IV.F HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

1. INTRODUCTION

This section addresses the project’s potential environmental impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials, including analysis of surrounding uses that may be hazardous to the project site. The information contained in this section is derived from the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA), dated February 24, 2006, performed by Applied Environmental Technologies, Incorporated (AET) as well as from the Fire/Vegetation Management Plan and Catastrophic Wildfire Risk Analysis, dated May 16, 2006, prepared by Scott Franklin Consulting. A copy of the Phase I ESA is provided in Appendix IV.F.1 of this EIR, and a copy of the Fire/Vegetation Management Plan and Catastrophic Wildfire Risk Analysis is provided in Appendix IV.K.2 of this EIR.

2. METHODOLOGY

The methodologies for analysis of the potential for hazards and hazardous materials to be present or created by the proposed project are described below.

a. Phase I ESA

The Phase I ESA identifies “the presence or likely presence of any hazardous substances or petroleum products on a property under conditions that indicate an existing release, a past release, or a material threat of a release of any hazardous substances or petroleum products into structures on the property or into the ground, groundwater, or surface water of the property. The term includes hazardous substances or petroleum products even under conditions in compliance with laws.1 To accomplish this task, the following evaluations were conducted:

Site Reconnaissance

A visual reconnaissance of the project site and adjacent properties was conducted, noting physical evidence of potential contamination or possible sources of contamination. In addition, interviews were conducted with persons familiar with the project site regarding present and past usage.

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1 American Society for Testing and Materials
Site History Investigation

The history of the project site was investigated regarding past land use at and near the area, specifically as it relates to the storage, production, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. The sources of information for this evaluation are listed below:

- Aerial photographs
- Munger Oil maps

Regulatory Agency Record Review

Many regulatory agencies compile information concerning sites that generate, store, use, and/or release hazardous materials. Reviewing lists published by the regulatory agencies provides access to this information. A report listing known sites that generate, store, use, and/or have released hazardous material was obtained. In addition, selected government agencies were contacted for information and records regarding environmental conditions at or near the project site. Records reviewed are listed below:

- Federal and state database review
- Local agency records review
- City directory abstract review

b. Fire/Vegetation Management Plan and Catastrophic Wildfire Risk Analysis

The objective of the Fire/Vegetation Management Plan and Catastrophic Wildfire Risk Analysis was to address vegetation management, introducing primarily native California shrubs and trees to produce a drought tolerant, fire resistive landscape. The report models wildfire under extreme weather and fuel conditions associated with western Los Angeles County. BEHAVE (the Fire Behavior and Fuel Modeling System), developed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service, was used to validate both wildfire risk as well as proposed vegetation management recommendations.

3. EXISTING CONDITIONS

a. Phase I ESA

On June 13 and July 7, 2006, a site reconnaissance was performed to observe current conditions. As illustrated in Figure IV.F-1, Project Site Plan, the project site consists of approximately 285 acres of hilly terrain. The site contains dwelling units and a horse ranch, as well as a Hollywood set for television and experimental dwelling units.
The project site is generally located in the northern part of Chatsworth at the base of the Santa Susana Mountains. The site is bound by the Santa Susana Mountains to the north and east and by the Simi Hills to the west. The project site is located north of Highway 188 along Browns Canyon Road. The site consists of the Hidden Creeks Ranch and the Mountain Meadows Ranch at 12900 and 12100 Browns Canyon Road, respectively. Elevation of the project site ranges from approximately 1,500 to 2,700 feet above mean sea level as measured from the U.S. Geological Survey 7.5-Minute Oat Mountain Quadrangle Topographic Map (USGS, 1951, revised 1969).

**Site Conditions**

**Hidden Creeks Ranch**

The Hidden Creeks Ranch located on the project site consists primarily of grazing land for cattle. Approximately 40 head of cattle currently use the ranch for grazing. A Hollywood set is placed near the southern end of the ranch. Two small cabins, a barn, and other structures are present. Storage containers, a trailer, and water tanks are also present in the dwelling area. The barn and storage containers contain tools and equipment for the movie sets and movie production. No pits, ponds, underground or above ground tanks except those to store water, stressed vegetation, or other potential environmental concerns were observed.

**Mountain Meadow Ranch**

The 12-acre Mountain Meadow Ranch boards approximately 80 horses and consists of a ranch house, stables, corals, a barn, and tack sheds. In the area of the tack shed, two small above ground tanks, both approximately 75 to 100 gallons in capacity, are present. One tank is used to store gasoline and the other to store diesel; these fuels are used by ranch vehicles. No staining was apparent in the vicinity of the tanks.

An approximate 10,000-gallon capacity water tank is present above the ranch house. The water is derived from an on-site well and provides all water for the ranch. The work areas and stables are clean and well kept. No pits, ponds, underground or above tanks except those to store water, stressed vegetation, or other potential environmental concerns were observed.

**Experimental Residential Units**

Below the two ranches, but located on the project site, are several experimental residential units that were constructed to test Styrofoam as an insulation material. The area is rural in nature and the experiment is no longer being studied at this site.
Adjacent Properties

Areas adjacent to the project site are open space and used primarily for cattle grazing. The Porter Ranch residential development is located approximately 0.5 mile southeast of the proposed project site. These residences would not be affected by any hazard from the proposed activities nor would the neighboring activities affect the project site.

Historical Information

Information regarding the history of the project site was obtained from historical aerial photographs and Munger Oil maps. The results of this research are summarized below:

Aerial Photographs

Aerial photo archives were reviewed to evaluate the history of the project site and vicinity, with particular attention to indications of the potential use, storage, or disposal of hazardous materials. Historical aerial photographs for the years 1928, 1938, 1947, 1956, 1965, 1976, 1990, 1994, and 2002 were reviewed. Based on aerial photograph review, the project site was developed with a dwelling and horse ranch sometime between 1976 and 1990. Prior to this development, the property appeared undeveloped and consisted of mountainous terrain. No environmental concerns were identified on the aerial photographs.

Munger Oil Maps

A review of the Munger Map Book, California – Alaska Oil and Gas Fields (2003) shows that the project site is not within a designated oil field. Several uncompleted abandoned wells were identified to the northeast of the project site in the Santa Susana Mountains. The site has not been impacted by oil and gas production.

Agency Information

A search of databases maintained by regulatory agencies regarding sites that generate, store, use, and/or have released hazardous materials. Information from each agency pertaining to the project site is summarized below:

Federal and State Database Review

Available federal and state agency databases were reviewed to identify government regulated properties that have known or potential recognized environmental conditions within the project site vicinity.
radii of investigation for the federal and state agency lists were selected in accordance with the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) Standards for Environmental Site Assessments. Based on a review of the database report, the site is not identified in the report, the site is not within 1 mile of a federal Superfund property, and no properties are listed on the report within 1 mile of the site.

Local Agency Records Review

No records were identified from the County or City of Los Angeles Building and Safety. Also, no records were identified from the County of Los Angeles Fire Department.

b. Fire/Vegetation Management Plan and Catastrophic Wildfire Risk Analysis

The project site is located in an area with a high incidence of wildfires. Elevated air temperatures in the summer create drying conditions that dries out vegetation to create fuel. During the fall, elevated air temperatures and dry winds in excess of 20 mph create conditions ideal for wildfires. Fire protection would be provided by the City of Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) with an existing response time to the project site of 7.6 minutes from Fire Station 28, located 2.6 miles from the proposed site. Additional information regarding local fire stations is in Section IV.K.2, Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services, of this Draft EIR.

The existing risk of wildfire to the proposed project area is from continuous grass and shrubs along the entire perimeter of the project site. The last wildfire within the project boundary occurred in 2005. The surrounding area, including all of the Oat Mountain Quadrangle, in which the proposed project site is located, has experienced numerous fires within the past 20 years, and the project is located within a designated historical wildfire corridor.

c. Emergency Response Plan

The City of Los Angeles Emergency Operations Organization coordinates among emergency service organizations and government agencies to manage the critical resources necessary in the time of emergency. The Emergency Operations Organization is made up of many operational divisions. The Public Works Division and the Fire Suppression and Rescue Division are responsible for preventing and responding to emergencies involving hazardous materials Citywide. Individual emergency response

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and evacuation plans are required by state law for businesses that use specified hazardous materials or involve the threat of a potential release of a hazardous material.4

d. **Aliso Canyon Gas Storage Field**

The Aliso Canyon Gas Storage Field (“Aliso Canyon”) site is located directly north and east of the project site beneath the slopes of Oat Mountain. The storage field is owned and operated by the Southern California Gas Company (the Gas Company). The largest of five storage fields owned by the Gas Company, the Aliso Canyon site is approximately 3,200 acres in size. The storage field, which is bounded by granite rock on three sides and groundwater on the fourth side, consists of porous sandstone that is able to store large quantities of natural gas.5

4. **REGULATORY FRAMEWORK**

a. **Federal Regulations**

Applicable federal regulations include the U.S. EPA National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP), which regulate the use, removal, and disposal of asbestos-containing material (ACM) and are implemented by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) and the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), which sets standards for safe exposure limits of chemicals to which construction workers are exposed. OSHA guidelines require that specific health and safety plans be implemented during construction for given chemical exposure risks. These guidelines are relevant to the proposed project, because OSHA regulates methane gas and lead exposure.

b. **State Regulations**

The Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources (DOGGR) enforces regulations regarding the permitting, establishment, completion, and abandonment/re-abandonment of gas and oil wells. If oil or gas wells are located on the project site, proper abandonment is required by DOGGR.

The California State Hazardous Waste Control Law (HWCL) establishes regulations for hazardous waste, and Cal-EPA, Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) administers the state hazardous waste program.

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5 Personal communication between Impact Sciences, Inc. and George Minter, Managing Principal, Greer/Daily/Minter Public Affairs Consulting, June 28, 2007.
IV.F Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Cal/OSHA regulates lead exposure during construction activities as well as airborne contaminants such as lead, asbestos, and soil gases. Employers must implement an Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP), which is a safety program to protect workers from workplace hazards, such as those involved in the demolition/renovation of existing buildings and construction of the proposed project.

The SCAQMD regulates emissions of asbestos during demolition and renovation activities through specific removal, handling, and clean-up procedures (Rule 1403, Asbestos Emissions from Renovation/Demolition Activities).

c. Local Regulation

Chapter IX, Article 1, Division 71, Section 91.7103 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code lays out the Los Angeles Methane Seepage Regulations for buildings and paved areas located in either a Methane Zone or Methane Buffer Zone.

The Los Angeles Fire Department regulates hazardous materials for the City of Los Angeles by issuing permits for hazardous materials handling and administering sections of the Los Angeles City Fire Code applicable to hazardous materials.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

a. Significance Thresholds

As discussed in the L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide, a project would normally have a significant impact on the environment if it would “involve the use, generation, disposal, transport or management of potentially hazardous or explosive substances (including, but not limited to, oil, pesticides, chemicals or radiation) in sufficient quantities to cause a potential hazard, or if the project would require a new or revised risk management plan, emergency response or emergency evacuation plan.”

Risk of Upset/Emergency Preparedness

The determination of significance for impacts associated with risk of upset and emergency preparedness shall be made on a case-by-case basis, considering the following factors:

HAZ-1 The regulatory framework;

HAZ-2 The probable frequency and severity of consequences to people or property as a result of a potential accidental release or explosion of a hazardous substance;

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6 Ibid., p. F.1-2.
HAZ-3 The degree to which the project may require a new, or interfere with an existing, emergency response or evacuation plan and the severity of the consequences; and

HAZ-4 The degree to which project design will reduce the frequency or severity of a potential accidental release or explosion of a hazardous substance.

**Human Health Hazards**

Impacts would also be considered significant to human health if the project would create a health hazard by introducing a hazard or disturbing, removing or disposing of a hazard found on site or locate people adjacent to a health hazard.\(^7\) The determination of significance of hazardous material impacts on human health is decided on a case-by-case basis and considers the following factors:

HAZ-5 The regulatory framework for the health hazard;

HAZ-6 The probable frequency and severity of consequences to people from exposure to the health hazard; and

HAZ-7 The degree to which project design would reduce the frequency of exposure or severity of consequences of exposure to the health hazard.

Based on these factors, the project would have a significant impact if it would expose people or structures to substantial research resulting from the release of a hazardous material, or from exposure to a health hazard, in excess of regulatory standards.

**b. Project Impacts**

**Risk of Upset/Emergency Preparedness**

**HAZ-1** The regulatory framework.

Federal regulations for hazardous materials include the NESHAP, which regulates the use, removal, and disposal of ACM and are implemented by SCAQMD and OSHA. State regulatory agencies include DOGGR, Cal-EPA, DTSC, Cal/OSHA, and the SCAQMD. DOGGR enforces regulations regarding the permitting, establishment, completion, and abandonment/re-abandonment of gas and oil wells. DTSC administers the state hazardous waste program established by HWCL. SCAQMD regulates emissions of asbestos during demolition and renovation activities through specific removal, handling, and clean-up procedures. Local regulations include the Los Angeles Methane Seepage Regulations for buildings and

\(^{7}\) Ibid., pp. F.2-2–F.2-3.
paved areas located in either a Methane Zone or Methane Buffer Zone. The LAFD issues permits for hazardous materials handling and administers sections of the Los Angeles City Fire Code applicable to hazardous materials. Compliance with the regulatory framework in place for the project would avoid the implementation of the project resulting in any potentially impacts to hazards; therefore, the risk of upset associated with the project would be less than significant.

**HAZ-2** The probable frequency and severity of consequences to people or property as a result of a potential accidental release or explosion of a hazardous substance.

According to the conclusions of the Phase I ESA prepared for the project site, the site has not been affected by oil and gas production and, therefore, the likely presence of contamination within the soil is low. Although the project site is adjacent to the Aliso Canyon Gas Storage Field described above, the storage field would not pose a hazard to residents of the proposed project. Operation of the field is subject to the safety regulations of the California Public Utilities (PUC) Commission and the facility is monitored by on-site Gas Company personnel. No project-related improvements would interfere with usage or operation of the gas field.

Additionally, there is no evidence of historic agricultural activities on site such that chemical pesticides and herbicides would be a concern. As such, earthmoving, grading, and construction activities would not disturb or affect contaminated soil and would not pose a threat to construction workers or surrounding land uses. Furthermore, methane gas is not a concern because the site is not located within a City Methane Zone or near a petroleum facility. Therefore, construction impacts to hazards and hazardous materials are less than significant.

The Phase I ESA did not identify any hazards on the project site that would have the potential to result in harm to people, the environment, or property as a result of a potential accidental release or explosion. No known hazardous substances, ACM, and/or lead-based paint were identified on the project site. The project site was not identified as a contaminated site in the records search. The project site is not within 1 mile of a federal Superfund property, is not impacted by oil and gas production, and is not located within 1 mile of a site listed in the EDR report. Additionally, local agency records review did not indicate any hazards, and no environmental concerns were identified on historical aerial photographs. During a site visit to observe current conditions, no conditions were observed that would be expected to impact the project site or surrounding land uses with respect to hazards and/or hazardous materials.

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According to the site conditions documented in the Phase I ESA, no structures containing asbestos are located on site and the potential for soil contamination is low. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project is not expected to result in potential accidental release or explosions on the project site as a result of the presence of hazardous substances and impacts would be less than significant.

During project operation, typical household chemicals like cleaning solvents would be used in the project residences. However, these products do not pose a substantial risk to people or property and are not likely to result in explosion or cause harm to humans or the environment. Operational impacts for hazards and the use of hazardous substances by the project site would not have the potential to result in significant impacts associated with accidental release or explosion of hazardous substances.

**HAZ-3** The degree to which the project may require a new, or interfere with an existing, emergency response or evacuation plan and the severity of the consequences; and

**HAZ-4** The degree to which project design will reduce the frequency or severity of a potential accidental release or explosion of a hazardous substance.

The proposed project site is located within a historical wildfire corridor and immediately adjacent to the City of Los Angeles High Hazard Fire Zone, which denotes areas within the City subject to high fire danger. Elevated temperatures and winds in excess of 20 miles per hour create drying conditions for the coastal live oak woodland vegetation and create a fire hazard for the project site, for people located on the project site, and for buildings and structures located on the site.

As part of the proposed project, Mason Avenue would be extended to become the primary access road into the project site. Browns Canyon Road would then become used primarily as a secondary emergency access road for the project and surrounding uses. The extension of Mason Avenue would provide an improved roadway constructed to comply with LADOT’s current street standards, and would shorten the travel route for emergency access vehicles. The additional access route would therefore increase response times for emergency vehicles and would also relieve traffic in the event of an evacuation of the project site. Additionally, improvements proposed for Browns Canyon Road, as listed in Table II-2, included within Section II, Project Description, would further enhance the existing emergency access to the project site and the uses surrounding the project site. Therefore, through the proposed improvements to existing emergency access to the Browns Canyon area, implementation of the proposed project would result in less than significant impacts with respect to project design and impacts upon the frequency and/or severity of potential accidental release and/or explosion of a hazardous substance.

Currently no fire hydrants exist on site; however, hydrants capable of releasing 2,000 gallons per minute flowing simultaneously, as required by the LAFD Fire Code, would be constructed on the project site. Additionally, as discussed in Section IV.K.2, Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services, through
the incorporation of mitigation measures MM-FIRE-1 through MM-FIRE-14, identified in the Fire/Vegetation Management Plan and Catastrophic Wildfire Risk Analysis, features would be included in the project design to prevent catastrophic wildfires, enhance emergency access and response for the project site, and reduce potential health and safety hazards for project residents and structures. Therefore, the impact of the proposed project on emergency response and evacuation plans would be potentially significant. However, with the implementation of mitigation, impacts could be reduced to a less than significant level.

**Human Health Hazards**

**HAZ-5** The regulatory framework for the health hazard.

As discussed above, federal regulations for hazardous materials include the NESHAP, which regulates the use, removal, and disposal of ACM and are implemented by SCAQMD and OSHA. State regulatory agencies include DOGGR, DTSC, Cal/OSHA, and the SCAQMD. DOGGR enforces regulations regarding the permitting, establishment, completion, and abandonment/re-abandonment of gas and oil wells. DTSC administers the state hazardous waste program established by HWCL. SCAQMD regulates emissions of asbestos during demolition and renovation activities through specific removal, handling and clean-up procedures. Local regulations include the Los Angeles Methane Seepage Regulations for buildings and paved areas located in either a Methane Zone or Methane Buffer Zone. The LAFD issues permits for hazardous materials handling and administers sections of the Los Angeles City Fire Code applicable to hazardous materials. The extensive regulatory framework would reduce impacts to hazards and its risk of upset would be less than significant.

**HAZ-6** The probable frequency and severity of consequences to people from exposure to the health hazard.

The Phase I ESA did not identify any potential health hazards to humans, the environment, or the project site. The project site is not identified as a contaminated site according to a records search, is not within 1 mile of a federal Superfund property, is not impacted by oil and gas production, and is not located within 1 mile of a site listed on the EDR report. Additionally, review of local agency records did not indicate any hazards and no environmental concerns were identified on historical aerial photographs. During the site visit, no conditions were observed that would be expected to expose the project site or residents of the site to health hazards.

During operation of the proposed project, typical household chemicals like cleaning solvents and landscaping materials would be used. However, the presence and use of these chemicals would not pose as a substantial health hazard to people or property. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project
would not expose people to health hazards during project construction or operations. Impacts would be less than significant.

**HAZ-7** The degree to which project design would reduce the frequency of exposure or severity of consequences of exposure to the health hazard.

As discussed above, as part of the proposed project, the existing Mason Avenue would be extended to become the primary access road into the project site. Browns Canyon Road would then become used primarily as a secondary emergency access road for the project and surrounding uses. The extension of Mason Avenue would provide an improved roadway constructed to comply with LADOT’s current street standards, and would shorten the travel route for emergency access vehicles. The additional access route would therefore increase response times for emergency vehicles and would also relieve traffic in the event of an evacuation of the project site. Additionally, improvements proposed for Browns Canyon Road would further enhance the existing emergency access to the project site and the uses surrounding the project site. Therefore, through the proposed improvements to existing emergency access to the Browns Canyon area, implementation of the proposed project would result in less than significant impacts related to the frequency of exposure or severity of consequences of exposure to health hazards.

c. **Cumulative Impacts**

For the proposed project, the hazardous impacts associated with a proposed project occur on a project-by-project basis, rather than in a cumulative nature. According to the Phase I ESA prepared for the project site, the likely presence of hazards and/or hazardous materials on the project site was determined to be low. Additionally, the records search conducted as part of the Phase I ESA identified that properties surrounding the project site are not listed in local, state, or federal databases of know and potential environmentally impact properties. Therefore, the potential for surrounding land uses and projects to affect the project site has been determined to be low. Additionally, because project implementation would comply with regulatory controls to manage existing and future project-specific hazards, any potential cumulative impacts associated with the project would be decreased, as the harmful substances and subsequent exposure to a health hazard would be removed from the project site. Further, with the proposed improvements along Browns Canyon Road, and with implementation of mitigation measures **MM-FIRE-1** through **MM-FIRE-14**, as identified in **Section IV.K.2**, emergency access and emergency response within the Browns Canyon area and for the project site would be enhanced. Therefore, potentially significant project-specific as well as cumulative impacts associated with implementation of the project can be reduced to be less than significant levels with the implementation of mitigation identified in **Section IV.K.2**.
d. Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures MM-FIRE-1 through MM-FIRE-14 as included in Section IV.K.2, Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services, would reduce potentially significant emergency access and emergency response hazards to a less than significant level. These measures include: incorporating project design features designed to minimize fire risk and danger; designating accessible access and evacuation routes; coordination with LAFD regarding fire hydrant and fire flow requirements; annual reporting to the City of Los Angeles Fire Marshall regarding compliance with fuel management zone requirements; maintaining specific vegetation on the site and avoiding the use of specific fire-prone species; and incorporating adequate vegetation clearance and plant spacing into the project design.

e. Adverse Effects

No adverse effects associated with hazards or hazardous materials are anticipated as the result of the development of the proposed project.