



## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1.1 PROJECT LOCATION

The Mancara at Robinson Ranch (Tentative Tract Map No. 063022) project site is located in the County of Los Angeles, within the eastern portion of the City of Santa Clarita. The project site is located to the east of the intersection of Oak Spring Canyon Road and Lost Canyon Road, and is generally bounded by the Santa Clara River to the north, Oak Spring Canyon Wash to the west, the Robinson Ranch Golf Club to the south, and unincorporated Los Angeles County and the Angeles National Forest to the east.

Regional access to the project area is provided via State Route 14 (SR-14), which is located approximately 0.2-mile north of the project site. Local access routes near the project site include Soledad Canyon Road (situated approximately 0.25-mile north of the site), Sand Canyon Road (located approximately 0.5-mile west of the site), Lost Canyon Road (which terminates at the western boundary of the site), and Oak Spring Canyon Road (which exists along the western and southern boundaries of the site).

### 1.2 PROJECT SUMMARY

The proposed project is a rural residential equestrian-based community that involves the development of 99 single-family graded residential lots and open space areas within 105 lots on approximately 187.3 gross acres of land. The 105 proposed lots would be utilized for the following purposes:

- **Lots 1 through 99:** Lots 1 through 99 would consist of single-family residential lots. A portion of Lots 9 and 10 (along the eastern boundary of the site) would contain a temporary drainage desilting basin that would be utilized until a proposed “future” street is extended easterly to accommodate a proposed development on the adjacent property to the east. Each of the 99 proposed residential lots would be developed with custom homes, consistent with the character of the Sand Canyon community and in compliance with the requirements of the *City of Santa Clarita Unified Development Code* (UDC), including the Sand Canyon Special Standards District.
- **Lots 100 through 104:** Lots 100 through 104 would be open space and equestrian lots within the northernmost and southernmost portions of the project site. Specifically, Lots 101 and 102 (just north of the Metrolink railroad right-of-way) are proposed for a City park and equestrian uses/equestrian trailhead. Further north (along the northern boundary of the site), Lots 100 and 103 would compose an open space area within the Santa Clara River floodplain. Lot 104, along the southern boundary of the project site, would be utilized for open space (golf course) purposes.
- **Lot 105:** Lot 105 would be utilized for a drainage/desilting water quality basin within the southeastern portion of the project site.



- **Not a Part:** The southwestern corner of the project site (approximately 14.7 acres) is under the ownership of the Project Applicant, but would not be developed as part of the proposed project. This area, labeled as Not a Part, is generally located north of Oak Spring Canyon Road, and southwest of the Oak Spring Canyon Wash (refer to Exhibit 3-4, Tentative Tract Map, for an illustration of the proposed project).

As such, approximately 172.6 acres of the 187.3-acre project site would be affected by development.

The site would accommodate approximately 43.6 acres of open space and 17 acres of streets, yielding a net site area of 112 acres. The residential lots would range in size from approximately 0.7-acre to over two or more acres, with an average lot size of 1.1 acres (excluding open space lots).

Access to the project site is proposed to occur via three vehicular gate-controlled points. The first would occur along a proposed easterly extension of Lost Canyon Road (at the northwestern corner of the site), immediately south of the existing Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) Metrolink railroad right-of-way. The second vehicular gate would occur at the southern boundary of the site, further south along the Lost Canyon Road extension just north of Oak Springs Canyon Road and the third would occur to the south of Oak Springs Canyon Road on the adjacent property on the proposed Mancara Road. Pedestrian and equestrian access through the project site would remain open to the public.

Circulation improvements would include a range of on-site roadways providing internal circulation and access. Several off-site roadway improvements would also be required, including: 1) improvements along Lost Canyon Road from Sand Canyon Road to the westerly project boundary; 2) the extension of Mancara Road southward from Oak Spring Canyon Road to Robinson Ranch Road; and 3) improvements at the intersection of Sand Canyon Road/Lost Canyon Road (in the event intersection improvements have not been carried forward by others at the time of implementation of the proposed project).

The proposed project also includes a network of on-site multi-use trails, which would connect to all residential lots on the site and the extension of an off-site trail on Lost Canyon Road from Sand Canyon Road to the project site. The majority of on-site trails would be owned and operated by the Homeowners' Association (but would be accessible to the general public) with the exception of a 30-foot wide City dedicated and maintained trail easement.

## 1.3 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The Mancara at Robinson Ranch Project is a private development plan proposed by Robinson Ranch Residential, LP. The overall objective of the proposed project is to develop a gated equestrian community with 99 single-family lots on 187.3 acres of primarily undeveloped land. The applicant's objectives for the project include the following items:



## LAND USE PLANNING

1. Create a new community that allows for residential development, while preserving significant natural resources and open areas.
2. Provide development that is compatible with surrounding land uses and is consistent with residential communities within the Sand Canyon area.
3. Provide for adequate flood protection for the purposes of public safety and preservation of public and private property.
4. Provide for the long-term maintenance of landscaping, storm drains, etc., that serve the project site.
5. Ensure compatibility with the City's Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan.
6. Ensure compatibility with the Sand Canyon Special Standards District.

## ECONOMIC

1. Develop the site to include lots of varying sizes.
2. Create an economically feasible project that offers single-family residential lots to serve the current and projected market.

## MOBILITY

1. Provide a safe, efficient, and aesthetically attractive street system, which is consistent with all requirements of the Sand Canyon Special Standards District.
2. Provide two points of ingress and egress that minimize impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods.
3. Provide equestrian trails throughout the project which connect with the City's equestrian backbone trail system.

## PARKS AND RECREATION

1. Provide space for an equestrian-oriented City park.
2. Provide space for an equestrian trail head that connects to the City's equestrian backbone trail system.
3. Provide space for a City community park.

## RESOURCE CONSERVATION

1. Maintain approximately 44 acres of open space.
2. Provide a site-specific evaluation of the biotic resources of the site in compliance with the provisions of the City's *Unified Development Code* and *General Plan* with regard to significant ecological areas.



## 1.4 SUMMARY OF PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

### ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED

In determining an appropriate range of alternatives to be evaluated in the EIR, five possible alternatives were considered but not carried forward for additional analysis, since they could not accomplish most of the basic objectives of the project or were considered infeasible. These scenarios include the following.

#### **“No Build” Alternative**

Under the “No Build” Alternative, no development would take place on-site. The site would remain in its current undeveloped condition (with the exception of the existing Metrolink railroad right-of-way, Southern California Gas Company transmission pipeline easement, and abandoned railroad grade that traverse the site).

If left as open space, the site would not be consistent with the City’s vision for low-density single-family residential development at the site. Thus, the City would be responsible for identifying an alternate location or locations for replacement housing to maintain housing supply as identified within its *General Plan*. Furthermore, retention of the project site in its existing condition would not fulfill any of the basic project objectives identified above. Consequently, the “No Build” Alternative was rejected from further consideration in the EIR.

#### **“Alternative Site” Alternative**

The “Alternative Site” Alternative would involve relocating the proposed project to another site within the City. The Alternative Site Alternative would generally retain the same characteristics (acreage, number of dwelling units, amenities, etc.) of the project. The Alternative Site Alternative would require adequate land, access, infrastructure, and must be compatible with existing General Plan and zoning designations for the site. Although other suitable sites may be available that could accommodate the project, it is not anticipated that the Alternative Site Alternative would substantially lessen the significant noise impacts associated with the proposed project. Although the project could potentially reduce impacts associated with short-term construction noise, it is considered infeasible since: 1) no other sites in the project area are under the Applicant’s ownership; and 2) relocation to another site may result in similar or elevated noise impacts depending on the proximity of sensitive receptors. Consequently, the Alternative Site Alternative was rejected from further consideration within the EIR.

#### **“Santa Clara River Bridge” Alternative**

The “Santa Clara River Bridge” Alternative would involve the construction of a roadway bridge over the Santa Clara River in order to provide primary access to the project site. This access scenario was considered as part of an earlier development proposal for the project site that included a total of 299 single-family dwelling units. Under this alternative, vehicular access to the site would no longer be provided by Lost Canyon Road, Oak Springs Canyon Road, or Robinson Ranch Road. The Santa Clara River Bridge Alternative has not been carried forward for further consideration within the EIR since it would not result in a the reduction or elimination of the significant impact identified for construction noise, since surrounding sensitive receptors



would remain affected by the grading and excavation process. Moreover, this alternative would likely result in substantially increased impacts related to hydrology, water quality, biology, and aesthetics due to direct impacts to the Santa Clara River. Consequently, the Santa Clara River Bridge Alternative was rejected from further consideration within the EIR.

### **10-Acre Lot Alternative**

The 10-Acre Lot Alternative would propose no development north of the existing gas pipeline easement and 10-acre lots on the remainder of the site south of the easement. In addition, this Alternative would have no access from Lost Canyon Road.

The 10-Acre Lot Alternative has not been carried forward for further consideration in this EIR, as this Alternative is not consistent with the *General Plan* designations of Non-Urban 5 and Urban Residential 1 or the *UDC* designations of Residential Very Low (RVL) and Residential Low (RL). Under the existing *UDC* designations, 229 homes could be constructed. Under this Alternative, approximately 50 percent of the 172.6 acres available for development, 86.3 acres, could be developed. Thus a total of nine lots would be permitted under this Alternative. While this Alternative would result in the reduction or elimination of the significant impact identified for construction noise, it is considered a down-zoning of the subject property and it not consistent with the City's vision for low-density single-family residential development. Thus, the City would be responsible for identifying an alternate location or locations for replacement housing to maintain housing supply as identified within its *General Plan*. Furthermore, implementation of this Alternative would not fulfill any of the basic project objectives identified above. Consequently, the 10-Acre Lot Alternative was rejected from further consideration within the EIR.

### **Reduced Building Footprint Alternative**

The Reduced Building Footprint Alternative would avoid disturbance to the areas north of the Metrolink Railroad right-of-way along the south bank of the Santa Clara River and west/southwest of the Oak Spring Canyon Wash, along with a 500-foot buffer area along the site's eastern boundary. As with the proposed project, this Alternative would require two points of access for public safety. This Alternative would eliminate more than 40 residential lots in the eastern portion of the site, and two residential lots and the five-acre park north of the Metrolink Railroad right-of-way. This Alternative would permit a total of 44 residential lots and would increase the on-site open space acreage.

The Reduced Building Footprint Alternative has not been carried forward for further consideration within the EIR since it would not result in the reduction or elimination of the significant impact identified for construction noise, since surrounding sensitive receptors would remain affected by the grading and excavation process. Implementation of this Alternative would not be consistent with the City's vision for low-density single-family residential development, and as result, the City would be responsible for identifying an alternate location or locations for replacement housing to maintain housing supply as identified within its *General Plan*. Consequently, the Reduced Building Footprint Alternative was rejected from further consideration in the EIR.



## ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED IN THIS EIR

The alternatives to the proposed project under consideration within this EIR consist of:

- Existing UDC Alternative; and
- Reduced Density Alternative.

A summary of these alternatives is provided below.

### Existing UDC Alternative

The Existing UDC Alternative is the No Project Alternative in compliance with *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6(e)(2), and discusses what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the proposed project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services. Non-approval of the Mancara at Robinson Ranch Project would not preclude the site from being developed at a later time. Based on the City's *General Plan* designation for the site, the City's goals for development on the site consist of low-density single-family residential development on-site. The project site has historically been subject to various iterations of multiple development proposals. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that in the absence of the proposed project, residential development would still occur on-site in the foreseeable future. For the purposes of this analysis, the Existing UDC Alternative assumes that on-site development would consist of development consistent with the City's *UDC*.

Two *UDC* designations apply to the site: Residential Very Low (RVL) and Residential Low (RL). The RVL designation allows for a maximum density of 1.0 dwelling unit per gross acre, while the RL designation allows for a maximum of 2.2 dwelling units per gross acre. The 187.3-acre project site includes 172.6 acres proposed for residential development. Of this 172.6 acres, 123.6 acres are designated RVL and 49 acres are designated RL. Thus, applying applicable densities to each designation, a total of 232 single-family dwelling units would be constructed.<sup>1</sup> Since the proposed project includes 99 dwelling units, this alternative represents an increase in development intensity. Thus, the Existing UDC Alternative would include 133 more units than the proposed project (representing an increase of approximately 143 percent).

This increase in development would result in an associated increase in the amount and duration of construction on-site, resulting in greater construction noise impacts. In addition, greater amounts of solid waste generation would be generated during construction and operations. In addition, the expansion in development would likely require a reduction in the amount of open space/recreational area included with the project. Although the Existing UDC Alternative would accomplish the majority of project objectives identified above, it would result in an increase of the significant impacts identified for the proposed project.

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<sup>1</sup> 123.6 acres of RVL x 1.0 dwelling unit/acre = 124 dwelling units; 49 acres of RL x 2.2 dwelling units/acre = 108 dwelling units.



### **Reduced Density Alternative**

The “Reduced Density” Alternative assumes that development on the site would only occur south of the Southern California Gas Company natural gas pipeline/easement that exists on-site. This pipeline and easement traverse the site in a southwest to northeast orientation, bisecting the project site approximately in half. The project proposes “D” Street over this pipeline and easement. Under the Mancara at Robinson Ranch Project, 20 dwelling units would be constructed north of the pipeline/easement that would no longer be implemented under the Reduced Density Alternative. Instead, this area would be utilized for open space, recreation, and equestrian uses similar to what is proposed north of the Metrolink railroad right-of-way. Thus, this alternative assumes that 79 dwelling units would be constructed. This would result in a reduction of 20 dwelling units (or approximately 20 percent) in comparison to the proposed project. Under this alternative, no off-site grading would occur and off-site disturbance would be limited to the construction access points to the site (i.e., the Lost Canyon Road extension to the northwest and Mancara Road extension to the south).

The Reduced Density Alternative has been identified as the environmentally superior alternative. This alternative would generally result in a reduction of project-related impacts. However, all of the significant and unavoidable impacts identified under the proposed project (short-term construction noise and solid waste) would still occur under this alternative.

The goals of the proposed project focus on creating a new community allowing for residential development that preserves significant natural resources and open areas, while maintaining compatibility with surrounding land uses. However, development of this alternative would provide 20 fewer dwelling units than the proposed project. As such, the Reduced Density Alternative would not accommodate projected growth in the Santa Clarita Valley to the extent that the proposed project would. Although this Alternative would generally meet the objectives of the project, it would not provide the amount of housing as the proposed project, and therefore may not be economically feasible. Therefore, all of the project objectives would be at least partially met under the Reduced Density Alternative. However, as noted above, none of the significant impacts identified for the proposed project would be eliminated under this alternative.

### **Environmentally Superior Alternative**

The determination of an environmentally superior alternative is based on the consideration of how the alternative fulfills the project objectives and how the alternative either reduces significant, unavoidable impacts or substantially reduces the impacts to the surrounding environment.

The Reduced Density Alternative has been identified as the environmentally superior alternative. Based on the analysis, it would result in a reduction of impacts related to aesthetics, light and glare, biological resources, traffic and circulation, air quality, greenhouse gases, noise, hydrology and water quality, geology, soils, and seismicity, and public services and utilities. However, significant and unavoidable short-term noise impacts identified under the proposed project would still occur under this alternative.