3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

This section describes the current environmental conditions throughout the plan area and in the general vicinity. More detailed descriptions of the setting for each environmental issue area can be found in Section 4.0, *Environmental Impact Analysis*.

3.1 REGIONAL SETTING

The City of Ventura has an estimated 2008 population of 108,261 (California Department of Finance, January 2008). Ventura is situated 25 miles southeast of Santa Barbara and 60 miles northwest of Los Angeles. Ventura is situated between the Pacific Ocean, the Ventura foothills, and lies between the Ventura and Santa Clara rivers. The City is located at the western edge of the Oxnard Plain, an alluvial plain that covers over 200 square miles in the southern portion of Ventura County. Much of the City is on relatively flat coastal plain, but steeply sloped hills abut the northern portion of the community. The western portion of the City stretches north along the Ventura River and is characterized by a narrow valley with steeply sloped areas along both sides.

Ventura has a Mediterranean climate and the coastline helps to produce moderate temperatures year round, with rainfall concentrated in the winter months. Ocean breezes cool the region in the summer and warm it in the winter. Average daytime summer temperatures in the area are usually in the high 70s to 80s (Fahrenheit). Nighttime low temperatures during the summer are typically in the high 50s to low 60s, while the winter high temperature tends to be in the 60s. Characteristic of Ventura's semi-marine microclimate, the winter low temperatures are in the 40s. Annual average rainfall in Ventura is about 15 inches. The region is subject to various natural hazards, including earthquakes, landslides, flooding, and wildfires.

3.2 PLAN AREA SETTING

The Parklands plan area is located near the eastern edge of Ventura, about 10 miles from downtown Ventura. The plan area is bordered by Blackburn Road to the south, Wells Road to the east, and Telegraph Road to the north. Residential development of single family homes and mobile homes lies immediately west of the plan area. The Santa Paula Freeway (SR 126) runs parallel to Blackburn Road, south of the plan area and serves as the regional connector. A single family residence lies between the plan area and Blackburn Road.

The plan area is currently in row crop agricultural production. The crop is annual flowers and a caretaker's mobile home exists in the northern central portion of the property, adjacent Telegraph Road. Other agricultural uses in the vicinity include row crops and orchards northeast of the intersection of Wells Road at Telegraph Road, and further to the west and northwest beyond existing residential development (see Figure 2-2 in Section 2.0 *Project Description*). Across Wells Road to the east are commercial retail uses, educational facilities, a medical office, and a private water reservoir. To the north of the project site are a neighborhood of single-family detached houses, a medical office building, and an assisted-living retirement community.

Brown Barranca bisects the plan area with both natural bottom and concrete portions from Telegraph Road to Blackburn Road at Wells Road. The barranca is a natural bottom channel to the north across Telegraph Road, but is a concrete channel south of Blackburn Road. The barranca contains a mix of native and non-native plant species, some of which are invasive weedy species. Dominant species include arroyo willow, California walnut, eucalyptus, German ivy, and castor bean. A total of 38 species of birds were noted in the plan area during a spring breeding survey (Rincon Consultants, May 2008). Previous biological investigations documented that raccoon, black rat, gray fox, domestic cat, coyote, striped skunk, and dusky footed-wood rat were present within the plan area. No reptiles or fish were observed within the plan area during previous biological investigations (Padre and Associates, 2007, Rincon Consultants, Inc. 2007; however, African clawed frogs were observed in ponded areas of the barranca during night surveys (Rincon Consultants, July 2008).

Portions of the plan area are within a 100-year floodplain as mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The floodplain boundaries mapped by FEMA differ from the boundaries that were mapped by the project hydrological consultant, which are based on current existing physical conditions (Omrun Engineering, 2008). In addition, portions of the plan area are subject to noise in excess of the normally allowable residential exterior standards of 65 decibels average, due to the proximity of traffic on SR 126, Telegraph Road and Wells Road (Padre Associates, 2007).

3.3 CUMULATIVE PROJECTS

CEQA defines cumulative impacts as two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts. Cumulative impacts are the changes in the environment that result from the incremental impact of development of the proposed project and other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time. For example, traffic impacts of two nearby projects may be insignificant when analyzed separately, but could have a significant impact when analyzed together. Cumulative impact analysis allows the EIR to provide a reasonable forecast of future environmental conditions and can more accurately gauge the effects of a series of projects.

The cumulative impact analysis contained in this EIR relies primarily on the forecasts of future growth in Ventura, as envisioned in the 2005 General Plan EIR. Table 3-1 lists predicted citywide development intensity in 2025 from the 2005 General Plan EIR.

The proposed project is located geographically near the eastern boundary of the City of Ventura. Cumulative development in the City of Ventura is spread geographically throughout the City. Some impacts are not necessarily cumulatively considerable in relation to development that occurs further from the proposed specific plan. For example, aesthetic and noise impacts associated with the Parkland Specific Plan are not likely to contribute to such impacts in the western region of the City, whereas their relevance is more profound within an area closer to the plan area. Therefore, some individual cumulative impact discussions in their respective issue area sections of the EIR may rely on a portion of the overall total future development, depending on the issue area and the type of impact. These are noted in the

cumulative impact discussions as appropriate. Other issue areas consider the overall General Plan buildout cumulative development.

Table 3-1
Cumulative Development

Land Use	Development Potential
Residential	**8,318 units**
Non-Residential	
Retail	1,241,377 sf
Office	1,213,214 sf
Industrial	2,235,133 sf
Hotel	530,000 sf
Non-Residential Total	**5,219,724 sf**

Source: City of Ventura, Final 2005 General Plan, Environmental Impact Report Supplement, June 2007.

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