RPO. The Specific Plan and Tract Maps analyzed in the other chapters of the EIR are subject to the RPO under San Diego Code of Regulatory Ordinance Section 86.603(a).

San Diego County Dark Skies Ordinance

The County of San Diego Light Pollution Code (Division 9) restricts use of outdoor light fixtures that have a detrimental effect on astronomical research. The ordinance is not applicable to a program-level analysis for a General Plan Amendment.

North County Metropolitan (Metro) Subregional Plan

The North County Metro Subregional Plan does not contain specific goals and/or policies for visual resources. The subregional plan is not applicable to a program-level analysis for a General Plan Amendment.

9.3.3.2 Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

A significant aesthetic impact would occur if the GPA/CE would result in:

1. Conflict(s) with the policies of the I-15 Corridor Scenic Preservation Guidelines

2. Conflict(s) with the San Diego County RPO regarding development on steep slopes

3. Conflict(s) with the goals, standards, or policies related to visual effects as outlined in the County General Plan, including the Scenic Highway Element and the North County Metro Community Plan.

4. Degradation of the vividness or intactness/unity of the visual environment, including public vantage points or views, as defined by the criteria below:

   - Vividness is degraded if the project will restrain, moderate, limit, or dull contrasting landscape components that combine to create a striking and distinctive visual pattern and impression in the existing visual environment.

   - Intactness/unity is degraded if the project damages the compositional harmony or compatibility between landscape components.

5. Change that will be incompatible with the existing visual character in terms of dominance and scale.

9.3.3.3 Analysis of General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element Effects and Determination of Significance

The following environmental review includes both a plan-to-ground review (existing two-lane roadway compared to a six-lane Prime Arterial) and plan-to-plan (four-lane Major Road compared to six-lane Prime Arterial).

<u>Guideline 1: Conflicts with I-15 Corridor Scenic Preservation Guidelines</u>

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Improvements along Deer Springs Road that could be visible from I-15 include potential for ground disturbance along an existing ridge located near the intersection of Deer Springs Road/Mesa Rock Road. The I-15 guidelines contain design standards related to site planning, parking and circulation design, lighting, landscape design, public utilities and safety, development within steep topography and natural features, and guidelines for architecture. These guidelines are typically not applicable to a roadway improvement project as they are used to address structures that may be constructed within the viewshed of the I-15 corridor.

Improvements along Deer Springs Road that could potentially be visible for a northbound motorist traveling along I-15 include the widening of the roadway west of the Mesa Rock

Road/Deer Springs Road intersection. Views for northbound motorists traveling along I-15 would be mostly interrupted due to mature vegetation, and because I-15 is located at a lower elevation than the proposed Deer Springs Road improvements. The change in views from I-15 of the proposed reclassification from a two-lane roadway to a Prime Arterial would be less than significant.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Buena Creek Road is not within the I-15 scenic corridor and further analysis is not needed.

Bicycle Lane: The Buena Creek Road bicycle lane is not within the I-15 scenic corridor and further analysis is not needed.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would result in ground disturbance required to improve and widen the roadway from four to six lanes. Improvements along Deer Springs Road that could potentially be visible for a northbound motorist traveling along I-15 include the widening of the roadway west of the Mesa Rock Road/Deer Springs Road intersection. Views for northbound motorists traveling along I-15 would be mostly interrupted due to mature vegetation, and because I-15 is located at a lower elevation than the proposed Deer Springs Road improvements. Therefore, given that existing views are mostly interrupted for passing motorists, the change in views from I-15 of the proposed reclassification from a four-lane roadway to a Prime Arterial would be less than significant.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Buena Creek Road is not within the I-15 scenic corridor and nofurther analysis is needed.

Bicycle Lane: The Buena Creek Road bicycle lane is not within the I-15 scenic corridor and no further analysis is needed.

<u>Guideline 2: General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element's Consistency with RPO</u>

As a general plan amendment, the RPO does not apply to the GPA/CE, as the RPO does not apply to general plan amendments. Therefore, the guideline is not addressed in this document.

Guideline 3: Conflicts with Policies Related to the County General Plan, including the Scenic Highway Element and the North County Metro Community Plan

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: The proposed Circulation Element Amendment is not located in the viewshed of a designated scenic highway; therefore, no impact would occur. The North County Metro Community Plan does not identify specific visual resources policies and recommendations. No impact would result.

Buena Creek Road Extension: The Buena Creek Road extension is not located in the viewshed of a designated scenic highway. Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would avoid ground disturbance and potential impacts to the Scenic Highway Element and the North County Metro Plan associated with constructing the roadway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element. No visual impact would occur.

Bicycle Lane: The proposed elimination of the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane is not located in the viewshed of a designated scenic highway. Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane would avoid ground disturbance and potential impacts to the Scenic Highway Element and the North County Metro Plan associated with constructing the roadway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element. No visual impact would occur.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would increase the ground disturbance required to improve the roadway from its planned condition; however, no significant impacts with policies related to the County General Plan, including the Scenic Highway Element and the North County Metro Community Plan would occur since the Circulation Element Amendment is not located in the viewshed of a designated scenic highway and the North County Metro Community Plan does not identify specific visual resources policies and recommendations. No impact would result.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the roadway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element. No visual impact would occur.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the bikeway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element. No visual impact would occur.

Guideline 4: Impacts to the Vividness or Intactness/Unity of the Visual Environment

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: The widening of Deer Springs Road would change the vividness and intactness/unity of the visual environment by increasing the pavement surface (thereby changing the scale of the road), impacting abutting slopes along the northern portions of the roadway, removing mature vegetation, and potentially constructing sound walls along the ROW.

Sound walls would likely be required adjacent to the roadway to reduce noise impacts to sensitive receptors along the roadway (see Section 9.2.2). The construction of potential sound walls would alter existing views of vegetation, rolling hills, and mountainous terrain. Views of the potential sound walls would be short term in nature due to the speed of passing motorists and intermittent locations of the sound walls adjacent to the roadway. Long-range views of distant vistas would be maintained, and the visual change may be significant.

The proposed roadway widening would likely require construction of a cut-slope along the northern portion of the roadway near the intersection of Mesa Rock Road/Deer Springs Road. Newly cut rock would be exposed to accommodate the reclassification roadway, and could be lighter in color than the existing rocks and slope area. This exposed rock would contrast with the existing aged appearance of the slope. These cut slopes would be difficult to soften with vegetation, due to the rocky nature of the soils. Therefore, due to the visibility of cut-and-fill slopes and noise walls, and the increase in pavement width, the removal of existing mature vegetation, and the change in near views, construction of Deer Springs Road under the Prime Arterial classification would have a significant impact on vividness and intactness/unity (Impact GPA/CE-AE-1).

Buena Creek Road Extension: No ground disturbance is proposed per the Buena Creek Road extension elimination. Views will be maintained of the existing visual environment; therefore, no impact would result from the Circulation Element Amendment.

Bicycle Lane: No ground disturbance is proposed per the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane elimination. Views will be maintained of the existing visual environment; therefore, no impact would result from the Circulation Element Amendment.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Reclassification of the roadway from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would have similar impacts to those identified under the previous plan-to-ground

analysis above with the exception of less paved surfaces as the roadway would already be constructed to four lanes in comparison to the existing two-lane roadway. Therefore, due to the visibility of cut-and-fill slopes and noise walls, and the increase in pavement width, the removal of existing mature vegetation, and the change in near views to accommodate the reclassification would result in significant visual impacts to the visual intactness/unity of the landscape for passersby (see Impact GPA/CE-AE-1). However, the significance of the incremental increase of 4 to 6 lanes is likely to be less noticeable than the two- to six-lane improvements. While somewhat speculative at this time, the impact is still considered significant due to the potential need for additional cut-and-fill slopes, new noise walls, and additional pavement.

Buena Creek Road Extension: The existing Circulation Element proposes an extension of Buena Creek Road in an area that consists of single-family homes and agricultural uses. The proposed Amendment includes removal of this extension, which would likely avoid significant impacts to the visual environment from introduction of a new roadway in a semi-rural setting. No ground disturbance is proposed per the Buena Creek Road extension elimination. Views will be maintained of the existing visual environment; therefore, no impact would result from the Circulation Element Amendment.

Bicycle Lane: No ground disturbance is proposed per the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane elimination. Views will be maintained of the existing visual environment; therefore, no impact would result from the Circulation Element Amendment.

<u>Guideline 5: Impacts to Visual Character</u>

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Improvements completed along Deer Springs Road would potentially consist of sound walls adjacent to sensitive receptors (see Section 9.2.2), cut-and-fill slopes, removal of mature vegetation, and an increase in pavement width, and could have a potential impact on the visual character.

Sound walls that may be required adjacent to the roadway to reduce noise impacts from passing motorists would introduce new vertical elements within the roadway corridor (see Section 9.2.2). Sound walls may alter existing views that contribute to the visual character in the area consisting of vegetation, rolling hills, and mountainous terrain. It is expected that views of the potential sound walls would be short term in nature due to the speed of passing motorists; however, the specific location, length, and height of the sound walls cannot be determined at this time as construction-level detail is not available. In combination, introduction and visibility of cut slopes, new pavement, sound walls, and removal of mature vegetation would change the existing

visual character along Deer Springs Road from that of a heavily travelled two-lane roadway in a generally rural area with a mixture of rural and emerging urban-type land uses to that of a more urban prime arterial roadway with associated cut-slopes, sound walls, and substantial pavement. This change in visual character would be significant (see Impact GPA/CE-AE-1).

Buena Creek Road Extension: No ground disturbance is proposed per the Buena Creek Road extension elimination. Views will be maintained of the existing visual character; therefore, no impact would result from the Circulation Element Amendment.

Bicycle Lane: No ground disturbance is proposed per the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane elimination. Views will be maintained of the existing visual character; therefore, no impact would result from the Circulation Element Amendment.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would have similar impacts to those identified under the plan-to-ground analysis previously described. Therefore, the visibility of cut-and-fill slopes, the change in pavement width, sound walls, the removal of existing mature vegetation, and the change in near views to accommodate the reclassification would result in significant impacts to the visual character for motorists passing along the roadway (see Impact GPA/CE-AE-1). However, the significance of the incremental increase of four to six lanes is likely to be less noticeable than the 2- to 6-lane improvements. While somewhat speculative at this time, the impact is still considered significant due to the potential need for additional cut-and-fill slopes, new noise walls, and additional pavement.

Buena Creek Road Extension: The existing Circulation Element proposes an extension of Buena Creek Road in an area that consists of single-family homes and agricultural uses. The proposed Amendment includes removal of this extension, which would likely avoid significant impacts to the visual character from introduction of a new roadway in a semi-rural setting. No ground disturbance is proposed per the Buena Creek Road extension elimination. Views will be maintained of the existing visual character; therefore, no impact would result from the Circulation Element Amendment.

Bicycle Lane: No ground disturbance is proposed per the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane elimination. Views will be maintained of the existing visual character; therefore, no impact would result from the Circulation Element Amendment.

Summary of Impacts

The following aesthetic impacts have been identified:

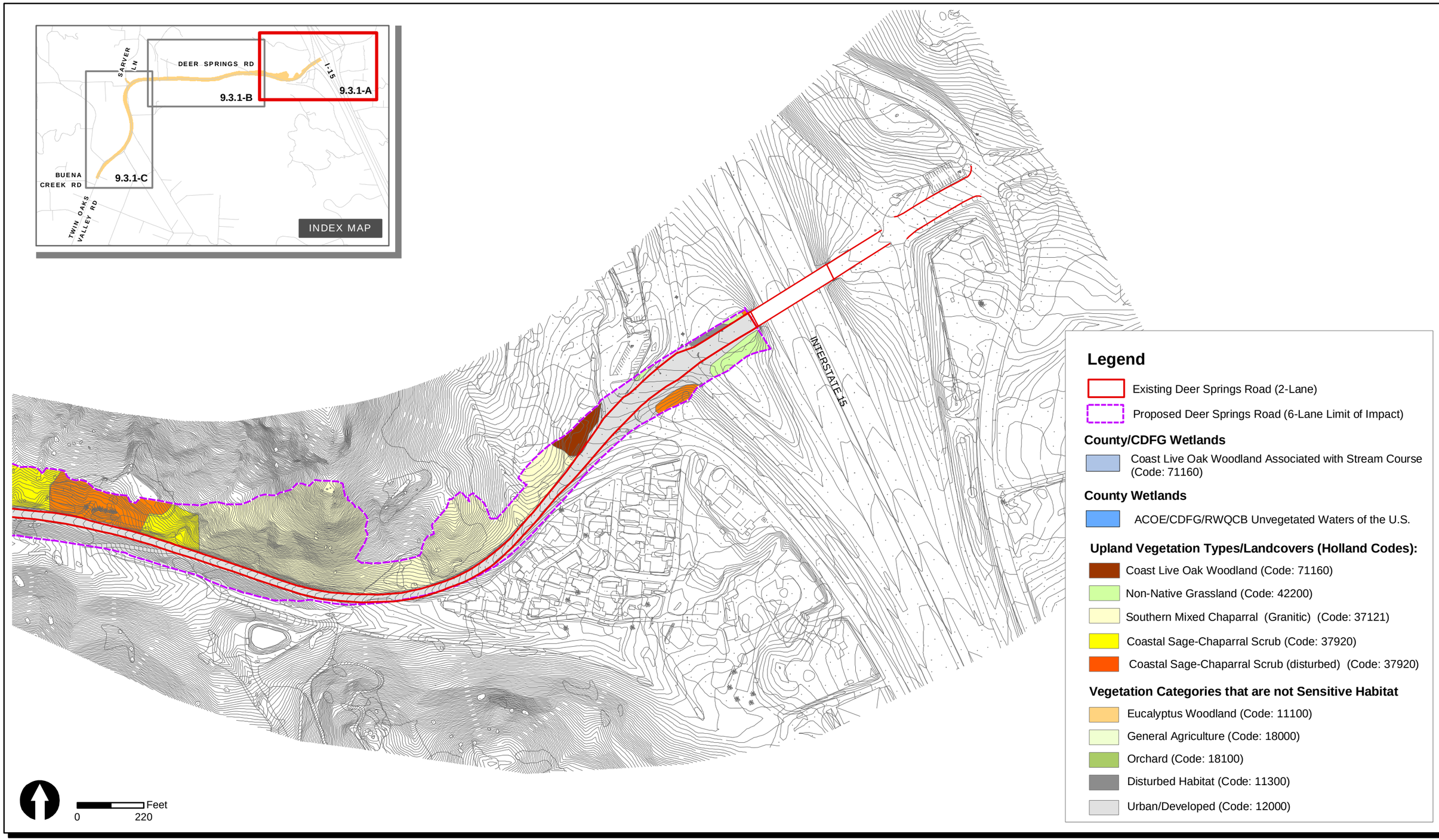
GPA/CE-AE-1 Impacts to the intactness/unity and visual character for passing motorists due to the introduction of manufactured cut-and-fill slopes, sound walls, the change in pavement width, the removal of existing mature vegetation, and the change in near views along Deer Springs Road, would be considered significant.

9.3.3.4 Mitigation Measure

M-GPA/CE-AE-1 Grading and landscaping design criteria upon final design shall retain the natural shape of the landform and reflect the topographic features of the terrain. This could include using variable slope gradients; staining of cut-slopes; blending slope contours with the natural topography; and using vegetation to alleviate sharp, angular slopes. The landscape will need to be designed to convey the character of the region and enhance the integration of the proposed road improvements into the existing environment.

9.3.3.5 Conclusion

The Circulation Element Amendment would result in impacts to the intactness/unity and visual character for passing motorists due to the potential introduction of manufactured cut-and-fill slopes, the change in pavement width, the removal of existing mature vegetation, and the change in near views along Deer Springs Road (Impact GPA/CE-AE-1). Implementation of Mitigation Measure M-GPA/CE-AE-1 would reduce impacts to a level below significance because blending manufactured slopes with the existing topography and staining the exposed rock surface would provide visual continuity, blending the graded hillsides with remaining natural vegetation and minimizing any adverse visual effect along these portions of the road.



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County Wetlands/Vegetation & Species Data Source: Pacific Southwest Biological Services, Inc. & Dudek

General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element - Deer Springs Road

Biological Resources Map - Plan to Ground

FIGURE 9.3.1-A

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Legend

- Existing General Plan Circulation Element Designation Impact
- Reclassification Deer Springs Road (6-Lane Limit of Impact)

County/CDFG Wetlands

- Coast Live Oak Woodland Associated with Stream Course (Code: 71160)

County Wetlands

- ACOE/CDFG/RWQCB Unvegetated Waters of the U.S.

Upland Vegetation Types/Landcovers (Holland Codes):

- Coast Live Oak Woodland (Code: 71160)
- Non-Native Grassland (Code: 42200)
- Southern Mixed Chaparral (Granitic) (Code: 37121)
- Coastal Sage-Chaparral Scrub (Code: 37920)
- Coastal Sage-Chaparral Scrub (disturbed) (Code: 37920)

Vegetation Categories that are not Sensitive Habitat

- Eucalyptus Woodland (Code: 11100)
- General Agriculture (Code: 18000)
- Orchard (Code: 18100)
- Disturbed Habitat (Code: 11300)
- Urban/Developed (Code: 12000)

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County Wetlands/Vegetation & Species Data Source: Pacific Southwest Biological Services, Inc. & Dudek

General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element - Deer Springs Road

Biological Resources Map - Plan to Ground

FIGURE
9.3.1-B

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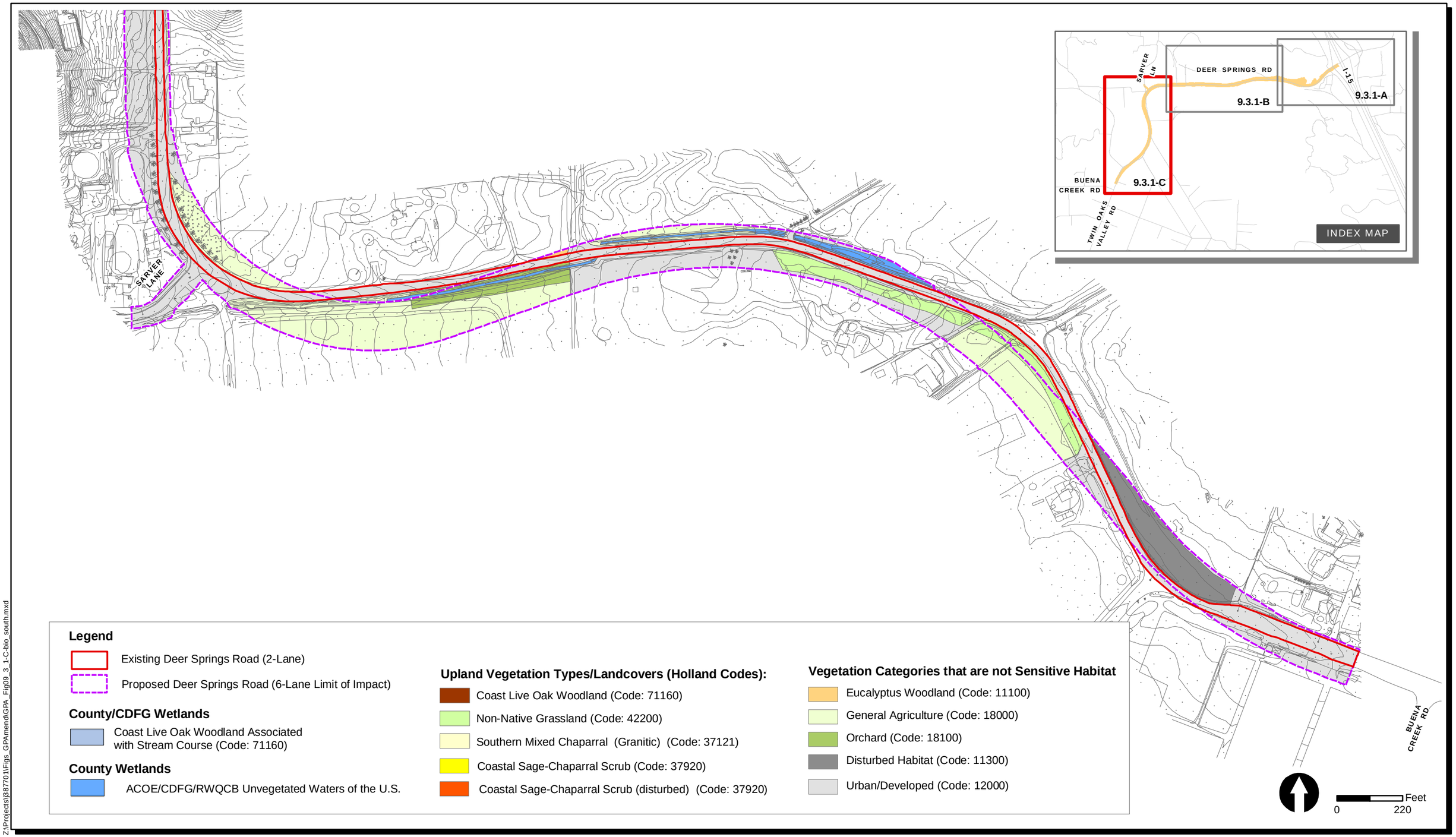

Legend

- Existing Deer Springs Road (2-Lane)
- Proposed Deer Springs Road (6-Lane Limit of Impact)

County/CDFG Wetlands

- Coast Live Oak Woodland Associated with Stream Course (Code: 71160)

County Wetlands

- ACOE/CDFG/RWQCB Unvegetated Waters of the U.S.

Upland Vegetation Types/Landcovers (Holland Codes):

- Coast Live Oak Woodland (Code: 71160)
- Non-Native Grassland (Code: 42200)
- Southern Mixed Chaparral (Granitic) (Code: 37121)
- Coastal Sage-Chaparral Scrub (Code: 37920)
- Coastal Sage-Chaparral Scrub (disturbed) (Code: 37920)

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- Orchard (Code: 18100)
- Disturbed Habitat (Code: 11300)
- Urban/Developed (Code: 12000)

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County Wetlands/Vegetation & Species Data Source: Pacific Southwest Biological Services, Inc. & Dudek

General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element - Deer Springs Road

Biological Resources Map - Plan to Ground

FIGURE 9.3.1-C

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9.4 Environmental Effects Found not to be Significant

9.4.1 Mineral Resources

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Mineral resources within the Deer Springs Road ROW are classified as MRZ-3 and MRZ-4 by the State of California Geology Board (Generalized Mineral Land Classification Map of Western San Diego County, 1996). The ROW is not located in an area designated or classified as containing significant mineral resources (MRZ-2). There are no County-designated mineral resource areas located within or adjacent to the Deer Springs Road ROW. The surrounding area is urbanized, and mining does not occur in the immediate vicinity. Existing land uses generally preclude any anticipated future mining or mineral recovery in the area. As a result, the Circulation Element Amendment would have no impact on a known mineral resource and would not result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would have no effect on mineral resources since no ground disturbance would occur. Ground disturbance that would have been associated with the Buena Creek Road extension would be eliminated.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bikeway would have no effect on mineral resources since no ground disturbance would occur. Ground disturbance that would have been associated with the Buena Creek Road extension would be eliminated.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Mineral resources within the Deer Springs Road ROW are classified as MRZ-3 and MRZ-4 by the State of California Geology Board (Generalized Mineral Land Classification Map of Western San Diego County, 1996). The ROW is not located in an area designated or classified as containing significant mineral resources (MRZ-2). There are no County-designated mineral resource areas located within or adjacent to the Deer Springs Road ROW. Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would increase the ground disturbance required to improve the roadway from its planned condition; however, no impact to mineral resources would occur because no significant mineral resources are located within the proposed improvement area and the Circulation Element Amendment would not result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the roadway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element. No impacts are anticipated.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bikeway would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the bikeway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element. No impacts are anticipated.

9.4.2 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: The additional ROW required for the proposed widening of Deer Springs Road is not located on a site listed in the State of California Hazardous Waste and Substance sites list complied pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 (http://www.calepa.ca.gov/sitecleanup/CorteseList/SectionA.htm; website accessed 12/22/08). Relatively small amounts of hazardous substances, such as fossil fuels, lubricants, and solvents would be used on site for road construction. There is a potential for construction debris to accumulate and for hazardous materials to be contained in stockpiles within the ROW. Impacts could include soils and water contamination, which would be considered a significant impact. However, all hazardous materials shall be transported and handled in accordance with all Federal, State, and local laws regulating the management and use of hazardous materials. In addition, the proposed road widening would include the proper removal and disposal of all construction debris as mandated by applicable regulations. Consequently, use of these materials for their intended purpose would not pose a significant risk to the public or environment, and impacts would be less than significant.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would have no effect on a hazards and hazardous materials since no ground disturbance would occur. Ground disturbance that would have been associated with the Buena Creek Road extension would be eliminated.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bikeway would not result in impacts to hazards and hazardous materials, since ground disturbance that would have been associated with the Buena Creek Road bicycle lane would be eliminated.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would increase the ground disturbance required to improve the roadway from

its planned condition; however, no significant impacts in relation to hazards and hazardous materials would occur as identified above under the "Plan-to-Ground" discussion.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the roadway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element. No impacts are anticipated.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bikeway would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the bikeway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element. No impacts are anticipated.

9.4.3 Land Use and Planning

The County Circulation Element includes guidelines for development of the regional transportation network necessary to serve designated land uses, both existing and planned, in the unincorporated area of San Diego County. The existing Circulation Element designates Deer Springs Road as a four-lane Major Road. The General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element proposes reclassification to accommodate planned land uses as the roadway would operate below an acceptable LOS as a four-lane Major Road upon ultimate buildout of planned land uses. Because the reclassification is proposed to address an inconsistency between the planned land uses and roadway classification on Deer Springs Road, it is consistent with the goals and intent of the Circulation Element.

The Circulation Element Amendment proposes removal of the Buena Creek Road extension and associated bicycle lane identified in the Circulation Element. The Circulation Element Amendment would maintain bicycle lanes along existing roadways that provide connectivity to the south at Twin Oaks Valley Road and to the north at Champagne Boulevard via Deer Springs Road. The bicycle lane removal along the Buena Creek Road extension provided in the Circulation Element is consistent with the goals and intent of the Circulation Element as regional connections would be maintained and it would not preclude the ability for the County to designate future bicycle lanes along existing roadways.

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Land use and planning impacts would be considered significant if the Circulation Element Amendment would physically divide or change the character of an established community, or conflict with any applicable policy that has been adopted with the purpose of protecting the environment, including policies in any adopted habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.

The existing character of Deer Springs Road within the existing community is that of a heavily travelled, congested roadway carrying from 14,900 to 18,400 ADT at LOS F (LLG 2009). This reflects existing use of Deer Springs Road as a through arterial connecting travelers residing in Temecula and other locations in Riverside County to employment centers in San Marcos, Vista, Carlsbad, and other North County coastal communities. Deer Springs Road connects I-15 to SR-78 and other four-lane arterials such as Twin Oaks Valley Road, San Marcos Boulevard, and Mountain Meadow Road and is heavily used as a commuter route. With the proposed reclassification, traffic on the roadway would increase from existing traffic (14,900 to 18,400 ADT) to 44,000 to 59,000 ADT; the roadway would be ultimately widened to six lanes and would be less congested, operating at LOS D. From a congestion and traffic standpoint, the increased traffic and reduced congestion would not result in a substantial change to community character.

As discussed in Sections 9.2.2, Noise, and 9.3.3, Aesthetics, widening the road and associated increased traffic would require introduction of manufactured slopes and about potential noise walls along Deer Springs Road. The manufactured slopes and potential noise walls would introduce more urban elements than currently exist along the existing heavily travelled roadway; however, these increased urban elements would likely be located at the easterly end of the approximately 2.1-mile Deer Springs Road improvement area, near the existing I-15/Deer Springs Road interchange based on the existing topography. As seen in Section 9.3.3, landscape and textural treatments would be provided for built elements to soften their appearance and blend these features with the existing terrain. These features of the Deer Springs Road improvements would alter the character of the roadway but would not result in substantial changes in community character for several reasons: the features and their effects would be confined to areas immediately adjacent to the existing roadway; built features would likely be at the easterly end of the improvement area closer to existing urban features near the interchange (gas station, fire station, and mobile home park); character changes along most of the western portion of the alignment would be limited to increased pavement width and potential intermittent noise walls; and landscaping and textural treatments would be provided to soften the visual appearance of introduced urban features (see Section 9.3.3).

The proposed Circulation Element Amendment would not physically divide an established community because Deer Springs Road already exists as a heavily travelled two-lane roadway and the proposed roadway alignment would be similar to the existing alignment. Driveways and accessibility would be maintained along Deer Springs Road. The proposed Circulation Element Amendment would widen Deer Springs Road generally along the existing heavily travelled roadway in the same location identified in the current Circulation Element. As such, it would not introduce a new roadway in a previously untraveled area, nor would it broadly traverse currently

undisturbed lands identified for conservation in any applicable plans. Measures would be incorporated in roadway design plans to avoid and minimize impacts to sensitive areas and resources. The roadway reclassification would not conflict with policies adopted for purposes of protecting the environment.

Buena Creek Road Extension: The proposed Circulation Element Amendment includes elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension as seen on Figure 9.1.1-B. This portion of the Amendment would eliminate the potential for land use conflicts resulting from construction of a new roadway corridor through single family residential and agricultural lands. Therefore, the removal of the Buena Creek Road extension from the existing Circulation Element Map would eliminate potential land use conflicts from the introduction of a new roadway through an established community.

Bicycle Lane: The elimination of the bicycle lane along the proposed Buena Creek Road extension would not divide an established community or conflict with any adopted policies. The proposed Circulation Element Amendment would provide regional connectivity from Champagne Boulevard South to Twin Oaks Valley Road via Deer Springs Road, which does not currently exist. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would increase the ground disturbance required to improve the roadway from its planned condition; however, no significant impacts to land use and planning would result from the Deer Springs Road Reclassification (see discussion under Plan-to-Ground). Impacts would be less than significant.

Buena Creek Road Extension: The proposed Circulation Element Amendment includes elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension as seen on Figure 9.1.1-B. Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would avoid ground disturbance and potential land use conflicts associated with constructing the roadway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element. No impacts are anticipated.

Bicycle Lane: The Circulation Element Amendment proposes removal of the bicycle lane proposed along the Buena Creek Road extension identified in the Circulation Element. The Circulation Element Amendment would maintain bicycle lanes along existing roadways that provide connectivity to the south at Twin Oaks Valley Road and to the north at Champagne Boulevard via Deer Springs Road. The bicycle lane removal along the Buena Creek Road extension provided in the Circulation Element is consistent with the goals and intent of the

Circulation Element as regional connections would be maintained and it would not preclude the ability for the County to designate future bicycle lanes along existing roadways.

9.4.4 Geology and Soils

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: No active or potentially active faults are known to exist on or in the immediate vicinity of Deer Springs Road. In addition, the Circulation Element Amendment does not affect a hazard zone identified by the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone Map. No unique conditions exist in the area that would constitute an increased seismic hazard risk with implementation of the proposed Circulation Element Amendment. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would not result in impacts to geology and soils because no construction or ground disturbance is proposed, therefore, significant impacts are not anticipated. Ground disturbance that would have been associated with the Buena Creek Road extension would be eliminated.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bikeway would not result in impacts to geology and soils because no construction or ground disturbance is proposed. Therefore, significant impacts are not anticipated. Ground disturbance that would have been associated with the Buena Creek Road extension would be eliminated.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would result in greater ground disturbance than would occur under the existing Circulation Element classification; however, impacts to geology and soils would be less than significant because no active or potentially active faults are known to exist in the immediate vicinity of Deer Springs Road, the Circulation Element Amendment does not affect a hazard zone identified by the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone Map and no unique conditions exist in the area that would constitute an increased seismic hazard risk with implementation of the proposed Circulation Element Amendment. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would avoid ground disturbance and, therefore, effects on geology and soils associated with constructing the roadway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element. No impacts are anticipated.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bikeway would avoid ground disturbance and, therefore, effects on geology and soils associated with constructing the bikeway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element. No impacts are anticipated.

9.4.5 Agricultural Resources

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Currently, agricultural operations within and adjacent to the Deer Springs Road ROW consist of greenhouse operations, scattered large-lot estate developments containing avocado groves, fruit trees, horse breeding, and other small-scale farming activities with rural estate development. Agricultural operations located south of Sarver Lane where a revised alignment is proposed include agricultural fields for growing various products. Agricultural lands actively farmed adjacent to the roadway are generally larger than 14.0 acres.

There are no Williamson Act contracts located within and/or immediately adjacent to the proposed Deer Springs Road alignment (see Figure 9.4.5). A portion of the proposed alignment passes through land designated as an Agricultural Preserve between the Sarver Lane curve and Twin Oaks Valley Road (see Figure 9.4.5). Per County of San Diego's Zoning Ordinance (Sections 5100 through 5110), road widening is not regulated within an Agricultural Preserve. Therefore, the proposed Circulation Element Amendment does not conflict with Agricultural Zoning or a Williamson Act Contract.

Due to the nature of road widening, which would impact narrow strips of land along the existing roadway alignment, it is not anticipated that the elimination of small portions of farm fields along the existing Deer Springs Road alignment would substantially impair the viability of an agricultural site. Based on conceptual design information, the improvement of Deer Springs Road from the existing two-lane facility to a Prime Arterial would directly impact about 39.5 acres, including about 9.6 acres of Prime Farmland and 6.6 acres of Local Importance (see Table 9.4.5-1). The proposed Circulation Element Amendment would not prevent continual operation of existing agricultural uses adjacent to the existing roadway because the majority of farm fields would remain in-tact with impacts limited to field edges. The roadway reclassification would require portions of agricultural lands to be acquired; however these portions do not constitute a large portion of the existing operations as less than 17% of the existing operations would be impacted (see Table 9.4.5-2). In addition, the roadway reclassification would not limit the ability for ingress/egress from existing driveways for the existing agricultural operations and existing access would be maintained. Therefore, impacts would be considered less than significant.

In addition, Deer Springs Road does provide access to secondary roadways that serve existing agricultural operations; however, existing access from these roadways, such as Meadow Park Lane, is limited due to the roadway currently operating at LOS F. Therefore, the proposed roadway reclassification would not affect existing agricultural uses beyond effects that may be occurring under existing conditions. The increase in traffic is not expected to hinder the movement of farm equipment or generate dust that could impair the existing agricultural productivity of agricultural land under production.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would not result in direct impacts to agricultural resources and no significant impacts are anticipated. Ground disturbance that would have been associated with the Buena Creek Road extension would be eliminated. It should be noted the proposed roadway extension would avoid impacts to Farmland with Prime, Unique and Statewide Importance designations located within the alignment of the Buena Creek Road extension (see Figure 9.4.5).

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bikeway would not result in direct impacts to agricultural resources and no significant impacts are anticipated. Ground disturbance that would have been associated with the Buena Creek Road extension would be eliminated.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would result in incrementally greater ground disturbance than would occur under the existing Circulation Element classification (see Table 9.4.5-1). However, this ground disturbance would not result in impacts to agricultural resources as the configuration and size of the impacts along the roadway edges would not impair the viability of the adjacent agricultural uses. In addition, the roadway reclassification would not limit the ability for ingress/egress from existing driveways for the existing agricultural operations and existing access would be maintained. Therefore, impacts would be considered less than significant.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would avoid ground disturbance and, therefore, effects on agricultural resources associated with constructing the roadway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element. The proposed roadway extension would have resulted in impacts to Farmland with Prime, Unique and Statewide Importance designations. In comparison to the adopted Circulation Element, the proposed Circulation Element Amendment would eliminate the potential impacts on farmlands along the proposed Buena Creek Road extension. No impacts are anticipated.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bikeway would not result in impacts to agricultural resources and no impacts are anticipated. Ground disturbance that would have been associated with the Buena Creek Road extension would be eliminated.

Table 9.4.5-1
Deer Springs Road – Agricultural Designations

Designation	Plan-to-Ground (acres)	Plan-to-Plan (acres)
Urban	2.2	0.0
Local Importance	6.6	0.1
Prime Farmland	9.6	1.4
Unique Farmland	2.1	0.2
Other Land	19.0	3.6
Total	39.5	5.3

Table 9.4.5-2
Deer Springs Road – Potential Agricultural Impacts to Existing Uses

Parcel	Existing Parcel Size	Potential Agricultural Lands Impacted	Percent of Potential Impact
182-260-08	13.1	3.4	25.9%
182-270-14	13.0	1.0	7.6%
Total Impact	26.1	4.4	16.8%

9.4.6 Utilities and Public Services

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Overhead telephone and electric utility lines are located along Deer Springs Road. In addition, an underground gas line that services local businesses and residences is located along the road alignment. Utility location affected by the proposed Circulation Element Amendment would be identified during the design phase, and relocation of these facilities would occur during construction. Utilities that currently overhang the roadway would be relocated underground, and relocation would occur within ROW limits and be coordinated with the service providers. Because the Circulation Element Amendment would not result in an increase in population, no additional utility demands would result with General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element implementation. Compared to the existing Circulation Element, the proposed Circulation Element Amendment would improve the LOS on Deer Springs Road, resulting in improved conditions for emergency responders. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would avoid ground disturbance and, therefore, potential effects on utilities and public services associated with constructing the roadway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element. No impacts are anticipated.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bikeway would avoid ground disturbance and, therefore, effects on utilities and public services associated with constructing the bikeway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element. No impacts are anticipated.

Plan-to-Plan:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Reclassification of Deer Springs Road from a Major Road to a Prime Arterial would result in incrementally greater ground disturbance than would occur under the existing Circulation Element classification. However, this additional ground disturbance would not result in impacts to public services and utilities because relocation of existing utilities would occur within the ROW limits and be coordinated with the service providers, the Circulation Element Amendment would not result in an increase in population, no additional utility demands would result with General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element implementation and the LOS would be improved along Deer Springs Road, resulting in improved conditions for emergency responders. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would avoid ground disturbance and, therefore, potential effects on utilities and public services associated with constructing the roadway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element. No impacts are anticipated.

Bicycle Lane: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road bikeway would avoid ground disturbance and, therefore, effects on public services and utilities associated with constructing the bikeway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element. No impacts are anticipated.

9.4.7 Recreation

Plan-to-Ground:

Deer Springs Road Reclassification: Walnut Grove Park is located along Sycamore Avenue to the east of Twin Oaks Valley Road. The 39-acre park includes a large grass open play area, two horse arenas, picnic shelters, and two tot lots. Consistent with County Roadway classification requirements, a 10-foot-wide recreational trail will be provided between the shoulder and limits of the proposed right-of-way. The trail will provide connections to the regional trail network

from the City of San Marcos located to the south and the Hidden Meadows trail network to the east of I-15. As the Circulation Element Amendment would accommodate recreational facilities and does not introduce new populations into the area, the amendment would not increase the use of existing recreational facilities and/or impact existing trails in the region. The Circulation Element Amendment would not impact existing recreational resources, existing trails or prohibit access to existing recreational facilities. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would not result in any disturbance to recreational resources and connections to Deer Springs Road will continued to be provided via Twin Oaks Valley Road. Ground disturbance that would have been associated with the Buena Creek Road extension would be eliminated.

Bicycle Lane: Bicycle lanes are not currently provided along this stretch of roadway proposed under in the Circulation Element. Therefore, the elimination of a proposed bicycle lane would not result in any impacts in comparison to existing conditions.

Plan-to-Plan:

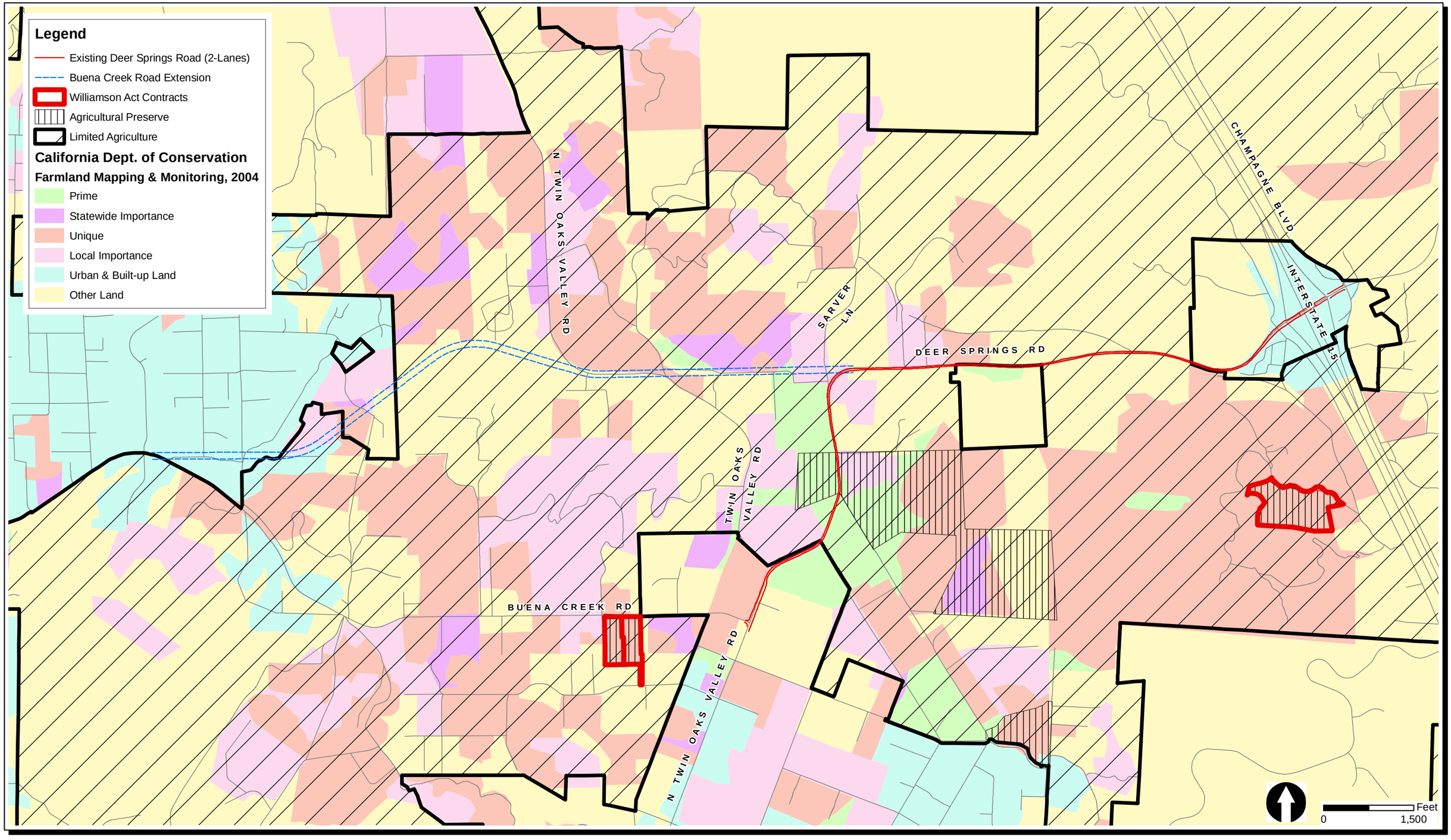
Deer Springs Road Reclassification: The proposed Circulation Element Amendment would not induce population growth in the area. As such, it is not expected to result in increased use of existing recreational facilities. Consistent with County Roadway classification requirements, a 10-foot-wide recreational trail will be provided between the shoulder and limits of the proposed right-of-way. The trail will provide connections to the regional trail network from the City of San Marcos located to the south and the Hidden Meadows trail network to the east of I-15. The Circulation Element Amendment would not impact existing recreational resources, trails or prohibit access to existing recreational facilities. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Buena Creek Road Extension: Elimination of the Buena Creek Road extension would avoid ground disturbance associated with constructing the roadway as currently envisioned in the County's Circulation Element. No impacts are anticipated.

Bicycle Lane: The existing Circulation Element of the General Plan identifies a bicycle network system along portions of Deer Springs Road, Buena Creek Road, and Twin Oaks Valley Road (see Figure 9.1.1-A). The Circulation Element Amendment would maintain bicycle lanes along existing roadways that provide connectivity to the south at Twin Oaks Valley Road and to the north at Champagne Boulevard via Deer Springs Road. The bicycle lane removal along the Buena Creek Road extension provided in the Circulation Element is consistent with the goals and

intent of the Circulation Element as regional connections would be maintained and it would not preclude the ability for the County to designate future bicycle lanes along existing roadways.

The elimination of the Buena Creek Road Extension would decrease the bicycle network system's connectivity at this location. While the elimination of the bicycle lane would reduce the connectivity of the bicycle lane network in the area, it would not preclude future development of bicycle lanes to restore this connectivity. Therefore, no environmental impacts related to recreation would occur with implementation of the Circulation Element Amendment.



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General Plan Amendment/Circulation Element - Deer Springs Road

Important Farmlands Areas

FIGURE 9.4.5

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9.5 Other CEQA Requirements

9.5.1 Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes Which Would be Caused by the Circulation Element amendment Should it be Implemented.

CEQA Section 15126.2(c) requires an environmental review to address any significant irreversible environmental changes that may occur as a result of project implementation. Approval of the Circulation Element Amendment would cause irreversible environmental changes consisting of the following:

- Use of various new raw materials, such as sand, steel, and gravel, for construction and rehabilitation. Some of these resources are already being depleted worldwide. The energy consumed in developing and maintaining the roadway may be considered a permanent investment. The Circulation Element Amendment is a relatively minor consumer of these supplies when compared to a regional context. Use of these resources would have an incremental effect on the regional consumption of these commodities.

- Implementation of the proposed reclassification for Deer Springs Road would involve an incremental increase in consumption of resources, derived in part from nonrenewable resources, such as aggregate to construct the roadway widening.

9.5.2 Alternatives

Alternatives to the GPA/CE are discussed in Chapters 1 and 5 of this EIR. They include two No Project Alternatives as well as alternative alignments for the roadway as a reclassified prime arterial. As discussed in Chapter 1.0, Project Description, the primary purpose of the GPA/CE is to resolve an internal inconsistency between the Land Use and Circulation Elements of the General Plan. This purpose would not be achieved and the inconsistency would not be resolved under either of the No Project Alternatives. Alternative A (No Project/No Development) would maintain the current two-lane configuration of Deer Springs Road. It would not address the inconsistency because it would not result in an adequate level of service at buildout of the existing General Plan Land Use Element. Alternative B (No Project/Existing General Plan) would maintain the current four-lane classification of Deer Springs Road and construction of the Buena Creek Road extension. It also would not address the inconsistency because it would not result in an adequate level of service at buildout of the existing Land Use Element.

A variety of alternative alignments have been considered for the roadway under both the GPA/CE prime arterial classification and under the major roadway classification as proposed for the Merriam Mountains project and are discussed in this EIR. These alternatives are included in

the discussion of the Deer Springs Road design exception (Section 9.1.1.2), the Analysis of Alternative F – Off-Site Roadway Improvements Along Deer Springs Road (Section 5.5, Alternatives), and the Deer Springs Road Technical Report (included as Appendix C to Appendix F, Resource Protection Study, to this EIR). Although the GPA/CE would be a precedent action to the Merriam Mountains project, the alternative considerations for Deer Springs Road under the Merriam Mountains project are useful in consideration of alternatives for the GPA/CE since the proposed GPA/CE alignment is planned to be consistent with the current Circulation Element major roadway classification alignment addressed as part of the Merriam Mountains project. Together, these alternatives discussions address alternatives to the GPA/CE.

The results of the alternatives analyses conclude that the GPA/CE as proposed will best meet project objectives and will avoid and minimize environmental impacts. Other alternatives would either not meet project objectives or would increase environmental impacts when compared with the proposed GPA/CE. In particular, alternative alignments would result in greater impacts to existing land uses and properties including agricultural parcels and an existing historic school as well as noise effects to existing sensitive receptors along the roadway.