

3.2 Effects Found Not Significant During Initial Study

This section provides a discussion of the environmental issue areas where the effects were identified as no impact or less than significant during preparation of the Initial Study and did not require further analysis. For the Proposed Project, the only issue area discussed in this section is population and housing. This environmental issue area was screened out as part of the preliminary evaluation and scoping process for the JVR Energy Park Project (Project). Further, no public comments were received during the scoping process indicating that this issue area should be addressed further. The Initial Study was made available by the County of San Diego (County) at the time the Notice of Preparation was released (March 7, 2019) and is included in Appendix A of this Environmental Impact Report. A summary of the findings from the Initial Study for population and housing is provided in this section.

3.2.1 Population and Housing

The County's Guidelines for Determining Significance do not include sections on Population and Housing. Therefore, for purpose of this EIR, CEQA Guidelines Appendix G applies to the direct and indirect impact analysis, as well as the cumulative impact analysis.

A significant impact would result if the Project would:

- Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)); or,
- Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

The JVR Energy Park Project (Project) would develop a utility-scale solar energy generation and storage facility that improves electrical reliability in the San Diego region and supplies California and the County of San Diego with additional renewable energy supplies. During construction and decommissioning, the Proposed Project would employ a total of approximately 500 workers, with a daily maximum of 500 workers at the peak of construction and approximately 250 workers during decommissioning. It is anticipated that workers from the San Diego region to the west or Imperial Valley to the east would construct and decommission the Proposed Project. Because of the presence of locally available workers in San Diego County, and because of the relatively short duration of construction (approximately 13 months) and decommissioning (approximately 10 months), workers are not expected to relocate to the area with their families.

During the operational phase of 35 years, the Proposed Project would be an unmanned facility that would be monitored remotely and would not have any full-time personnel on site. Up to five people may periodically be on site during operations for inspections, maintenance, and repair activities. The operational workers are likely to come from the San Diego region to the west, and are also not anticipated to relocate to Jacumba Hot Springs or the Mountain Empire Subregion given their limited time at the site annually. Accordingly, the limited scale of the Proposed Project construction, operation and decommissioning would not affect the population base within the Project area.

The Proposed Project would not induce substantial unplanned population growth in the community of Jacumba Hot Springs or the Mountain Empire Subregion. The Proposed Project does not include a residential component that would cause permanent or temporary population increases, nor would it extend roads or infrastructure (e.g., water, sewer, etc.) into previously unserved areas. Additionally, the Proposed Project would not include any physical or regulatory changes that would remove a restriction to, or encourage population growth in the area, including, but not limited to, the following: large-scale residential development; accelerated conversion of homes to commercial or multifamily use; regulatory changes including General Plan Amendments encouraging population growth, specific plan amendments, zone reclassifications, or sewer or water annexations; or Local Agency Formation Commission annexation actions. Therefore, the Project would not result in a direct or indirect impacts to population and housing.

The electricity generated by the Proposed Project would be fed directly into the regional electricity grid and would not serve or facilitate any growth of the local population directly. The Proposed Project is intended to support the state's transition to 100% renewable energy generation and to improve electrical reliability in the San Diego region as a whole. Accordingly, the Project would supplement the region's energy supply and would not encourage housing growth or result in growth-inducing impacts in the Jacumba Hot Springs or the Mountain Empire Subregion.

The NOP identified one residence on the Project site; however, subsequently a Historical Resources Technical Report (2020) was prepared for the Proposed Project which identified four unoccupied dwellings. These structures are proposed to be demolished as part of the Proposed Project. The loss of four unoccupied dwellings would not result in a substantial loss of housing.

Thus, the Proposed Project would not result in a substantial population increase in the community of Jacumba Hot Springs or across the Mountain Empire Subregion, and it would not displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

For these reasons, the Project would have a **less than significant impact** on population and housing, as identified in the Initial Study.