

Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations *City of Ridgecrest General Plan Update*

1.1 Introduction and Certification of the Final EIR

The City of Ridgecrest (City), as lead agency, has completed the Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR) for its City of Ridgecrest 2030 General Plan Update Project (proposed project). The Final EIR comprises a program-level analysis of the proposed project and has State Clearinghouse No 2008111097.

A Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) was released on May 19, 2009, for review by public agencies, organizations, and members of the public. The Draft EIR assess the potentially significant environmental effects resulting from implementation of the proposed project, identifies potentially feasible means to mitigate those potentially significant adverse impacts, and evaluates a reasonable range of alternatives to the project. The Final EIR is comprised of the Draft EIR, written responses to the significant environmental issues raised in those comments, revisions to the text of the Draft EIR reflecting changes made in response to comments and other information, along with other minor changes to the text of the Draft EIR. The Final EIR is hereby incorporated by reference.

Through the adoption of this section (1.1) of these findings, the City of Ridgecrest City Council (City Council or Council) hereby satisfies its obligation under section 15090 of Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3 of the California Code of Regulations (“CEQA Guidelines”) to certify: (1) that the Final EIR has been completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines; (2) that the Final EIR has been presented to the Council, which has reviewed and considered the information contained therein prior to taking action on the proposed project; and (3) that the Final EIR reflects the City’s independent judgment and analysis.

1.2 Findings

As required by CEQA, the City has made specific findings regarding the environmental effects of the project. These findings constitute the City Council’s best efforts to set forth the evidentiary and policy bases for its decision to approve the project in a manner consistent with the requirements of CEQA. These findings, in other words, are not merely informational, but rather constitute a binding set of obligations that come into effect with the City Council’s approval of the proposed project.

The City Council is adopting these findings for the entirety of the actions described in these findings and in the Final EIR. Although the findings below identify specific pages within the Draft and Final EIRs in support of various conclusions reached below, the Council has no quarrel with, and thus incorporates by reference and adopts as its own, the reasoning set forth in both environmental documents, and thus relies on that reasoning, even where not specifically mentioned or cited below,

in reaching the conclusions set forth below, except where additional evidence is specifically mentioned. This is especially true with respect to the Council's approval of all mitigation measures recommended in the Final EIR, and the reasoning set forth in responses to comments in the Final EIR.

Having received, reviewed, and considered the Final EIR and other information in the record of proceedings, the City Council hereby adopts the following findings in compliance with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines.

- Part I – Findings regarding the environmental impacts of the proposed project and the mitigation measures (General Plan policies, etc.) for those impacts identified in the Final EIR and incorporated in the General Plan.
- Part II – Findings regarding alternatives and the reasons that such alternatives are rejected.
- Part III – Statement of Overriding Considerations determining that the benefits of implementing the proposed project outweigh the significant unavoidable environmental impacts that will result and therefore justify approval of the proposed project despite such impacts.

Those findings are presented below, along with facts and evidence to support each finding.

The documents and other materials that constitute the record of proceedings on which these findings are based are located at the City of Ridgecrest, Planning Department, 100 W. California Avenue, Ridgecrest, CA 93555-4054. This information is provided in compliance with Public Resources Code §21081.6(a) (2).

Part I – Impacts and Mitigation Measures

These findings provide the written analysis and conclusions of the City Council regarding the environmental impacts of the proposed project and the mitigation measures included as part of the Final EIR and adopted by the City Council as part of the project. To avoid duplication and redundancy, and because the Council agrees with, and hereby adopts, the conclusions in the Final EIR, these findings will not repeat the analysis and conclusions in the Final EIR, but instead incorporates them by reference herein and relied upon them as substantial evidence supporting these findings.

In making these findings, the City Council has considered the opinions of other agencies and members of the public. The City Council finds that the determination of significance thresholds is a judgment decision within the discretion of the City Council; the significance thresholds used in the EIR are supported by substantial evidence in the record, including the expert opinion of the EIR preparers and City staff; and the significance thresholds used in the EIR provide reasonable and appropriate means of assessing the significance of the adverse environmental effects of the proposed project. Thus, although, as a legal matter, the City Council is not bound by the significance determinations in the EIR (see Pub. Resources Code, § 21082.2, subd. (e)), the Council finds them persuasive and hereby adopts them as its own.

Table 1 summarizes the environmental determinations of the Final EIR and the proposed project's impacts before and after mitigation. This table does not attempt to describe the full analysis of each environmental impact contained in the Final EIR. Instead, Table 1 provides a summary description of each impact, describes the key General Plan policies and implementation measures identified in the Final EIR and adopted by the City Council, and states the City Council's findings on the significance of each impact after imposition of the adopted General Plan policies and implementation measures. A full explanation of these environmental findings and conclusions can be found in the Draft and Final EIR and these findings hereby incorporate by reference the discussion and analysis in these documents supporting the determination regarding the proposed project's impacts and mitigation measures designed to address those impacts. In making these findings, the City Council ratifies, adopts and incorporates in these findings the determinations and conclusions of the Final EIR relating to environmental impacts and mitigation measures, except to the extent any such determinations and conclusions are specifically and expressly modified by these findings.

As set forth below in Section 1.4 "Resolutions of Approval", the City Council adopts and incorporates the policies and implementation measures (mitigation measures) set forth in Table 1 to substantially lessen or avoid the potentially significant and significant impacts of the proposed project, as well as certain less-than-significant impacts. In adopting these mitigation measures, the City Council intends to adopt each of the policies and implementation measures proposed in the Final EIR. Accordingly, in the event a policy or implementation measure recommended in the Final EIR has inadvertently been omitted from Table 1, such policy or implementation measure is hereby adopted and incorporated in the findings below. In addition, in the event the language describing a policy or implementation measure set forth in Table 1 fails to accurately reflect the mitigation measures in the Final EIR due to a clerical error, the language of the policies and implementation measures as set forth in the Final EIR shall control, unless the language of the policies and implementation measures has been specifically and expressly modified by these findings. With respect to each and every significant effect identified in the EIR, the City hereby finds that "[c]hanges or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the final EIR." (CEQA Guidelines, § 15091, subd. (a)(1).) Rather than repeat this finding dozens of times to address each and every significant effect, this paragraph eliminates the need for such repetition because in no instance is the City Council rejecting mitigation measures recommended in the Draft and Final EIRs. The Council recognizes that, as a part of the General Plan update process, the final language of the General Plan evolved to reflect both environmental considerations and public input. In all instances, the Council is content with the final mitigation language as set forth in the General Plan at the time of adoption.

**TABLE 1
SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

Environmental Impact		Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance Before Mitigation	Level of Significance After Mitigation
Section 3.1		Land Use and Aesthetics		
Impact 3.1-1:	The Proposed Project could conflict with other applicable adopted land use plans.	None Required (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures).	LS	N/A
Impact 3.1-2	The Proposed Project could conflict with an applicable Conservation Plan (HCP) or Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP).	Habitat None Required (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures).	LS	N/A
Impact 3.1-3	The Proposed Project could substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of scenic resources or vistas.	No Feasible Mitigation Measures (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures) Available.	PS	SU
Impact 3.1-4	The Proposed Project could substantially degrade the quality of scenic corridors or views from scenic roadways.	No Feasible Mitigation Measures (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures) Available.	PS	SU
Impact 3.1-5	The Proposed Project would create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.	No Feasible Mitigation Measures (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures) Available.	PS	SU
Section 3.2		Public Services and Utilities		
Impact 4.2-1	The Proposed Project would result in a substantial increase in vehicular traffic.		PS	SU
Impact 3.2-1	The Proposed Project could require new or expanded water supply facilities or affect the adequacy of a water supply.	The following new policy is required to ensure that this impact is reduced to a less than significant level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy LU-10.17 Funding for Public Facilities. Continue to utilize developer fees, public facilities fees, and a variety of other methods (i.e., grant funding or assessment districts) to finance public service and facility design, construction, operation, and maintenance. <i>[New Policy – Draft EIR]</i> 	PS	LS
Impact 3.2-2	The Proposed Project could result in impacts to groundwater supply, recharge, and secondary impacts to groundwater resources.	None Required (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures).	LS	N/A
Impact 3.2-3	The Proposed Project could result in increased wastewater treatment demand and result in the need for new or expanded facilities.	The following new policies are required to ensure that this impact is reduced to a less than significant level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy LU-10.17 Funding for Public Facilities. Continue to utilize developer fees, public facilities fees, and a variety of other methods (i.e., grant funding or assessment districts) to finance public service and facility design, construction, operation, and maintenance. <i>[New Policy – Draft EIR]</i> • Policy LU-10.18 Monitoring Plant Performance. The City shall continue to monitor the performance of the City's wastewater treatment plant to determine when additional capacity will be required and plan for needed treatment capacity. <i>[New Policy – Draft EIR]</i> • Policy LU-10.19 Wastewater Discharge Monitoring. The City shall continue to 	PS	LS

**TABLE 1
SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

Environmental Impact	Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance Before Mitigation	Level of Significance After Mitigation
	monitor and ensure that all wastewater is treated in compliance with approved discharge permits. <i>[New Policy – Draft EIR]</i>		
Impact 3.2-4	<p>The Proposed Project could violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, or otherwise degrade water quality.</p> <p>The following new policies are required to ensure that this impact is reduced to a less than significant level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy LU-10.17 Funding for Public Facilities. Continue to utilize developer fees, public facilities fees, and a variety of other methods (i.e., grant funding or assessment districts) to finance public service and facility design, construction, operation, and maintenance. <i>[New Policy – Draft EIR]</i> • Policy LU-10.18 Monitoring Plant Performance. The City shall continue to monitor the performance of the City’s wastewater treatment plant to determine when additional capacity will be required and plan for needed treatment capacity. <i>[New Policy – Draft EIR]</i> • Policy LU-10.19 Wastewater Discharge Monitoring. The City shall continue to monitor and ensure that all wastewater is treated in compliance with approved discharge permits. <i>[New Policy – Draft EIR]</i> 	PS	LS
Impact 3.2-5	<p>The Proposed Project could result in water quality issues resulting from increased soil erosion and downstream sedimentation related to construction activities.</p> <p>None Required (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures).</p>	LS	N/A
Impact 3.2-6	<p>The Proposed Project could affect drainage patterns through increased on-site and downstream erosion and sedimentation.</p> <p>The following new policies are required to ensure that this impact is reduced to a less than significant level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy LU-10.17 Funding for Public Facilities. Continue to utilize developer fees, public facilities fees, and a variety of other methods (i.e., grant funding or assessment districts) to finance public service and facility design, construction, operation, and maintenance. <i>[New Policy – Draft EIR]</i> • Policy LU-10.18 Monitoring Plant Performance. The City shall continue to monitor the performance of the City’s wastewater treatment plant to determine when additional capacity will be required and plan for needed treatment capacity. <i>[New Policy – Draft EIR]</i> • Policy LU-10.19 Wastewater Discharge Monitoring. The City shall continue to monitor and ensure that all wastewater is treated in compliance with approved discharge permits. <i>[New Policy – Draft EIR]</i> 	PS	LS

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SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

Environmental Impact		Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance Before Mitigation	Level of Significance After Mitigation
Impact 3.2-7	The Proposed Project could result in the need for increased stormwater drainage system capacities.	The following new policy is required to ensure that this impact is reduced to a less than significant level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy LU-10.17 Funding for Public Facilities. Continue to utilize developer fees, public facilities fees, and a variety of other methods (i.e., grant funding or assessment districts) to finance public service and facility design, construction, operation, and maintenance. <i>[New Policy – Draft EIR]</i> 	PS	LS
Impact 3.2-8	The Proposed Project would increase solid waste disposal demand.	None Required (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures).	LS	N/A
Impact 3.2-9	The Proposed Project would increase the need or use of law enforcement service.	None Required (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures).	LS	N/A
Impact 3.2-10	The Proposed Project would increase the need or use of fire protection service.	None Required (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures).	LS	N/A
Impact 3.2-11	The Proposed Project would increase the need or use of school services or facilities.	None Required (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures).	LS	N/A
Impact 3.2-12	The Proposed Project would increase the need or use of libraries.	The following new policy is required to ensure that this impact is reduced to a less than significant level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy LU-10.18 Expand Library Services. The City shall continue to coordinate with the Kern County Library System to expand library facilities and services as necessary to meet the needed growth and according to an established square foot per capita standard of 1.0 square foot of library space per resident. <i>[New Policy – Draft EIR]</i> 	PS	LS
Section 3.3	Transportation and Circulation			
Impact 3.3-1	The Proposed Project would result in a substantial increase in vehicular traffic.	No Feasible Mitigation Measures (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures) Available.	PS	SU
Impact 3.3-2	The Proposed Project would result in a substantial increase in public transit usage.	No Feasible Mitigation Measures (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures) Available.	PS	SU
Impact 3.3-3	The Proposed Project would result in a substantial increase in bicycle and pedestrian activity.	No Feasible Mitigation Measures (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures) Available.	PS	SU
Impact 3.3-4	The Proposed Project could result in inadequate parking capacity.	None Required (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures).	LS	N/A
Impact 3.3-5	The Proposed Project could conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks).	None Required (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures).	LS	N/A

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Environmental Impact		Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance Before Mitigation	Level of Significance After Mitigation
Section 3.4	Air Quality, Climate Change, and Energy			
Impact 3.4-1	The Proposed Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of an applicable air quality plan.	None Required (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures).	LS	N/A
Impact 3.4-2	The Proposed Project would violate air quality standards or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation.	No Feasible Mitigation Measures (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures) Available.	PS	SU
Impact 3.4-3	The Proposed Project would result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of criteria pollutants. Future growth in accordance with the Proposed Project would exceed the KCAPCD thresholds for PM10.	No Feasible Mitigation Measures (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures) Available.	PS	SU
Impact 3.4-4	The Proposed Project would expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.	The following new policy is required to ensure that this impact is reduced to a less than significant level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy HS-2.15 Vehicular Air Toxics Exposure Reduction. The City shall require that, for any sensitive uses proposed to be located within 500 feet of high volume traffic routes where daily vehicle accounts exceed 100,000, require the use of an HVAC system with filtration to mitigate infiltration of vehicle emissions as warranted by exposure analysis. <i>[New Policy – Draft EIR]</i> 	PS	LS
Impact 3.4-5	The Proposed Project would not create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people.	None Required (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures).	LS	N/A
Impact 3.4-6	The Proposed Project would potentially conflict with implementation of state goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.	The following new policies are required to ensure that this impact is reduced to the greatest extent feasible: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy HS-6.3: Support Climate Action Team Emission Reduction Strategies. The City will continue to monitor the activities of the Climate Action Team (CAT) as they continue to develop a recommended list of emission reduction strategies. As appropriate, the City will evaluate each new project under the updated General Plan to determine its consistency with the CAT emission reduction strategies. <i>[New Policy – Draft EIR Analysis]</i> • Policy HS-6.4: Support Offsite Measures to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions. The City will support and encourage the use of off-site measures or the purchase of carbon offsets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. <i>[New Policy – Draft EIR Analysis]</i> • Health & Safety Implementation Measure 24.0. The City shall develop and maintain a climate action plan. The climate action plan shall include the following elements: an emissions inventory, emission reduction targets, applicable greenhouse gas control measures, and monitoring and report plan. <i>[New Implementation – Draft EIR Analysis]</i> 	PS	SU

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Environmental Impact		Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance Before Mitigation	Level of Significance After Mitigation
Impact 3.4-7	The Proposed Project would increase energy demand and require additional energy resources.	None Required (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures).	LS	N/A
Section 3.5				
Noise				
Impact 3.5-1	The Proposed Project could expose a variety of noise-sensitive land uses to construction noise.	None Required (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures).	LS	N/A
Impact 3.5-2	The Proposed Project could expose a variety of noise-sensitive land uses to traffic noise.	No Feasible Mitigation Measures (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures) Available.	PS	SU
Impact 3.5-3	The Proposed Project could result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in noise effects.	No Feasible Mitigation Measures (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures) Available.	PS	SU
Impact 3.5-4	The Proposed Project could expose a variety of noise-sensitive land uses to stationary noise sources.	No Feasible Mitigation Measures (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures) Available.	PS	SU
Impact 3.5-5	The Proposed Project could expose a variety of noise-sensitive land uses to excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels.	No Feasible Mitigation Measures (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures) Available.	PS	SU
Section 3.6				
Hydrology and Drainage				
Impact 3.6-1	The Proposed Project could expose people or structures to flood hazards from development within a 100-year Flood Hazard Area or from increased rates or amounts of surface runoff from development.	None Required (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures).	LS	N/A
Section 3.7				
Biological Resources				
Impact 3.7-1	The Proposed Project could have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on a variety of special status species.	None Required (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures).	LS	N/A
Impact 3.7-2	The Proposed Project could have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on a variety of common plant and wildlife species.	None Required (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures).	LS	N/A
Impact 3.7-3	The Proposed Project could have a substantial adverse effect on sensitive natural communities including federally protected wetlands.	None Required (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures).	LS	N/A
Impact 3.7-4	The Proposed Project could have a substantial adverse effect on wildlife habitat, nursery sites, or movement opportunities.	None Required (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures).	LS	N/A
Impact 3.7-5	The Proposed Project would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance.	None Required (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures).	LS	N/A
Section 3.8				
Mineral Resources and Geology				
Impact 3.8-1	The Proposed Project could expose people to injury or structures to damage from potential rupture of a known earthquake fault, strong	None Required (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures).	LS	N/A

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	Environmental Impact	Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance Before Mitigation	Level of Significance After Mitigation
	groundshaking, seismic-related ground failure, or landslides.			
Impact 3.8-2	The Proposed Project could result in potential structural damage from development on a potentially unstable geologic unit or soil.	None Required (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures).	LS	N/A
Impact 3.8-3	The Proposed Project could increase the potential for structural damage from development on expansive soil.	None Required (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures).	LS	N/A
Section 3.9	Cultural Resources			
Impact 3.9-1	The Proposed Project could cause a substantial adverse change to a historic resource.	No Feasible Mitigation Measures (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures) Available.	PS	SU
Impact 3.9-2	The Proposed Project could cause a substantial adverse change to archaeological, paleontological, and/or human remains.	None Required (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures).	LS	N/A
Section 3.10	Health and Safety			
Impact 3.10-1	The Proposed Project could result in development located within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public or private airstrip that could result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the Planning Area.	No Feasible Mitigation Measures (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures) Available.	PS	SU
Impact 3.10-2	The Proposed Project could include uses that create a significant hazard to the public or environment from the transportation, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.	None Required (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures).	LS	N/A
Impact 3.10-3	The Proposed Project could include uses that emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous materials, substances, or waste near school sites.	None Required (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures).	LS	N/A
Impact 3.10-4	The Proposed Project could locate development on a hazardous waste site.	None Required (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures).	LS	N/A
Impact 3.10-5	The Proposed Project could expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires.	None Required (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures).	LS	N/A
Impact 3.10-6	The Proposed Project could impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.	No Feasible Mitigation Measures (Beyond Currently Proposed General Plan Policies and Implementation Measures) Available.	PS	SU

Part II - Alternatives to the Project

An EIR is required to describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project that could feasibly attain the objectives of the project, and to evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(a)).

Additionally, CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(b) requires consideration of alternatives that could avoid or substantially lessen any significant adverse environmental effects of the proposed project, including alternatives that may be more costly or could otherwise impede the project's objectives. The range of alternatives considered must include those that offer substantial environmental advantages over the proposed project and may be feasibly accomplished in a successful manner considering economic, environmental, social, technological, and legal factors.

The following alternatives are discussed in the EIR:

- Alternative 1: No Project (Build-out of existing 1991 General Plan)
- Alternative 2: Increased Residential Density Alternative
- Alternative 3: Reduced Development Yield Alternative

Descriptions of these alternatives, the basis for selection, and the environmental characteristics of the alternatives are more fully described in Chapter 4 "Alternatives to the Proposed Project" of the Draft EIR.

Project Objectives

For reference purposes in consideration of project alternatives, the key project objectives are to:

- Minimize the loss of open space land.
- Protect existing land uses from incompatible development.
- Encourage infill development and the use of village centers that can be the focus and foundation of neighborhoods within the City.
- Promote a diverse economy and compatible land uses with the surrounding military operations.
- Address recent environmental trends and issues, such as green-house gases, energy conservation, and long-term water supply.

Summary of Findings

Alternative 1: No Project Alternative

Under the No-Project Alternative, the City would continue with implementation of its existing 1991 to 2010 General Plan, which would remain as the adopted long-range planning policy document for the City. Current development patterns would continue to occur in accordance with the existing General Plan and Zoning Code. Consequently, this alternative would fundamentally fail to meet a majority of the project objectives described above. Failure to update the City's existing General Plan

will not result in a comprehensive update to the City’s existing goals and policies to help incorporate current planning, environmental, and regulatory trends and objectives. Additionally, the existing General Plan fails to include the concept of “urban villages”, which identify future development areas and set guidance for the comprehensive planning of future growth and development. For all of these reasons, the City Council rejects the No Project Alternative as infeasible within the meaning of CEQA and CEQA case law.

Alternative 2: Increased Residential Density Alternative

While keeping many of the features of the proposed project, Alternative 2 looks at increasing the amount of land designated as Residential Low Density (an increase in density over the Residential Estate lands identified under the proposed project) in the southeastern quarter of the Planning Area. This alternative also looked at the inclusion of areas for large-scale planned residential communities. Although increased levels of development would require additional increases in infrastructure (both transportation and public service/utility), this alternative could encourage transit usage and reduce dependency on the automobile.

This alternative would fail to meet several key project objectives of paramount importance to the City Council. Notably, increasing the density of land in the southeastern quarter of the Planning Area makes this alternative inconsistent with project objectives related to the loss of open space lands, protecting existing land uses from incompatible development, and reducing GHG emissions. Furthermore, the greater concentrations of development in the southeastern quarter contemplated by this alternative will lead to increased levels of impact for certain categories of environmental effects. For example, because land uses are intensified within the southeastern quarter, air quality impacts, due to the types of dwelling units and other development contemplated under the alternative, would result in slightly higher emission levels of both mobile and stationary sources of air quality emissions, and GHG emissions (see Draft EIR, Table 4-1). (Draft EIR, p. 4-4 and 4-5.) With respect to cultural resources, the intensification of land uses within the southeastern quarter under Alternative 2 may result in greater impacts to previously undiscovered cultural resources to those anticipated under the proposed project. (Draft EIR, p. 4-12.) With respect to transportation, Alternative 2 would cause slightly higher levels of delay and congestion than the proposed project. (Draft EIR, p. 4-13) For all of these reasons, the City Council rejects Alternative 2 as infeasible within the meaning of CEQA and CEQA case law.

Alternative 3: Reduced Development Yield Alternative

Under Alternative 3, the anticipated development yield and ultimate population relative to the net increases associated with the proposed project would be reduced by 10%. This alternative would allow fewer homes and fewer residents in the southwest and southeastern portions of the Planning Area relative to the proposed General Plan. The transportation improvements provided in the Circulation Element and Diagram would be implemented under this alternative.

The purpose of a general plan is to guide the growth and development of a community. Accordingly, the City’s proposed General Plan is premised on projected future growth occurring in the area and to provide a framework within which projected growth can be accommodated and managed consistent

with the City's overall planning responsibilities and objectives. The proposed project embodies a long-term perspective that tries to deal with demographic and market realities in a manner that minimizes the environmental effects that are inevitable when large numbers of people move into a region over time (or when the children of local families choose to remain in their hometown and raise their families there). On its face, Alternative 3 may appear to be more environmentally benign than the proposed project, in that the alternative would reduce its anticipated development yield and ultimate population by roughly 10%. However, as shown in Table 4-1 (Draft EIR, p. 4-4 through 4-7), implementation of Alternative 3 would still result in significant and unavoidable impacts (although the severity would be reduced in some cases) to several environmental resource topics. Because these seeming benefits, however, reflect what the City Council believes are unrealistic assumptions about future growth pressures and an unwillingness to grapple directly with such pressures so that new growth in the region can be under the City's control to the extent possible, the City Council rejects Alternative 3 as infeasible.

Part III - Statement of Overriding Considerations

As previously described, the City has found that several impacts of the proposed project remain significant following adoption and implementation of the mitigation measures described in the Final EIR. These significant impacts are summarized above in Table 1.

The City finds, per Public Resources Code §21081(b), that specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects of the proposed project (the Program). These overriding considerations include the following:

1. Creation of jobs and economic benefits.
2. A framework for the orderly management of future City growth.
3. Updated policies that reflect current environmental and planning trends.
4. Increased opportunities for infill development.

1.3 Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

In accordance with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines, the City Council must adopt a mitigation monitoring and reporting program to ensure that the mitigation measures adopted herein are implemented in the implementation of the proposed project. In the case of the project, one of the primary components of the proposed project includes preparing an update to the City's existing General Plan. Consistent with the CEQA Guidelines (Section 15097(b)), the monitoring plan applies to all of the policies and implementation measures identified in the general plan, in particular to those identified in Table 1 of this document. Consistent with the CEQA Guidelines (Section 15097 (b)), the City's annual report on the status of the general plan will serve as the basis for its mitigation monitoring and report program and will not require a separate mitigation monitoring and reporting program.

1.4 Resolutions of Approval

The City Council hereby takes the following actions and makes the following approvals:

1. The City Council has certified the Final EIR in Section 1.1, above.
2. The City Council hereby adopts as conditions of approval all mitigation measures (policies and implementation measures of the proposed project) within the responsibility and jurisdiction of the City as set forth in Section 1.2 (Part I) of the findings, above.
3. The City Council hereby adopts the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the proposed project as discussed in Section 1.3, above.
4. The City Council hereby adopts the findings and statements of overriding considerations set forth above in their entirety as its findings for these actions and approvals.
5. Having certified the Final EIR, independently reviewed and analyzed the Final EIR, incorporated policies and implementation measures into the proposed project, and adopted findings and a statement of overriding considerations, the City Council hereby separately approves the City of Ridgecrest 2030 General Plan Update.