4.11 MINERAL RESOURCES

4.11.1 Introduction

This section of the EIR analyzes the potential physical environmental impacts from the implementation of the General Plan Update as these impacts relate to mineral resources. Data used to prepare this section was taken from the City of Simi Valley General Plan Update Final Technical Background Report (2007), the California Geological Survey (CGS) (formerly known as the Division of Mines and Geology), and the 1988 Simi Valley General Plan.

No comment letters addressing mineral resources were received in response to the December 1, 2009, Notice of Preparation (NOP) circulated for the proposed General Plan Update. Full bibliographic entries for all reference materials are provided in Section 4.11.6 (References) of this section.

4.11.2 Environmental Setting

- Mineral Resources

This section describes the mineral resources present within the Planning Area. Information was obtained from various sources, including City and County documents and regulations, California Department of Conservation, and the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research.

- Oil and Gas Production

Oil deposits are known to exist within the northern portion of the Simi Valley Planning Area, generally within existing open space areas. Oil extraction is currently permitted in this region, primarily within the City’s Sphere of Influence (SOI) as shown on Figure 4.11-1 (Mining and Oil Permits). The northern portion of the City contains small oil and gas fields which contain a number of production wells (City of Simi Valley 1988b).

Simi Valley falls within the Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources’ District 2 (Ventura) for oil, gas, and water production. Oil and gas produced by the City’s oil fields in 2006 are shown in Table 4.11-1 (Oil and Gas Production from Simi Valley Oil Fields [2006]). As shown, the City’s oil production accounted for approximately 1.6 percent and 0.07 percent of the District and state’s total onshore production, respectively. Natural gas production within Simi Valley accounted for approximately 2.3 percent and 0.01 percent of the total gas withdrawn by the District and state, respectively (CDOC DOGGR 2007).

Oil deposits have been reduced after nearly a century of oil extraction, but there may be sufficient remaining oil and possibly untapped deposits, for continued extraction and even new exploratory drilling. Furthermore, oil extraction technology may make technical advances to permit additional production from previously depleted areas. Techniques such as the use of slant-drilling could allow multiple wells to be consolidated within smaller, enclosed spaces that do not need to be located directly over the deposits.
Table 4.11-1  Oil and Gas Production from Simi Valley Oil Fields (2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oil Field</th>
<th>Oil Production (bbl)</th>
<th>Net Gas Withdrawn (MCF)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Big Mountain</td>
<td>30,300</td>
<td>89,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakridge</td>
<td>74,600</td>
<td>18,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Susana</td>
<td>28,800</td>
<td>81,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simi</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tapo Canyon, South</td>
<td>14,800</td>
<td>5,670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tapo Ridge</td>
<td>3,570</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>152,750</strong></td>
<td><strong>195,330</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>District 2 (Onshore) Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>9,330,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,450,000</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>State (Onshore) Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>208,000,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>192,000,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

bbl = billion barrels; MCF = thousand cubic feet

### Surface Mining Resources

Mineral resource areas are identified according to the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA) and the following criteria for Mineral Resource Zones (MRZ), Scientific Resource Zones (SZ), and Identified Resource Areas (IRA). The MRZ and SZ categories used by the State Geologist in classifying the state’s lands, the geologic and economic data, and the substantiation upon which each unit MRZ or SZ assignment is based shall be presented in the land classification information provided by the State Geologist to the Board of Supervisors for the following areas:

- **MRZ-1**: Adequate information indicates that no significant mineral deposits are present, or where it is judged that little likelihood exists for their presence. This zone shall be applied where well-developed lines of reasoning, based upon economic geologic principles and adequate data, demonstrate that the likelihood for occurrence of significant mineral deposits is nil or slight.
- **MRZ-2**: Adequate information indicates that significant mineral deposits are present or where it is judged that a high likelihood for their presence exists. This zone shall be applied to known mineral deposits or where well-developed lines of reasoning, based upon economic geologic principles and adequate data, demonstrate that the likelihood for occurrence of significant mineral deposits is high.
- **MRZ-3**: Containing deposits whose significance cannot be evaluated from available data.
- **MRZ-4**: Available information is inadequate for assignment to any other MRZ zone.
- **SZ Areas**: Containing unique or rare occurrences of rocks, minerals, or fossils that are of outstanding scientific significance shall be classified in this zone.

Simi Valley contains areas designated as MRZ-1, MRZ-2, and MRZ-3, as shown in Figure 4.11-2 (Aggregate Resource Areas). Areas of regional significance have been classified by the California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology, as Mineral Resource Zone 2 (MRZ-2). MRZ-2 areas within the City limits are located in two locations: (1) a small, unincorporated area adjacent to the City to the south and (2) a small open space area near the northern terminus of Black Canyon.
Figure 4.11-1
Mining and Oil Permits

Source: City of Simi Valley, October 2006.
Figure 4.11-2
Aggregate Resources Areas

Legend
- MRZ-1 - Areas where adequate information indicates that no significant mineral deposits are present.
- MRZ-3 - Areas containing mineral deposits, the significance of which cannot be evaluated from available data.
- MRZ-3a - Areas judged to have higher potential than other deposits classified MRZ-3.
- Designated MRZ-2 - Areas designated by the state which have regional or statewide significance.
- Sphere of Influence
- City Urban Restriction Boundary
- City Boundary
- Area of Interest/Planning Area
- Arroyo Simi
- Major Road
- Railroad

Source: Ventura County General Plan, September 2000.
Road in the eastern portion of the City. As discussed above, MRZ-2 specifies areas where adequate information indicates that significant mineral deposits are present, or where it is judged a high likelihood for their presence. This provides for the utilization and management of mineral resources as an interim land use before final development.

Furthermore, Simi Valley contains areas of construction aggregate resources that, according to the State Mining and Geology Board Reclamation Regulations, are designated to be of regional significance (§3550.5 Construction Aggregate Resources Simi Valley Area of the Simi Region, Ventura County). These areas include hillside deposits located on Oak Ridge and the Simi Hills, portions of Oak Ridge extending from Long Canyon eastward to the Ventura County line, and areas above Meier and Runkle Canyons in the Simi Hills (CDOC OMR 2006).

In addition, according to the existing General Plan Conservation/Open Space Element, two portions of the City have been designated as areas of regionally significant construction aggregate resources (City of Simi Valley 1988a). They consist of a 1,904-acre area located across the northern portion of Simi Valley extending easterly and westerly of the Gillibrand quarry site, and a 371-acre area located northeasterly from (and including) the Southern Pacific Milling Company Quarry (now closed) located in the southern portion of Runkle Canyon (City of Simi Valley 1988b). Mining and oil extraction is permitted in the upper northern portion of the City, primarily within the City’s SOI rather than inside City boundaries, as shown in Figure 4.11-1.

In order to protect the mineral resources of a particular city and region, the classification process for mineral resource conservation is implemented by the State Department of Conservation through the California State Mining and Geology Board, as decreed in SMARA. The mineral resource information, in this case, MRZ-2, is tendered to local governments for insertion in their general plans and mineral resource or conservation policies. The process ensures that aggregate resources are recognized and considered before land use decisions are made that would otherwise limit the accessibility of these resources.

In the case of construction aggregates, the Board’s designation identifies aggregate resources need for a region’s supply for 50 years. According to the CGS, Ventura County’s 50-year demand for aggregate resources is 309 million tons, while permitted resources total 106 million tons of the 50-year demand (CGS 2006).

According to the Ventura County General Plan (2000), the supply of aggregate within the Simi Production Consumption Region (PCR) is sufficient to meet the region’s projected 50-year demand. The total aggregate demand is anticipated to be 130 million tons of which 60 percent, or 80 million tons, will be for Portland Cement Concrete (PCC). There are total aggregate “reserves” and “resources” of 1200 million tons, of which 760 million tons are cumulatively suitable for PCC. No apparent shortfall exists.

In summary, the Simi PCR contains adequate supplies of aggregate to meet its projected needs to the year 2030 and significantly more material is available from areas not currently under permit (County of Ventura 2000).
However, according to the Ventura County General Plan, limitations on aggregate supplies within the Simi PCR include the following:

- **American Jewish University**—This religious institute controls the majority of Sector B and because of the nature of the use, mining may be considered inappropriate on the Institute’s land. Lack of access to the resources in this sector could reduce the cumulative supply of aggregate by 510 million tons and the cumulative supply of PCC quality aggregate by 400 million tons.

- **Hauling Aggregate**—With the imbalance of aggregate grades in the Simi PCR, transporting the material for optimal mixes may become a necessity at some time. Because the present mining and processing facilities are located in the hills to the north and south of the City of Simi Valley, any transport of material between sites will invariably have to pass through the City. The movement of trucks for this purpose may create problems in the area. Any curtailment of the transport of material would effectively reduce the supply of PCC aggregate in the Simi PCR.

- **Shortfalls in Adjoining PCRs**—The State estimated that the “reserves” within the San Fernando and Western Ventura County PCRs will be depleted within 10 and 13 years respectively if present consumption rates continue. Since the Simi PCR is adjacent to both of these PCRs, it is logical that its supplies of aggregate would be utilized to meet shortfalls in adjoining PCRs. If “resources” within the San Fernando and Western Ventura County PCRs are opened up for mining, the shortfalls projected by the State will be put off and less demand will be placed on the Simi PCR.

- **Aesthetics**—Given the location of the aggregate deposits in the hills surrounding the City of Simi Valley and the City’s strict controls on development on the hillsides which could detract from aesthetic qualities, some mining may be precluded.

- **Other Constraints**—Preservation of rare and endangered species and archaeological sites may further limit the extent of mining in the various sectors.

- If shortfalls should arise in the Simi PCR, alternative sources of aggregate could include the Saugus Newhall PCR. This area has not been thoroughly evaluated by the state at this time, but preliminary assessments indicate the presence of substantial supplies of aggregate. The problem, however, would be the costs of hauling aggregate over such long distances and the attendant impacts from its transport. Specific studies will have to be made of such potential alternative sources to determine their suitability and to assess the attendant problems that would be associated with mining sites in potentially distant locations.

### 4.11.3 Regulatory Framework

- **Federal**

  There are no federal regulations pertaining to mineral resource extraction that apply to the General Plan Update.

- **State**

  **Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA)**

  The state adopted the SMARA with the primary objectives being the assurance of adequate supplies of mineral resources important to California’s economy and the reclamation of mined lands. The agencies
responsible for administering this program at the state level are the CGS and the State Mining and Geology Board. The objectives of the SMARA are implemented by local government agencies, with the assistance of the state, through land use planning and regulatory programs.

The SMARA’s mineral resource conservation objective is achieved through a mineral inventory and land use planning process termed classification/designation, which jointly involves the CGS, the State Mining and Geology Board (Board), and local government. Information on the location of important mineral deposits is developed by the CGS through a process of mineral land classification. The classification report is then used by the Board in designating deposits that are of economic significance to a region, the state, or the nation (CGS 2006).

**Public Resources Code Section 2762**

The Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 2762 of the SMARA states that within 12 months of receiving the mineral information described in Section 2761, and also within 12 months of the designation of an area of statewide or regional significance within its jurisdiction, every lead agency shall, in accordance with state policy, establish mineral resource management policies to be incorporated in its general plan that will recognize mineral information classified by the State Geologist. This will assist in the management of areas of statewide and regional significance, and help emphasize the conservation and development of identified mineral deposits (California OPR n.d.).

**State Division of Mines and Geology**

In addition to the informal guidance provided by the above referenced sections of the SMARA, the State Division of Mines and Geology has prepared “Mineral Resource Management Goals and Policies” which, in accordance with the SMARA, provide additional guidance in the preparation of the County’s Mineral Resource Management Program (MRMP). These goals and policies are achieved through a joint effort between the CGS, the Board, and local government (i.e., the City).

**Local**

**Simi Valley Municipal Code**

**Chapter 9-40—Oil and Gas Drilling Production**

This chapter of the City of Simi Valley Municipal Code establishes reasonable and uniform limitations, safeguards, and controls for oil and gas exploration and production facilities and operations within the City that will allow for the reasonable use of an important resource. These regulations also ensure that oil and gas exploration and production facilities and operations will not be detrimental to the health, safety, comfort, convenience, and general welfare of the neighborhood, and will not be incompatible with the surrounding area (City of Simi Valley 2010).

**9-44.190—Surface Mining Permits and Reclamation Plans**

This section of the City of Simi Valley Municipal Code establishes procedural guidelines and conditions of approval for reclamation plans and surface mining permits, in accordance with the SMARA (PRC Section 2710 et seq.) (City of Simi Valley 2010).
4.11.4 Project Impacts and Mitigation

Analytic Method

The description of existing conditions regarding mineral resources was taken from the 2007 Technical Background Report prepared for the General Plan Update. Additional information was provided by the California Department of Conservation, the 2000 Ventura County General Plan, and the Simi Valley 1988 General Plan. The General Plan Update policies were analyzed to determine their eventual effect on existing and proposed conditions within the City. The differences between existing and future impacts were then compared to the City’s CEQA Thresholds.

Thresholds of Significance

The following thresholds of significance have been adopted by the City and are based on Appendix G of the 2011 CEQA Guidelines. For the purposes of this EIR, implementation of the proposed project would have significant impact if it would do any of the following:

- Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state
- Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan

General Plan Policies that Mitigate Potential Impacts on Mineral Resources

Policies and goals from the Mobility and Infrastructure, Natural Resources, and Safety and Noise Chapters that would mitigate potential impacts on mineral resources include the following. All General Plan policies are followed by a set of numbers in parentheses. These numbers reference applicable measures that will be undertaken by the City to implement the policy.

Policy LU-1.2 Development Location. Limit development to lands within the Simi Valley City Urban Restriction Boundary (CURB), as shown in Figure LU-1, thereby protecting existing agriculture, open space, viewsheds, wildlife, and watersheds surrounding the City from development impacts and limiting urban sprawl. (Imp A-1, A-2, LU-6, LU-10, LU-18)

Policy LU-1.3 Development Priorities. Prioritize future growth as infill and redevelopment of existing developed areas re-using and, where appropriate, intensifying development of vacant and underutilized properties within the CURB. Allow for growth on the immediate periphery of existing development in limited designated areas, where this is guided by standards to assure seamless integration and connectivity with adjoining areas and open spaces. The Growth Diagram below illustrates the locations in which new development will be permitted. (Imp A-1, A-2, A-3, LU-6, LU-10, LU-18)

Policy LU-3.2 Citywide Development Pattern. Provide for an overall pattern of land uses that promotes efficient development; minimizes the impact of traffic congestion; reduces transportation distances, energy consumption, air pollution, and
greenhouse gas emissions; ensures compatibility between uses; protects the natural hillsides, major watercourses, and trees; enhances community livability and public health; and sustains economic vitality.  

**Policy LU-4.6 Hillside Development Density.** Maintain land outside the valley floor having a slope of over 20 percent as permanent open space. Commercial and industrial development shall be limited to slopes of 10 percent or less, unless otherwise allowed under the Hillside Performance Standard of the Simi Valley Municipal Code approved by a specific plan that justifies and provides appropriate design measures for the development of these areas, in which case development shall be limited to slopes of 20 percent or less. 

**Policy LU-5.12 Mineral Extraction/Landfill Activities.** Continue to monitor mineral extraction activities and sanitary landfill activities within the City’s Area of Interest to ensure that such uses are compatible with and minimize impacts on adjoining uses. 

**Policy LU-13.4 Oil Facilities.** Prohibit the development of oil pumping, storage, and processing facilities and exclude the development of new residential uses in or near areas containing existing and permitted oil pumping, storage, and processing equipment until such facilities have been relocated or discontinued. 

**Policy NR-1.1 Open Space Preservation and Buffer Zone.** Protect, conserve, and maintain the open space, hillside, and canyon areas that provide a buffer zone around the City’s urban form, serve as designated habitat for sensitive species, and provide recreation opportunities for residents and visitors. 

### Effects Not Found to Be Significant

No Effects Not Found to Be Significant have been identified with respect to mineral resources.

### Less-Than-Significant Impacts

**Impact 4.11-1** Implementation of the General Plan Update could result in the loss of availability of known mineral resources that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state or in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site as delineated in an adopted land use plan; however, this impact would be reduced to less-than-significant levels through the implementation of General Plan policies and compliance with relevant local, state, and federal regulations. This is a less-than-significant impact.

### Surface Mining Resources

Based on guidelines adopted by the CGS, areas known as MRZs are classified according to the presence or absence of significant deposits. Jurisdictions are required to respond to mineral resource recovery...
areas that have been designated by the State as MRZ-2 (significant existing or likely mineral deposits). As shown on Figure 4.11-1, the City does have a substantial amount of land designated as MRZ-2 within its Area of Interest. The majority of the MRZ-2 land is located in the foothills in the far northern portion of the Planning Area as well as a northeasterly trending swath in the south-central/southeastern portion of the Planning Area. All of the land designated MRZ-2 is located outside of the CURB with the exception of a small portion that is located in the hills behind Gonzales Road in a small area outside City boundaries that juts out to the south and east, just west of Black Canyon Road as well as small, southern-most tip of the CURB, located south of the terminus of Sequoia Avenue (refer to Figure 4.11-2).

Both of the areas described above, where land designated as MRZ-2 is located within City limits as well as the CURB, are proposed to be designated as Open Space in the General Plan Update. In addition, neither of these areas is located within the proposed areas of change. Policy LU-1.3 (Development Location) prioritizes future development areas within the City, and focus future development to infill sites and other underutilized areas. In addition, Policy LU-3.2 (Citywide Development Patterns) and Policy LU-4.6 (Hillside Development Density) protect hillside areas from future development. Policy NR-1.1 (Open Space Preservation and Buffer Zone) calls for the protection and conservation of open space areas around the City. These policies will ensure that these MRZ-2 areas are not developed.

All of the other land designated MRZ-2 is located outside of the CURB. In addition, Policy LU-1.2 (Development Location) requires that future development occur within the CURB in order to protect open space areas. Policy LU-1.3, Policy LU-4.6, and Policy NR-1.1, as described above, would further ensure that these areas are not developed and these mineral resources are preserved.

Since all of the land within the Planning Area that is classified as MRZ-2 according to CGS is located in areas where development is not permissible either through its geographic location and restrictions of CURB and/or due to land use designation and limits set forth by the above-listed policies, the General Plan Update will not result in the loss of important mineral resources. This is a less-than-significant impact.

**Oil and Gas Wells**

As discussed above, historic and active oil and gas wells are located in the northern portion of the City’s SOI in large areas of undeveloped open space, as shown in Figure 4.11-1. Oil extraction is currently permitted in this region. In addition, there are some small oil and gas fields located within the City limits. As shown above in Table 4.11-1, the City’s oil production accounted for approximately 1.6 percent and 0.07 percent of the District and state’s total onshore production, respectively. Natural gas production within Simi Valley accounted for approximately 2.3 percent and 0.01 percent of the total gas withdrawn by the District and state, respectively (CDOC DOGGR 2007).

Oil deposits have been reduced after nearly a century of oil extraction, but there may be sufficient remaining oil and possibly untapped deposits, for continued extraction and even new exploratory drilling. Furthermore, oil extraction technology may make technical advances to permit additional production from previously depleted areas. Techniques such as the use of slant-drilling could allow multiple wells to be consolidated within smaller, enclosed spaces that do not need to be located directly over the deposits.
The General Plan Update focuses growth and change within the specified Study Areas, although some development could occur elsewhere in the City. Portions of the open space areas in the City’s SOI are within the oil permit boundary or the mining permit boundary. The majority of the community’s open space is classified in the City’s General Plan as a residential land use category. Open space areas permit limited residential development (1 unit/40 acres) that is regulated by policies and criteria in the General Plan and the City’s Hillside Performance Standards. Because limited residential development would be allowed, combined with General Plan policies protecting open space and the focus of future growth in the identified Study Areas, it is unlikely that the open space area in the SOI where oil and gas extraction or mining occurs would be subject to substantial development that could result in a loss of important mineral, oil, or natural gas resources. No Study Areas are located within the Oil Permit Boundary except for the West End Specific Plan Area, which is located in the northwestern area of the City between SR-118 and Los Angeles Avenue. The West End Specific Plan Area is proposed to be used for business park uses (allowing a variety of office, research, industrial, and a limited amount of commercial uses or an auto dealership center). Future development within this area could reduce the potential for oil extraction within the Oil Permit Boundary. However, this area represents a very small portion of the total permit area. Because the West End Specific Plan Study Area does not propose residential uses, it is possible that oil production could continue even if the site is developed.

Since only a small portion of the land within the Planning Area that is part of the Oil Permit area is located in the areas for focused growth under the General Plan Update, and since the proposed non-residential uses are not necessarily incompatible with the production of oil (per the General Plan Update), the General Plan Update will not result in the loss of important oil or natural gas resources. This is a less-than-significant impact.

### Significant and Unavoidable Impacts

No significant and unavoidable impacts have been identified with respect to mineral resources.

### Cumulative Impacts

The geographic context for the cumulative impacts associated with mineral resource issues is the County of Ventura. Cumulative impacts are only addressed for those thresholds that have a project-related impact, whether it is less than significant, significant, or significant and unavoidable. If “no impact” occurs, no cumulative analysis is provided for that threshold.

As discussed above, the Ventura County General Plan (2000) states that the supply of aggregate within the Simi PCR is sufficient to meet the region’s projected 50-year demand. No apparent shortfall exists. Thus, there is no existing impact to which the General Plan Update would make a cumulative considerable contribution. In addition, no apparent existing impact regarding the production of oil exists within the County. As a result, impacts are considered cumulatively less than significant.

### 4.11.5 References

CHAPTER 4 Environmental Analysis


