3.1.12 Land Use

3.1.12.1 Affected Environment

Applicable Plans, Policies, and Regulations

Local Planning

The Santa Clarita Valley is comprised of two separate planning regions: the unincorporated County areas and the City of Santa Clarita. The Project site is located outside of the jurisdiction of the City in unincorporated lands. Land use planning in these unincorporated areas is the responsibility of the County and is addressed in the Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan (County 1990). The plan describes the settings of the interrelated communities discussed in Section 2.1. The Project site lies in Soledad Canyon near the planning community of Agua Dulce located east of the site.

The County's Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan (adopted in February 1984 and revised in December 1988 and 1990) and the County zoning ordinances provide planning policy for unincorporated County areas including the Project site. The majority of the Project site is currently designated as a Hillside Management (HM) area on the Land Use Policy Map of the Area Plan. This area is also zoned M-2 (Heavy Manufacturing) by the County, and mineral extraction activities are allowed by a Surface Mining Permit and Reclamation Plan.

The update of the Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan (December 1990) contemplates possible development of a mobile home park in a portion of adjacent Bee Canyon through the submittal and approval of a Specific Plan. The current Bee Canyon land use designation is U1 (1.1 to 3.3 dwelling units per acre), and its zoning is A-2-1 (Heavy Agriculture, 1-acre-minimum lots). A portion of the site is also subject to HM density considerations. The Area Plan includes the objective of encouraging mobile home parks to locate in residential areas, where zoning permits, and to specifically exclude them from industrial areas that include M-2 designations (such as the TMC Project site). If a Specific Plan is not approved, the Area Plan states that the Bee Canyon area land use designation would revert to HM (County 1990:9). HM areas are classified as "nonurban" where slopes generally exceed 25 percent, as is the case with portions of TMC's Project area (County 1990:39).

Local Planning Managed Resource Production

The essential elements of the Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan are statements of written policies and depictions of mapped policy. The areawide policies that govern managed resource production (including mining) are contained under the Environmental Resources Management Element of the Plan as follows:

- maintain, where feasible, aquifer recharge zones to assure water quality and quantity;
- carefully consider, in all governmental and private actions related to sewage and solid waste disposal, the potential effects on local groundwater quality; and

- protect important mineral resources by a long-range approach toward mineral resource utilization.

The Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan for the County classifies Angeles and Los Padres National Forest lands as open space. Private inholdings within the forest boundaries are designated for nonurban uses at a maximum density of one unit per 5 acres except where higher densities presently exist. Commercial uses to support user groups within the forest may be permitted. All proposed private and public development projects within the Forest boundaries will be reviewed by the Regional Planning Commission and the U.S. Forest Service for compliance with applicable land use and resource management plans.

The City of Santa Clarita lies west of the Project site in the center of the Valley and is mostly developed. It was incorporated in December 1987 and completed its General Plan in July 1991. The City is responsible for its own planning programs within the jurisdictional limits of the city. The current eastern boundary of the City of Santa Clarita extends along the centerline of the Antelope Valley Freeway to approximately Shadow Pines Boulevard and Soledad Canyon Road to the north. South of the Antelope Valley Freeway, the City encompasses the Sand Canyon and Oak Springs Canyon areas.

Six annexations along the City's eastern boundary have been completed since 1990. The Pinetree development includes 2,330 single-family homes on a 1,038-acre site north of Soledad Canyon Road. Other annexations along the eastern edge of the City include American Beauty (299 single-family homes), Prime West (179 single-family homes), Hunters Green (73 single-family homes with two golf courses), Oak Springs Canyon (35 single-family homes), and Morton Stanley (75 single-family homes). Proposed annexations north and adjacent to Pinetree include Thompson Ranch (1,126 projected single-family homes) and California Canyons (204 single-family homes).

Currently, the City's sphere of influence (SOI) is the same as the City boundaries. After its General Plan completion, the City proposed to expand its SOI to the east to include portions of unincorporated lands (including portions of the Project site). The Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) for the County subsequently rejected the proposal; therefore, land use planning for these areas is governed by county, state, and federal policies.

Surface Mining Regulations

In addition to local County policies, activities at the Project site are governed by state and federal policies. State regulations governing mining activities at the site include those established by the State Mining and Geology Board (SMGB), as well as those implementing the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA).

As discussed in Section 1.4.2, SMARA provides a process of mineral lands inventory termed classification-designation that serves as a means of identifying and conserving mineral resources. The primary objective of this process is to provide local agencies with information on the mineral resources within their jurisdictions so that the resources will be considered in local

land use planning decisions. This process is implemented through the adoption of local General Plan mineral resource management policies.

The first step of the process is the classification of lands into mineral resource zones (MRZs) based on guidelines adopted by the SMGB. Mineral lands are "classified" solely on the basis of geological factors. By statute, land use is not considered in the classification process. The classification information submitted to the SMGB is used in the "designation" of lands as containing aggregate resources of regional or statewide significance in accordance with SMARA. In contrast to classification, which inventories mineral deposits without regard to land use, designation identifies those deposits that are potentially available from a land use perspective and are of prime importance in meeting future needs of the P-C Region (CDMG 1987a, 1987b). The SMGB guidelines for the classification and designation of mineral lands are provided in Part II of Special Publication 51, California Surface Mining and Reclamation Policies and Procedures (CDMG 1987a).

Upon formal adoption by the SMGB, the areas designated as being of regional significance are then formerly codified by the state into Title 14, Division 2, of the CCR. Once the designation has been completed, SMARA requires that local Lead Agencies establish mineral resource management policies in their General Plans that (1) recognize the mineral information provided by the classification process, (2) assist in the management of land use that affects areas of statewide and regional significance, and (3) emphasize the conservation and development of the identified mineral deposits (SMARA Section 2762[a]).

A Lead Agency's land use decisions are required under SMARA to be in accordance with its mineral resource management policies. Also, a Lead Agency must balance mineral value against alternative land uses and consider the importance of the designated resources to their market as a whole and not just to the Lead Agency's area of jurisdiction. Lead Agencies are required to submit mineral resource management policies to SMGB for review and comment prior to adopting the policies.

Any subsequent amendment to mineral resource management policies also requires SMGB review and comment.

In addition to summarizing or incorporating by reference the state classification and/or designation reports and maps, and adopting statements of policy in accordance with SMARA, the Lead Agencies' mineral resource management policies are also required by SMARA to include implementation procedures for recognizing and protecting mineral resources. These implementation procedures must include the two following measures (CCR 1989):

- reference in the General Plan of the location of identified mineral deposits and a discussion of those areas targeted for conservation and possible future extraction by the lead agency, and

- use of overlay maps or inclusion of information on any appropriate planning maps to clearly delineate identified mineral deposits and those areas targeted by the Lead Agency for conservation and possible future extraction.

Pursuant to CCR Section 3676, implementation shall also include at least one of the following:

- use of special-purpose overlay zones, mineral resource/open space zoning, or any other appropriate zoning that identifies the presence of identified mineral deposits and restricts the encroachment of incompatible land uses in those areas that are to be conserved;

- record, on property titles in the affected mineral resource areas, a notice identifying the presence of identified mineral deposits; and/or

- impose conditions upon incompatible land uses in and surrounding areas containing identified mineral deposits for the purpose of mitigating the significant land use conflicts prior to approving a use that would otherwise be incompatible with mineral extraction.

SMGB has also developed land use categories to guide local governments in establishing land uses on or adjacent to lands that have been designated as regionally significant, such as the TMC mining site. These land use categories are as follows (CDMG 1987b):

- Incompatible - land uses that are inherently incompatible with mining and/or require high public or private investment in structures, land improvements, and landscaping that would prevent mining because of the elevated value of the improved land. Examples of incompatible uses include high-density residential, low-density residential with high unit value, public facilities, intensive industrial, and commercial.

- Compatible - land uses that are inherently compatible with mining and/or require a low public or private investment in structures, land improvements, and landscaping and that would allow mining because of the low economic value of the land and its improvements. Examples of compatible uses include very low-density residential (e.g., one unit per 10 acres), extensive industrial, public/commercial recreation, agricultural, silvicultural, grazing, and open space.

- Interim - land uses that require structures, land improvements, and landscaping of a limited useful life and, from an economic and political standpoint, can be converted to mining at the end of that limited life.

The BLM administers the mineral rights to the site. Subsequent to a successful bid to conduct sand and gravel mining operations on a site, and the executions of contracts pursuant thereto, the operator must also meet the requirements of the CFR and all applicable federal laws through submission and approval of a Mining and Reclamation Plan. This plan is also intended to meet state requirements. See Section 1.1.2.2 (Need for State Classification) and Section 1.4 (Relationship to Non-BLM Policies, Plans and Programs) for further discussion.

The County General Plan and County Code, Part 9, Chapter 22.56 implements SMARA at the County level. The County General Plan implements this state policy in several ways. Policy 11 of the County General Plan Land Use Chapter "protects[s] known mineral resource reserves (including sand and gravel) from encroachment of incompatible land uses." Condition and Standard No. 16 of the Land Use Element requires that "[w]ithin identified mineral resource

areas, proposed development other than open space, passive recreation, agriculture, extraction or surface mining shall be reviewed for compatibility with existing or potential mineral resource production." Factors in the review include "[t]he value of mineral resources located within the vicinity of the proposed development." "Mineral resources areas" are defined by the General Plan to include "areas identified or to be identified as containing significant mineral resources by the State Mining and Geology Board." The intent of the ordinance is to regulate all surface mining operations in the unincorporated area of the County. It further requires person(s)/applicant(s) conducting surface mining operations to obtain a permit and to have an approved Reclamation Plan.

Regional Characterization

The Project site is located in a sparsely populated area known as Soledad Canyon. This area is part of unincorporated County lands within the Santa Clara Valley (also known as the Santa Clarita Valley for County planning and administration purposes). Existing land use patterns within the valley have been influenced largely by the geographic constraints of the area. The presence of the Santa Clara River, its tributary canyons, the mountainous terrain, and the boundaries of the Angeles National Forest has focused growth and development mainly in the central portions of the Valley (County 1990). Section 2.3 provides a detailed description of the regional setting of the Project site relative to land use.

Project Site Characterization, Zoning, and Land Use Designation

The Project site is composed of two areas as previously presented on Figure 1.2-2. Current zoning of the site and the surrounding area is shown on Figure 3.1.12-1. Areas A and B are zoned by the County as M-2 (Heavy Manufacturing), in which mineral extraction with a surface mining permit is allowed. The area south of A and B is zoned A-2-5 (Heavy Agriculture, 5-acre minimum lots), and the area north of the Project site is zoned A-2-1 (Heavy Agriculture, 1-acre minimum lots). The CDMG classifies the site as Mineral Resource Zone-2 (MRZ-2), shown on Figure 2.3-1, having aggregate resource deposits that meet necessary criteria for value and marketability (CDMG 1987a). The CDMG further recognizes the importance of the site through its designation of the land as a Regionally Significant Construction Aggregate Resource Area (CDMG 1987b). Sections 1.4.2 and 2.3.1.1 discuss in detail the state's classification and designation of the area and its consistency with the Project and regional and local planning. In addition, the BLM Resource Management Plan (RMP) indicates that the area has a high potential for sand and gravel development (BLM 1994).

As discussed in Section 1.2, Area A is a 460-acre "split estate" with the surface estate owned by Canyon Country Enterprises, Incorporated, doing business as Curtis Sand and Gravel and the mineral estate owned by the Federal Government. As further discussed in Section 1.2, the mineral estate is the dominant estate. Curtis Sand and Gravel and/or its predecessors and interests operated sand and gravel quarrying on the site within Area A since 1968. A court-ordered stipulation for compromise settlement was entered into between Curtis Sand and Gravel and the Federal Government, resulting in a public competitive bid for the rights to mine the sand and gravel at the site. TMC was the successful bidder, which in turn led to the issuance of the

Federal Contracts. Accordingly, Curtis Sand and Gravel does not have any rights to mine sand and gravel from the Federal Contracts area.

The U.S. District Court, Central District, has recently ruled that the United States, and TMC, as contractor, have the right to mine across the entire Federal Contracts area, which includes the entire Area A. Area B and the area south of the Project are owned by C.A. Rasmussen and have been leased to the Applicant to locate support facilities and develop Project-related water sources. The support facilities and water source development will be located in Area B, which encompasses approximately 40 acres (26 acres excluding the railroad easement). The area south of the Project may be used for additional water development.

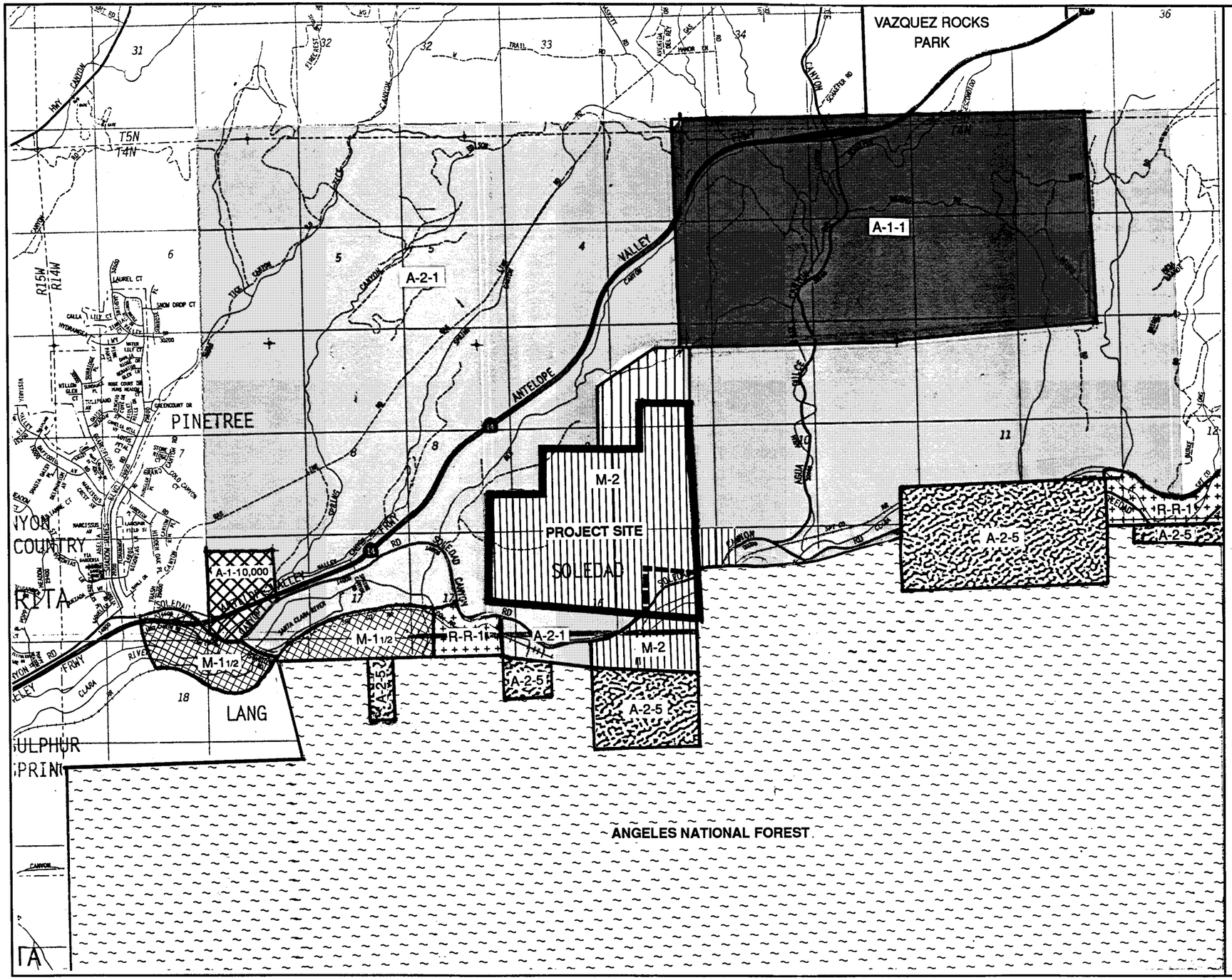
County land use designations for the Project site and the surrounding area were shown on Figure 2.2-2. Proposed residential development projects are shown on Figure 3.1.12-2. The current designation for the majority of Area A is HM. This designation is included under the land use classification of Special Management Areas. These areas contain lands with unique characteristics that constrain the ultimate use of the land because of environmental and regulatory factors. Development requires adherence to special standards to protect life, property, and natural resources. Areas shown as HM areas are classified as Nonurban (N) on the countywide Land Use Element Land Use Policy Map where the slope typically exceeds 25 percent (4 horizontal to 1 vertical). Area A is located north of Soledad Canyon Road and does not lie within any floodplain areas or Significant Ecological Area (SEA).

The southeastern portion of Area B is also designated as an HM area. The remaining portion of Area B and the portion of the Project to the south are traversed by the Santa Clara River. The County land use designation for the Santa Clara River is Floodway/Floodplain (W) and SEA (SEA No. 23). The Santa Clara River traverses approximately 2,000 feet of the Project site outside of the area of mining operations (Figure 2.3-3).

Within floodway areas, in addition to the primary uses for flood control and drainage, the County allows certain extractive industrial uses (such as sand and gravel); agricultural, open space, and light recreational uses; and groundwater recharge.

SEAs are ecologically important land and water areas considered valuable as plant or animal communities. The SEA designation for the river was originally proposed to protect the unarmored threespine stickleback. Formerly found in the Los Angeles, San Gabriel, and Santa Ana Rivers, populations of this species are now restricted to the Santa Clara River and San Francisquito Canyon. In the Santa Clara River, this state and federally endangered species is limited to permanent streams and pools from the Golden State Freeway west to the mouth of San Martinez Grande Canyon, and from Lang east 8.5 miles to the confluence with Arrastre Canyon and upstream 0.8 mile in the canyon. These habitats have been identified by the USFWS and labeled the Del Valle and Soledad Canyon Zones, respectively. Their boundaries constitute part of the SEA. Additionally, SEA No. 23 includes riparian vegetation of willows, cottonwoods, and mulefat in the floodplain zone.

The floodplain of the Santa Clara River is the most critical part of the SEA No. 23. To further protect the SEA, a ½-mile-wide buffer is designated along each side of the floodplain. Within



M 1 1/2	Restricted Heavy Manufacturing
M-2	Heavy Manufacturing
A-1-1	Light Agriculture (1-acre minimum lots)
A-1-10,000	Light Agriculture
A-2-1	Heavy Agriculture (1-acre minimum lots)
A-2-5	Heavy Agriculture (5-acre minimum lots)
R-R-1	Resort and Recreation (1-acre minimum lots)
W	Watershed

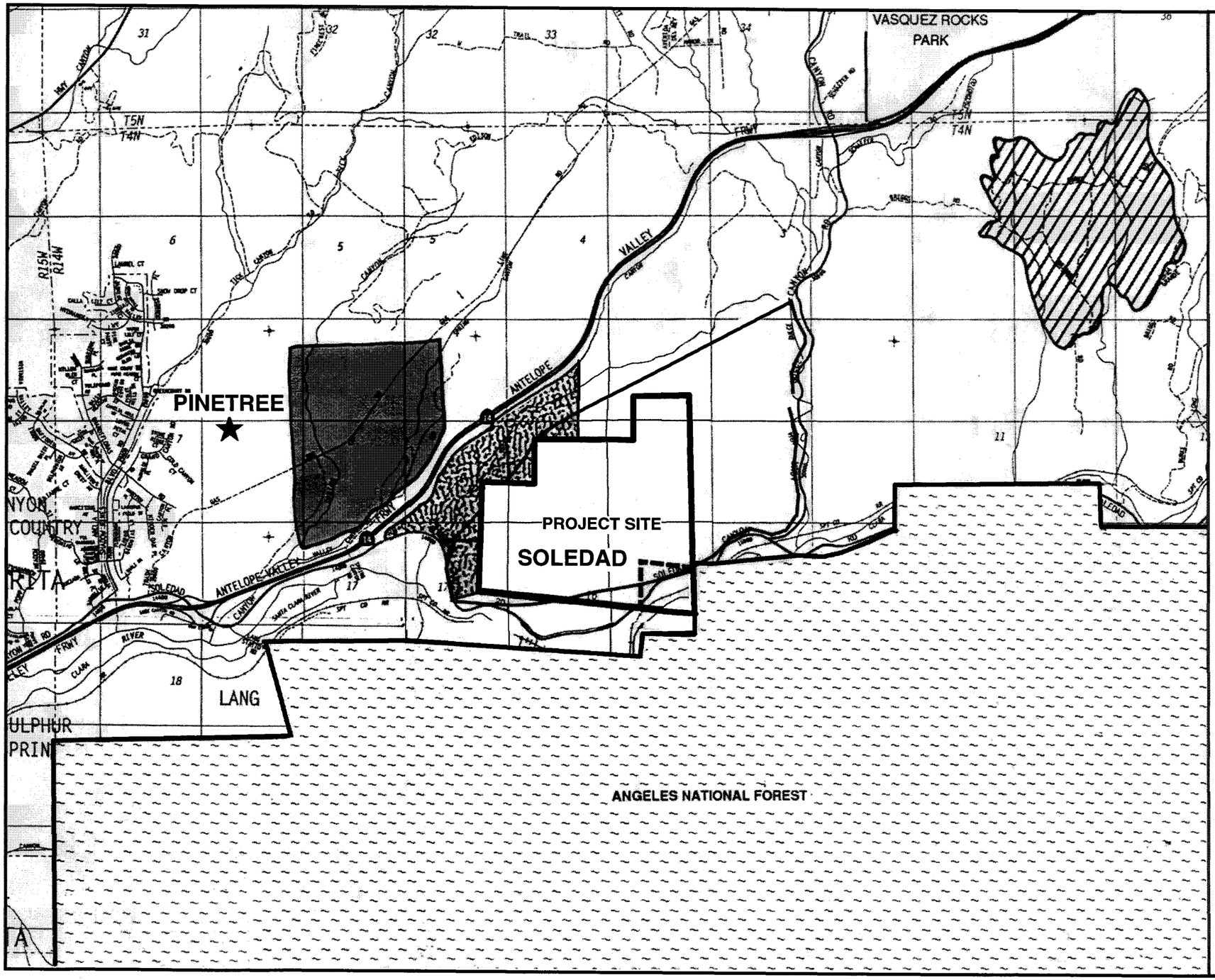
N

Feet
0 2,640

Source: County of Los Angeles, Regional Planning Dept., November 1992

ZONING - COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
Figure 3.1.12-1

8200A/3-99



SHADOW PINE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
CO. OF LA PROJECT # 90115
(499 SF. LOTS, 548 ACRES)

CO. OF LA PROJECT #87459
(637 UNITS, 425 ACRES)

BEE CANYON MOBILE HOME PARK
CO. OF LA PROJECT #93147
(650 UNITS, 211 ACRES

RIO DULCE DEVELOPMENT
CO. OF LA PROJECT #90501
(622 LOTS, 943 ACRES)

TMC PROJECT SITE

STATE MINERAL RESOURCE
(MRZ-2) ZONE OVER TMC AND
BEE CANYON PROJECT AREAS

N

Feet
0 2,640

Source: County of Los Angeles, 1992

**PROJECT RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
PROJECTS IN SITE VICINITY
Figure 3.1.12-2**

this buffer, uses normally allowed in the corresponding land use classifications will be permitted unless a finding is made that a Project/activity will adversely affect the adjacent SEA. Findings are based on a detailed biotic survey to determine the compatibility of the Project/activity with the biotic resources identified on the Project site. In January 1991, the County Department of Regional Planning established Significant Ecological Areas Technical Advisory Committee Procedures and Biota Report Guidelines for Projects that fall within County-defined SEAs.

Within the SEAs, the County considers the following uses compatible by definition: regulated scientific activity; passive recreation; limited picnicking, riding, and hiking; and overnight camping. Relative to the Project, allowed extractive uses, including rock, sand, and gravel quarrying, may be compatible as determined by a detailed biotic survey, with conditions imposed, as necessary, to ensure protection of identified ecological resources (County 1990). Other uses that may be allowed, provided they are compatible with identified biotic resources, include oil and gas recovery, some residential and commercial uses, and essential public/semipublic uses.

Portions of the land leased for potential water development, south of Areas A and B, lie within the lands designated as Angeles National Forest. Although these lands are also within unincorporated County, resource management and planning for forest lands are under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Forest Service. Under the current Land and Resources Management Plan (Forest Plan), mining is an allowed use within the boundaries of the forest. In the Forest Plan, mining activities are governed by forestwide standards and guidelines for the management of minerals and geology. It also contains standards and guidelines for the management of fish and wildlife within Forest lands including guidelines for protection and enhancement of riparian areas and critical threatened and endangered species habitats.

Adjacent Lands Characterization, Zoning, and Land Use Designations

The unincorporated areas surrounding the Project site are a mix of developed and undeveloped parcels. Residential uses are found at scattered lots along the Santa Clara River corridor and residential and commercial development in the Pinetree area north of the Antelope Valley Freeway. Existing and planned residential uses proximate to the site include, but are not limited to, the following: Bee Canyon Mobile Home Park, Shadow Pines, Rio Dulce, Sand Canyon, Stonecrest, Agua Dulce, and Rivers End Trailer Park. Several additional smaller developments are also proximate to the site. The closest school to the site is Pinetree Elementary located approximately 2½ miles from the site. Large residential development projects proposed in the surrounding area are shown on Figure 3.1.12-2.

The majority of vacant lands located due north of the site are under private ownership. The remaining areas consist of small, isolated parcels of BLM public lands and split-estate lands (BLM 1992). These lands are designated in the County General Plan as Open Space (O) and are zoned A-2-1 (Heavy Agriculture, 1-acre minimum lots). Open-space areas are considered to be lands under public or private ownership that are essentially free of structures and roads, and maintained in an open or natural state. These areas are primarily managed for recreation purposes, protection of natural resources, and/or protection of public health and safety (County 1990).

No structures or active land uses exist on these lands. Some areas in the general vicinity have been used as locations and backdrops for motion picture filming.

Bee Canyon is located immediately west and northwest of the Project site between the Antelope Valley Freeway and Soledad Canyon Road. This large, relatively flat area is mostly vacant with one abandoned residential site. In 1990, the County adopted an update to the Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan, which allowed for submittal of a Specific Plan in Bee Canyon. This update has allowed for submittal of an application for a Specific Plan for a mobile home park adjacent to the TMC's Project. Along with these changes, the County land use designation for this area changed from HM (Hillside Management, nonurban where slopes exceed 25 percent) to Urban 1 (U1, 1.1 to 3.3 dwelling units per acre) as indicated by the area labeled "A" on Figure 2.2-2. Current zoning remains A-2-1 (Heavy Agriculture, 1-acre minimum lots).

Several versions of the proposed mobile home park have occurred since 1988. At a County Regional Planning Commission hearing in January 1996 for a 958-unit plan, the Applicant for the Bee Canyon project requested postponement without discussion, and the item was continued off calendar. The staff report analyzing that 958-unit project prepared by the County Regional Planning Department recommended denial of the project. Subsequently, a revised Specific Plan for Bee Canyon was been submitted to County Regional Planning (August 1996). In 1996 a downscaled proposal consisting of a 211-acre, 650-unit layout involved some cut slope grading within the boundary of the TMC Federal Contracts area for aggregate resource development. As proposed at that time, the overlap onto the TMC Federal Contracts area, resulted in the mobile home park proposal as a combination of land use designations U1 (1.1 to 3.3 dwelling units per acre) and HM (Hillside Management, nonurban where slopes exceed 25 percent), and a combination of A-2-1 (Heavy Agriculture, 1-acre minimum lost) and M-2 (Heavy Manufacturing) zoning. Two staff reports analyzing the 650 unit project, prepared by the County Department of Regional Planning, recommended denial of the project, in large part because of its incompatibility with the adjacent designated mining area.

The community of Pinetree lies northwest of the Project site and the Antelope Valley Freeway. The portion of this community that lies west of Shadow Pines Boulevard was annexed into the City of Santa Clarita in 1990 and forms the northeasternmost limit of Santa Clarita (Don Williams, City of Santa Clarita, personal communication, November 1992). Prior to this, when Santa Clarita first applied to be incorporated as a city, Pinetree was originally included within the proposed city limits but was subsequently left out of the city by the LAFCO for the County. Housing in this area consists of single-family residential tract homes with densities of 3.4 to 6.6 dwelling units per acre. New conventional residential tracts are currently being constructed with lower densities of 1.1 to 3.3 dwelling units per acre. A portion of this area is designated by the County as HM and N2 (1.0 dwelling units per acre). As indicated on Figure 2.2-2, the County has proposed a change in designation (within the area labeled "B") from HM to N2. One large residential development has been approved east of Shadow Pines Boulevard and north of the Antelope Valley Freeway. The development (County Project No. 87459) includes 437 units on 425 acres in the area between Shadow Pines Boulevard and Spring Canyon. As of June 1996, approximately 200 units had been constructed and occupied.

Another large residential development is proposed north of the Project site on the north side of the Antelope Valley Freeway. This project is known as Shadow Pines and consists of 499 single-family residences on 548 acres (County Project No. 90115). This project includes an access from Spring Canyon Road off Soledad Canyon Road. An EIR is currently being prepared for this project (June 1996).

Northeast of the Project site, the Agua Dulce area is located in a small alluvial valley between the rugged hills in the northeastern reaches of the County planning area of Santa Clarita Valley including the area of Vasquez Rocks. Ranching was the predominant use in the area since the late 1800s. The current predominant use is rural residential. Agua Dulce has grown from about 450 residents in the mid 1980's to about 1,800 at present. Early mining activity in Soledad Canyon also attracted people to this area. Agua Dulce Canyon Road, which bisects Calmat Company property, provides access off of both the Antelope Valley Freeway and Soledad Canyon Road. Calmat has applied for a surface mining permit for a site northeast of the TMC Project site.

Residential development along Agua Dulce Canyon Road in the vicinity of the Project site is limited and distinctively rural. Most existing parcels are greater than 2½ acres, with a few lots that are 1 acre or smaller. The proposed Rio Dulce development is located east of Agua Dulce Canyon Road and south of the Agua Dulce Community Standards District at the northeast corner of the Calmat Agua Dulce property. A total of 616 single-family units, 4 open-space lots, 1 park facility, and 1 sewage treatment facility are proposed on 943 acres. The area is currently designated N1. An application for zoning change from N1 to N2, and N1 to HM (shown as the area labeled "C" on Figure 2.2-2) is currently on file with the County Department of Regional Planning. A tract map and Screencheck EIR are on file but are incomplete, and no activity has been recorded on this property in several years. The application for water rights was recently withdrawn by the Applicant, and this project is assumed to be infeasible.

Commercial uses that primarily serve the local areas exist at the approximate center of the community off Darling Road in Vasquez Rocks and along Agua Dulce Road near the center of the community (County 1990). Agua Dulce Air Park is located approximately 1 mile east of Agua Dulce Road and 1 mile south of Sierra Highway. It is the only existing general aviation airport in the Santa Clarita Valley.

The Lang Station area is located in the Santa Clara River west of the Project site and south of Pinetree, and is primarily composed of mining and other industrial operations. The area within the river corridor is designated as floodway/floodplain and as an SEA (W/SEA). Curtis Sand and Gravel Company and P.W. Gillibrand operate existing quarries near Lang Station. Sweetwater Aggregates has reduced operations at its Lang facility. Pending a change in the current economic climate, Sweetwater Aggregates may increase operations. Other existing uses in this area include a concrete batch plant (National Redimix), an asphalt plant (Industrial Asphalt), a small topsoil supply operation, and a former oil recycling facility (Lubrication Company of America). Existing residential use is restricted to one house on Lang Road and another on Soledad Canyon Road. The River's End Trailer Park is located east of Lang and provides affordable alternative housing consisting of 39 spaces rented on a monthly basis (TetraTech 1991).

East of Lang Station, the Santa Clara River runs south of TMC's Project site approximately parallel with Soledad Canyon Road. Public use in the river is generally denied or discouraged by public agencies and landowners due to river dumping and off-roading activities (BSI Consultants, Inc. 1990). Scattered residential sites and mobile home/recreational vehicle parks are located east of the Project site along the river and Soledad Canyon Road. The County Fire Department and the California Department of Corrections operates a Fire Suppression Station approximately 1.5 miles east of the Project site.

The Santa Clara River west of the Project site within the City of Santa Clarita boundary is included in the City's proposed River Plan. This plan proposes to develop recreational amenities including multiuse trail systems and habitat preservation (BSI Consultants, Inc. 1990). The entire river has recently been included into the state recreational trails system and the County Master Plan of regional trails. The County eventually plans a multiuse trail along the river; however, no detailed planning for the river has been developed yet. Within the area of the Project, it has not been determined whether the trail will follow the river corridor.

As mentioned in the discussion above for the Project site, the land to the south and southeast of the site is the Angeles National Forest. Mining has been and is still occurring adjacent to Area B of the Project site. Mining is an allowed use under the Forest Plan, which guides the exploration and development of minerals so they will be consistent with the use and protection of other resources.

A Noise Impact Management Corridor, delineated by the County General Plan, runs northeast to southwest approximately parallel with Antelope Valley Freeway. This management area is located north of the Project site just outside of the site boundaries and contains areas within projected CNEL contours of 60 dB. This classification is overlaid onto other land use classifications and is used to determine the areas subject to County Noise Impact Management regulations. As future studies yield more accurate noise contours, these management areas will be altered to reflect the changes (County 1990).

Mining Operations in Vicinity

The predominant land uses onsite and in the Project vicinity include industrial uses and other mining and sand and gravel operations (Figure 3.1.12-3). Mining has been conducted at the subject site and along the Santa Clara River corridor by other operators for approximately 20 years. The following existing mining operations are located within the vicinity of the Project:

1. P.W. Gillibrand Company currently produces crushed stone aggregate from the anorthosite-gabbro group near Lang Station (CDMG 1987a).

2. Curtis Sand and Gravel at Lang Station - Curtis Sand and Gravel operations at Lang Station are located within the Santa Clara River corridor west of Lang Crossing. This site is designated by the state as a sand and gravel resource area in the Saugus-Newhall P-C Region. This existing operation was recently required to retroactively file a plan to bring the mining operation into compliance. A negative declaration for expansion of the existing operation was finalized on February 15, 1994.

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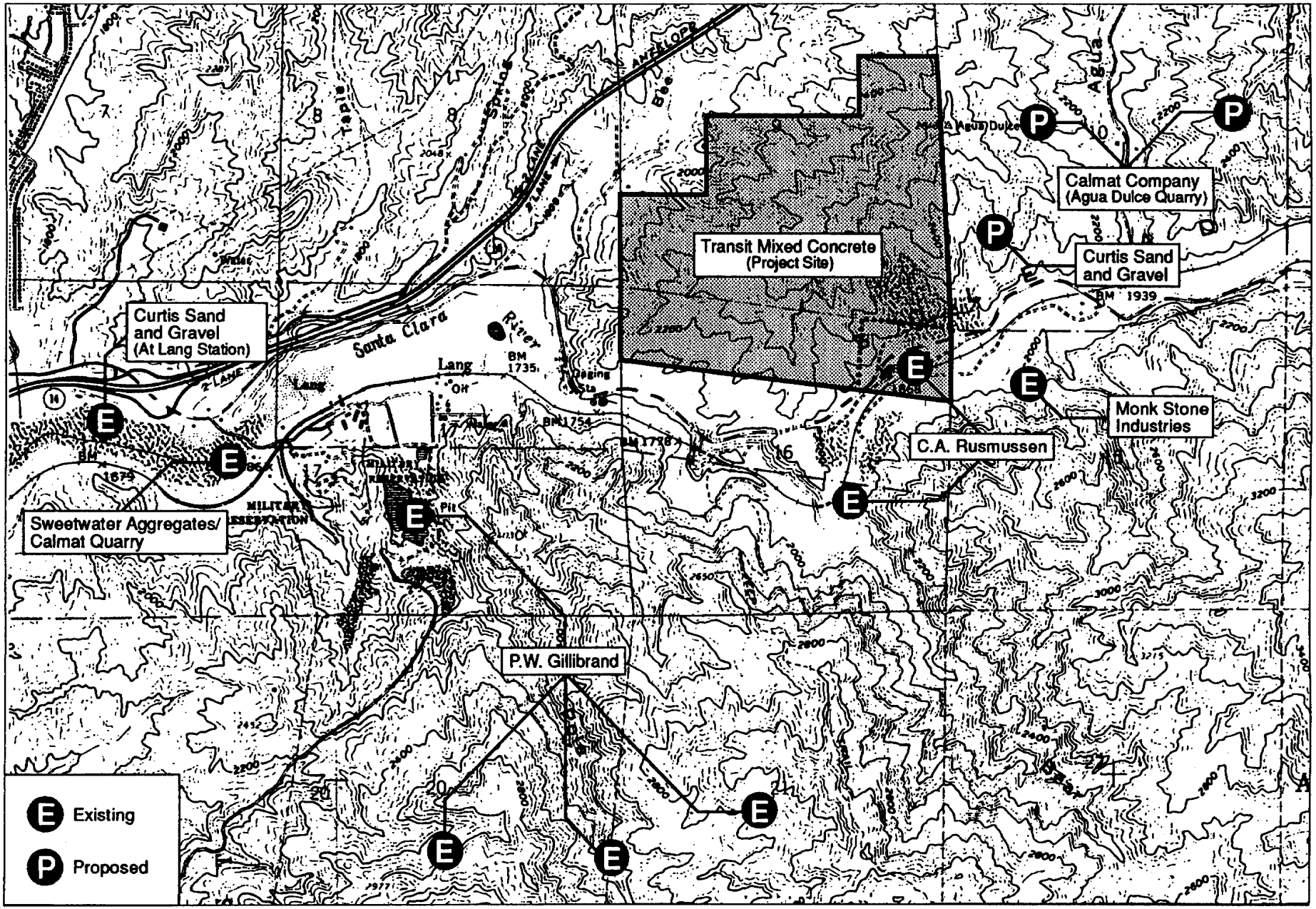

N

Feet
0 2000

Base Map Source: USGS 1:24,000
Agua Dulce, Mint Canyon, CA

EXISTING AND PROPOSED MINING OPERATIONS
Figure 3.1.12-3

3. Sweetwater Aggregates at Lang Station - As discussed previously, Sweetwater Aggregates has limited operations at the Lang Station site but may resume operations upon improvement of current economic conditions.

4. C.A. Rasmussen Company has a quarry located due south of the Project site. Previous mining activities at this site have included mining for riprap.

5. Monk Stone Industries currently mines anorthosite from the adjacent area east of Area B and south of the river.

6. P.W. Gillibrand Co. - P.W. Gillibrand Company has obtained approval of a mining operation in the Angeles National Forest within a 13,500-acre claim area south and southwest of the Project site. Project activities will include surface mining for aggregate and titanium, stockpiling, waste disposal, and reclamation with three claim groups totaling 780 acres. The U.S. Forest Service and the County exercise land management within Gillibrand's proposed mining area through their respective land use plans. Final approval of the Reclamation Plan for this project was secured from the California State Mining and Geology Board in early 1996.

In addition to the TMC Project, the following surface mining applications are currently on file with the County Regional Planning Department:

1. C.A. Rasmussen Company has filed an application (September 1994) for expansion of its quarry south of the TMC Project site. As of June 1996, an EIR was in preparation.

2. Calmat Company Agua Dulce Quarry is located east of the proposed TMC Project site, between Soledad Canyon Road and Antelope Valley Freeway. The 1,183-acre site is bisected by Agua Dulce Canyon Road and Agua Dulce Creek and includes a ½-mile-long frontage along Soledad Canyon Road. The County land use designations for the site include HM, Floodway/Floodplain (W) in the Agua Dulce Canyon area, and the SEA within the Santa Clara River corridor. The area is zoned A-1-1 and A-2-1 by the County (Ingrid Elsel Associates 1991). Calmat Company proposes to excavate construction-grade aggregate from the Agua Dulce site. BLM has mineral ownership of the majority of the site. An EIR is being prepared for this project.

3. Curtis Sand and Gravel has submitted plans to mine an adjoining property east of the Project site. The company filed an application with the County Regional Planning Department in November 1990 to continue surface mining on a 168.3-acre area. However, a portion of this area is within TMC's current Federal Contracts area. To the extent the proposal contemplates mining or reclamation on the Federal Contracts area, it is not feasible, because it would violate recent U.S. District Court orders confirming TMC's exclusive right to mine sand and gravel on the Federal Contracts area. As of November 1994, no further action had occurred on this file. Most of the area currently has a General Plan land use designation of HM and is zoned A-1-1 (Light Agriculture, 1-acre minimum lots).

3.1.12.2 Environmental Effects

Significance Criteria

Land use impacts are considered adverse and significant if the following occur:

- substantial conflict with applicable zoning regulations, County General Plan designations or policies, other applicable land use plans, designation requirements of SMARA, or requirements of the CFR and laws governing aggregate resource mining; and/or
- the Project is incompatible with zoned or designated uses of adjacent areas.

Conformance With Applicable Policies and Plans

Consistency with regional and local planning is discussed in Section 2.3. As a summary, TMC's Project area is designated or otherwise recognized by the County, the State of California Department of Conservation, SMGB, and the BLM as an area of regionally important and significant aggregate resources. Under the provisions of SMARA, the designation of the Project area as a Regionally Significant Aggregate Resource is intended to preserve access to available and economically important mineral resources for conservation and development. It also requires that local agencies establish land use policies that protect these designated areas from preemption by incompatible land uses such as urbanization.

The TMC Project site is zoned for heavy manufacturing uses (M-2). The proposed mining and extraction of aggregate to be used in construction are permitted uses in this area with a surface mining permit issued by the County in accordance with the requirements of the County Code that implements SMARA. An application has been made by TMC in May 1991 for such a permit. If the permit is granted, the Project would be consistent with the current zoning of the parcels involved.

The Project site was mined for 2 decades previously pursuant to a CUP, and the Project is consistent with the existing policy of the County Board of Supervisors to "protect important mineral resource by a long-range approach toward mineral resource utilization" as described in the Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan. In addition, local planning policy is required to be consistent with state policy as stated above. Under BLM's planning for the South Coast RMP and EIS, the TMC Project has been deemed to be consistent with BLM management objectives. Also, the BLM can enter into mineral material contracts, such as it has with TMC, only after determining that it is in the public interest to do so and after determining that the operator is capable of carrying through the contracts. The BLM granted the mineral material Federal Contracts to TMC for the Project area in March 1990. In 1989, BLM prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) and issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the sale of sand and gravel for the Project site.

Because the Project area has also been designated by the SMGB as an area of regional significance, the lead agency's land use decisions are required under SMARA to be in accordance with its mineral resource policies. This includes implementation procedures by the

Lead Agency for recognizing and protecting mineral resources so that they are available when needed. The County General Plan has established policies for managed resource production that provide for protection of important mineral resources (including sand and gravel) from encroachment of incompatible land uses. The Project, in its approved form, can be found consistent with these current written policies and planning objectives, subject to the conditions set forth in a surface mining permit.

Compatibility With Adjacent Land Uses

While the TMC Project site is in compliance with existing applicable policies, the most recent proposal for development of the adjacent Bee Canyon Mobile Home Park could be considered incompatible with the adjacent, regionally significant minerals on the Federal Contracts area. In land use conflicts between urban development and mineral resources, it is important that the significance of the mineral resources be recognized and that their potential loss (if unrecoverable) be evaluated. The CDMG has identified the Project area as an area of regional significance that is known to contain mineral deposits. Furthermore, under SMARA, the extraction of minerals from such an area is of prime importance in meeting future needs for minerals, and that, if developed for alternate incompatible land uses, could result in the permanent loss of minerals that are of more than local significance (SMARA Section 2726).

According to the County's General Plan, known mineral reserves are to be protected from encroachment of incompatible land uses. The Project site is zoned M-2 and has been designated as a Regionally Significant Construction Aggregate Resource Area.

3.1.12.3 Mitigation Measures

The TMC Project has no significant adverse land use impacts, and no mitigation measures are required. However, the following measure will be required as a standard condition of approval.

LU1. No mitigation measures are required because no significant adverse impacts were identified. However, as a condition of TMC's Project, the County will review and approve the proposed Reclamation Plan to reclaim mined lands to a usable condition. Under the proposed Reclamation Plan, at the conclusion of the Federal Contracts, TMC will reclaim the TMC's Project processing site and/or all inactive disturbed areas. Any areas not used for continued mining will be reclaimed and revegetated for use as open space. Upon approval of all applicable permits and reclamation plans, the Project will be deemed consistent with state, regional, and local land use policies and designations.

3.1.12.4 Unavoidable Significant Adverse Effects

The measures proposed above can be feasibly implemented and will reduce the identified impacts to a less-than-significant level. No potential unavoidable significant adverse impacts will remain after mitigation.