

City of Ventura

Notice of Preparation

To: Responsible and Trustee Agencies and others on attached distribution list

From: City of Ventura, Community Development Department
501 Poli Street
Ventura, CA 93001

Subject: **Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report**
City of Ventura – The Grove Specific Plan Project

The City of Ventura will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an environmental impact report to be prepared for the Project identified below. The City needs to know the views of the environmental information that is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed Project. Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the Project.

The project description, location, and the potential environmental effects are described in the attached materials. A copy of the Initial Study (is is not) attached.

Due to the time limits mandated by state law, your response must be sent to the City within 30 days of receipt of the Notice of Preparation.

Please send your response to Mr. Iain Holt, Senior Planner, Community Development Department, City of Ventura, 501 Poli Street, P.O. Box 99, Ventura, CA 93002. We will need the name for a contact person at your agency.

A scoping meeting regarding The Grove Specific Plan Project EIR will be held April 29, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. at Ventura City Hall, Santa Cruz Conference Room, 501 Poli Street, Ventura, CA 93002.

Project Title: The Grove Specific Plan Project

Date: 4/13/15

Signature: 

Iain Holt
Senior Planner
(805) 654-7752

Title:
Telephone:

Reference: California Administrative Code, Title 14 (CEQA Guidelines), Sections 15082(a), 15103, and 15375.

Project Details

Project Name:	The Grove Specific Plan
Project Number:	0723
Case Number(s):	SP-9, ARB-2983, A-326, Z-915, S-5626, DA-37, EIR-2457
Location:	West terminus of Thille St., North of Copland Drive
APN:	079-0-240-035
Current Zoning:	Ventura County: Agriculture Exclusive (AE-40-AC)
Land Use:	Neighborhood Medium (9-20 du/acre); City of Ventura General Plan

Project Description

The proposed Project consists of a Specific Plan and a Vesting Tentative Tract Map that would enable the future development of a residential neighborhood ranging between 200 and 250 dwellings on approximately 26.51 acres (a density of 9.43 per units per acre) bounded on the north by Highway 126, on the east by the Thille Community Neighborhood, on the south by Telephone Road and Copland Drive, and on the west by the La Posada mobile home park, and farther to the west by the 101/126 highway interchange (see Figure 1). The property is currently within unincorporated area, but is within the City of Ventura's Sphere of Interest, and is designated on the General Plan as Medium Density Residential; 9-20 du/ac.

The Tentative Map (see Figure 2) would create individual lots for 32 front-loaded single-family residences, 26 alley-loaded single-family residences, and 4 larger lots that could accommodate up to 192 units in a combination of alley-loaded single family homes, townhouses, and courtyard or stacked multi-family housing (See Figure 2).

The Specific Plan would be divided into six separate neighborhood blocks containing a mix of residential housing types with a goal to create a traditional neighborhood. It emphasizes the public realm, pedestrian-friendly streets and blocks, and a diversity of building types to generate a distinct sense of neighborhood identity. As a traditional-design neighborhood, the Project has a center and edge linked by a series of walkable connections to the open spaces, includes communal residential services, and functions contained within the site.

The plan area includes up to 4.67 acres of park area, which includes a linear park, public and pocket parks, and an open space area reserved for a potential future pedestrian and bike bridge connection to El Camino Real Park to the north of and over Highway 126. A portion of the open space would serve as storm water detention area located off-site in the Copland Drive vacated right of way.

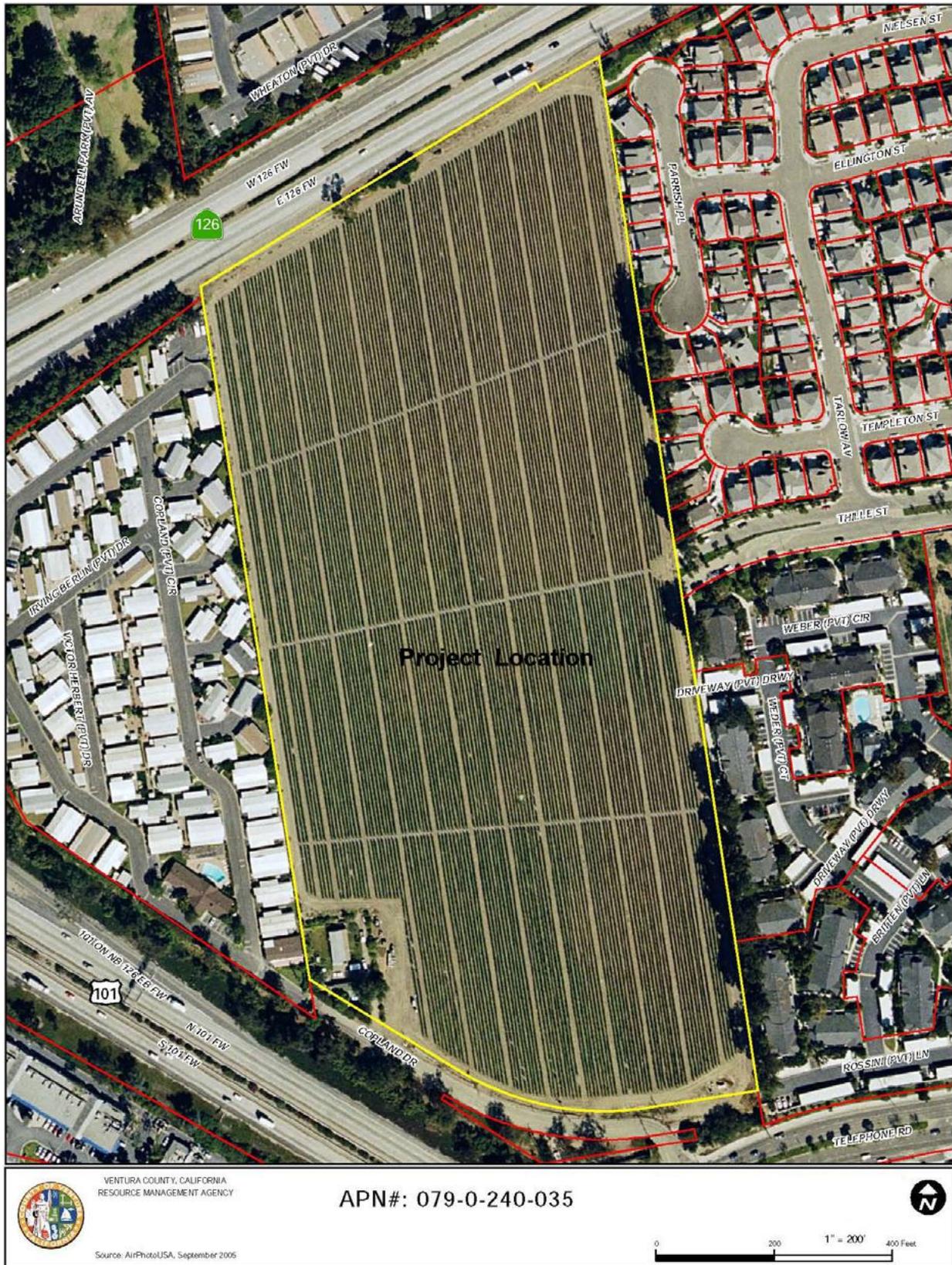


Figure 1, Location Map

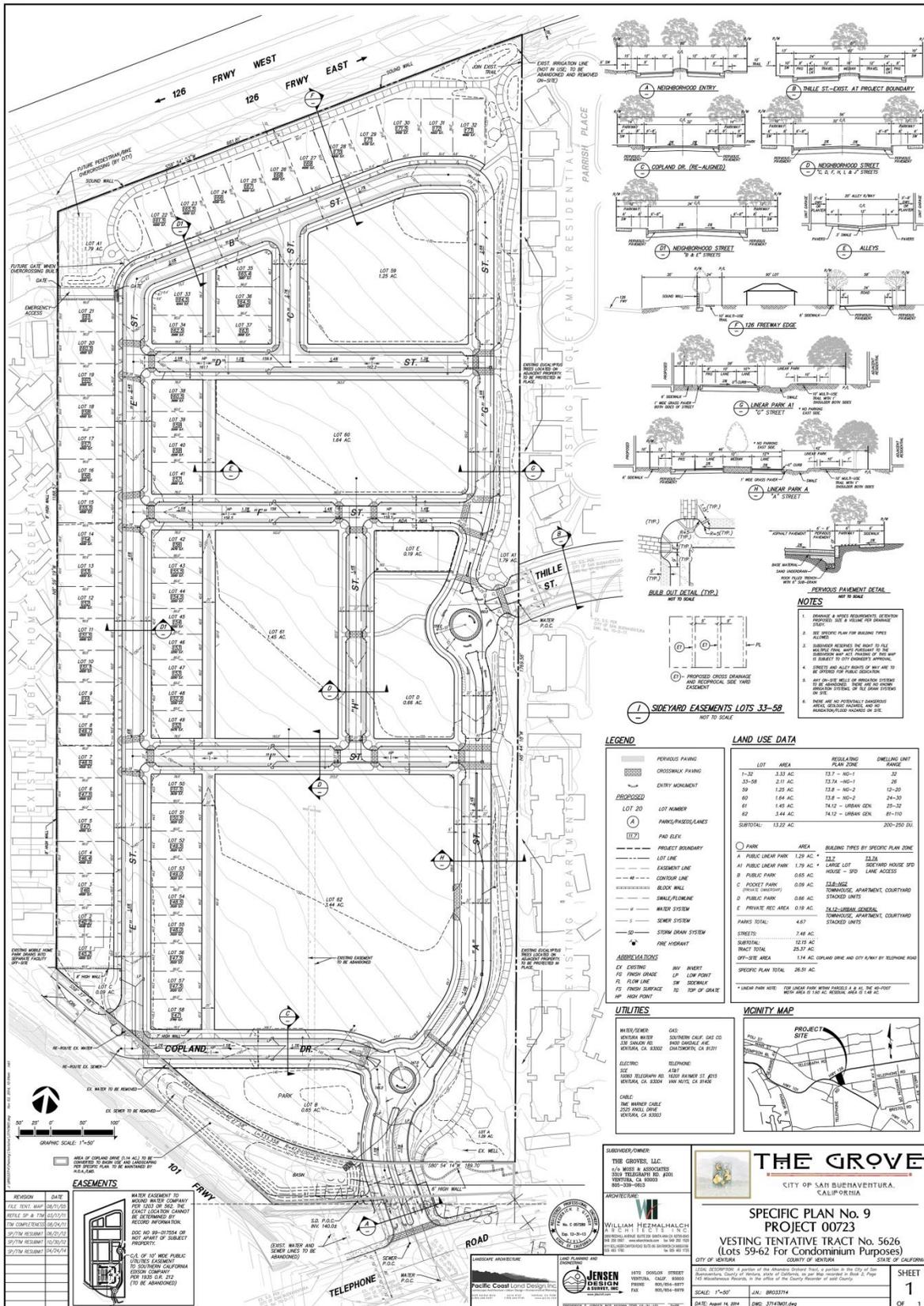


Figure 2, Vesting Tentative Tract Map

The Project will improve neighborhood connectivity by continuing the linear park system as well as vehicular connection from Thille Road to Telephone Road.

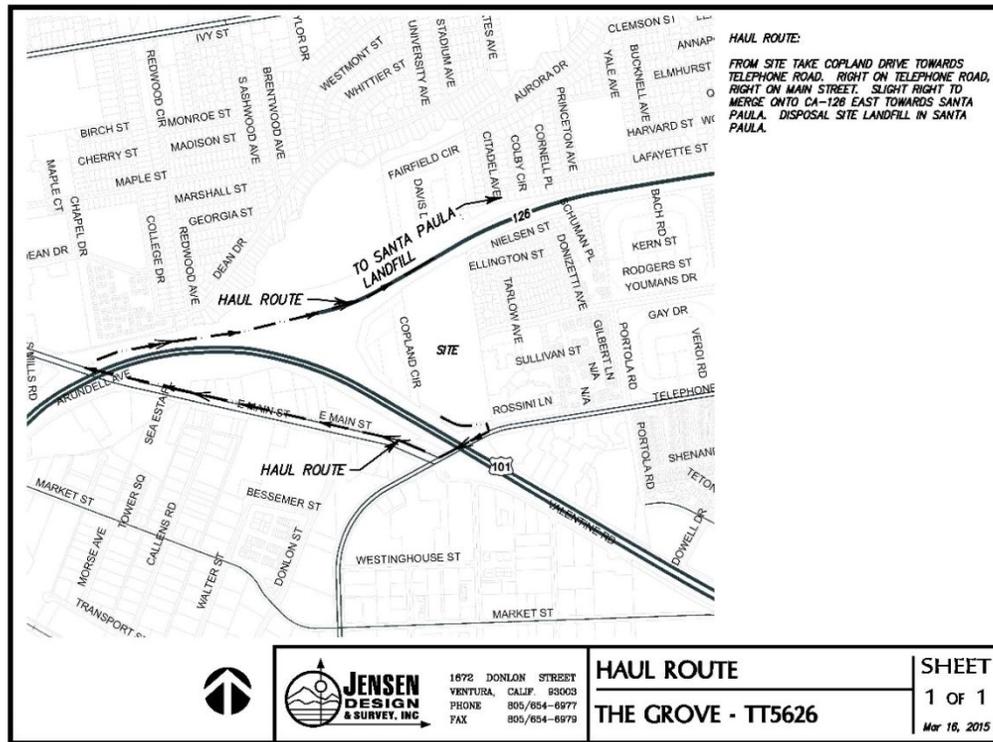
Other Project Characteristics

- a. For the physical development of the site, the following exhibit reflects the earthwork required to create the building areas, roads, and parks:



It is anticipated that on-site materials will shrink upon compaction; therefore, the gross volumes show an overage in cut to accommodate for this. The site will balance from a grading standpoint.

- b. For Site Demolition and preparation, a haul route is proposed for access to the Toland Landfill, as noted below:



Intended Uses of This EIR

At this time, the City of Ventura has identified the following actions that will need to be taken by the City, acting as lead agency for this Project, and by Responsible Agencies. The list of Responsible Agencies and project actions is preliminary, and the City anticipates that additional actions may be identified as a result of consultation facilitated by the environmental review process.

The **City of Ventura** would be responsible for the following actions:

- Pre-Zone and Amendment to the City’s Zoning Ordinance to incorporate The Grove Specific Plan
- Approval of the Tentative Tract Map
- Certification of the Final Environmental Impact Report
- File application to amend the sphere of influence and incorporate the project site into the City of Ventura
- Design Review of the proposed Project

The **Ventura County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO)** would be responsible for the following actions related to the Project:

- Approval of an amendment to the City’s Sphere of Influence to include The Grove Specific Plan site
- Approval of reorganization of Special Districts

Potential Environmental Effects

The City of Ventura has completed a preliminary review, as described in §15060 of the CEQA Guidelines, of the proposed Westside Community Plan, and determined that an EIR should be prepared for this Project. The scope of work for this EIR will involve research, analysis, and study of the following environmental topics:

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality/Health Risk Assessment
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology/Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions/Climate Change
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology/Water Quality
- Land Use
- Noise
- Population/Employment/Housing
- Public Services
- Transportation/Traffic
- Utilities/Service Systems

A brief description of the scope of analysis the City has identified for study related to each of these topics is provided as an attachment to this notice for your information.

The City of Ventura will consider the comments received in response to this Notice of Preparation in determining the scope and content of the Draft EIR the City will prepare for this Project. Any comments provided should identify the potential environmental effects you are requesting the City study and your reason for suggesting the study of these topics in the EIR. In addition, a public scoping meeting will be held on April 29, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. in the Santa Cruz Conference Room, City Hall, located at 501 Poli Street in Ventura.

Please provide your comments in writing to:

Mr. Iain Holt
Senior Planner
Community Development Department
City of Ventura, 501 Poli Street, P.O. Box 99
Ventura, CA 93002

Thank you for your participation in the environmental review of this Project.

Preliminary Scope of Study

City of Ventura The Grove Specific Plan Project Draft EIR

Aesthetics

This section will characterize the existing aesthetics environment and visual resources, including a discussion of views within the site and views from surrounding areas to the site, particularly from adjacent uses. Project construction impacts will be addressed based on changing on-site aesthetics visible from surrounding roadways and locations. This section will include a discussion of architectural and design specifications for the Project provided by the Applicant. Mitigation measures such as perimeter landscaping, screening, and setbacks may be recommended to reduce the significance of potential visual impacts and wall treatment at SR-126. Color site photographs will be provided that will show on-site and surrounding views. This section will incorporate the visual simulations prepared by the Project architect to analyze potential view impairments, if any, to adjacent uses as a result of Project implementation. The compatibility of the Project's architectural features, height, and building materials with the on-site uses and the surrounding area will be studied.

This section will also address potentially significant impacts generated by the introduction of light and glare associated with the development of the proposed Project. This analysis will include a light and glare impact discussion on neighboring sensitive uses from such things as street lights, vehicle headlights, and building lights. Consultant will review and incorporate existing City policies and guidelines regarding light and glare and dark sky for inclusion within the EIR. Consultant will recommend mitigation measures to reduce potential aesthetic and light and glare impacts to the maximum extent possible.

Agricultural Resources

The EIR will evaluate the impacts of development on active Class 1 agricultural land and agricultural resources. The removal of Class 1 Prime agricultural resources on the Project site would be considered a significant and unavoidable impact. State of California maps will be reviewed to determine how much of the site is Class 1 agricultural land or whether there are other agricultural designations on the Project site. Coordination with the Ventura County Agricultural Commission will be conducted to determine what mitigation has been previously applied to Prime farmland holdings and its corresponding effectiveness. Mitigation measures will be proposed to mitigate the loss of Class 1 designated agricultural resources. Mitigation measures evaluated may include, but are not limited to, off-site conservation easements, in-lieu mitigation fees, and agricultural mitigation land.

Air Quality

The impacts of the proposed Project on air quality will be evaluated in accordance with the Guidelines for the Preparation of Air Quality Impact Analyses prepared by the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District (VCAPCD). This section will examine the consistency of the Project with the Ventura County Air Quality Management Plan, the effects of the Project on

attainment status for regulated pollutants, and any potential impacts related to emissions from existing and planned surrounding uses. A detailed Health Risk Assessment (HRA) will also be prepared based on industry-accepted methodology recommendations of the California Air Resources Board and the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District.

Biological Resources

A Biological Resources section will be prepared utilizing existing biological documentation for the site and area. Because the site has been under agricultural production for so long, it is highly doubtful that any biological resources exist on the Project site. Special attention will be afforded to nesting birds (including raptors) in trees located on and along the perimeter of the site.

Cultural Resources

The cultural resources historical and archaeological reports shall be reviewed, analyzed, and if satisfactory, incorporated into the Draft EIR.

Geology and Soils

A review of the geotechnical report prepared by the Applicant for the Project will be undertaken. Because the site is relatively flat, there would be no concerns from a technical standpoint with regard to slopes and stability issues.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The potential for development allowed by The Grove Specific Plan to generate greenhouse gases (GHG) in excess of current GHG emissions will be analyzed in this section, along with the consistency of the Specific Plan with applicable plans and policies.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

This section will review the Phase I Preliminary Site Assessment for the Project site. This section will evaluate potential hazards, such as hazardous and toxic materials, high fire hazards, and emergency evacuation and/or emergency responses that may impact or be generated by future development.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Ventura Water will perform a peer review of the existing technical data, reference plans, and previous reports prepared by the Applicant's engineer.

The reports shall be reviewed based upon the following criteria:

- Design methodology and assumptions
- Existing and proposed land uses
- Existing and proposed improvements and mitigation measures
- Technical competency
- Adequacy of the data to complete the EIR
- Levels of significance as defined by CEQA and identification of possible impacts and mitigation

Land Use

The EIR will evaluate the appropriateness of the proposed Project plan in consideration of on-site and surrounding land uses and will analyze the relationship of the Project to all applicable planning policies and proposed annexation. These policies will be identified from the 2005 General Plan, the Zoning Code, and other City regulations.

The EIR will evaluate the proposed Specific Plan with regard to compatibility of existing and proposed land uses. The EIR will also assess impacts to existing and potential future land uses in the planning area for construction (short-term) and operational (long-term) phases. City reference documents are anticipated to include the General Plan and the Municipal Development Code. The regional planning review will include consistency with the Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG) Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide policies, Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, and the principles of the SCAG Southern California Compass Growth Visioning Program, as applicable.

Noise

The noise study prepared for the Project would be analyzed to determine increase in ambient noise levels and potential impacts to nearby sensitive residential units. The existing noise environment is characterized by vehicular noise from SR-126 and Telegraph Avenue.

Population/Employment/Housing

Analysis of the consistency of projected growth with adopted local and regional demographic projections will be provided. This section will also consider the short-term construction employment opportunities.

Public Services

The EIR will address the need for police, fire, solid waste disposal, recreation, and other public services from the City of Ventura to serve the additional development that would be allowed by The Grove Specific Plan, and the ability of the City and other agencies to meet this increased demand for services. The increased demand for school services provided by Ventura Unified School District will also be analyzed. Standards of service for police and fire departments and student generation rates provided by the school district will be used to determine impacts to

these services. The potential for solid waste generated by additional development to impact landfill capacity will also be assessed.

Transportation/Traffic

The traffic study prepared for the proposed Project will be reviewed and analyzed for adequacy in accordance with the City's Traffic Impact Study Guidelines based on the City's transportation model. Impacts to state and county facilities, including SR-126 and US Highway 101, will be assessed using the methodologies and standards of these agencies. Impacts on transit service in the area will also be addressed. The relationship of The Grove Specific Plan to current plans addressing alternate modes of transportation, including pedestrian and bicycle use, will be evaluated.

Utilities/Service Systems

Project water, sewer, and hydrology (storm drain) studies will be evaluated for adequacy and potential impacts on existing and planned sewer, water, and storm drain facilities in the area. Potential impacts to energy demand and service in the area will be evaluated.