4.15 THEORETICAL BUILDOUT

The theoretical buildout scenario is included in the EIR to provide the reader with the ability to understand the scenario of full, but theoretical development of the Draft General Plan to its maximum permissible density and intensity.[1] This scenario is not the proposed buildout of the Draft General Plan, but rather a theoretical, worst-case scenario addressing not only the City but its entire planning area. The theoretical buildout scenario demonstrates residential and non-residential development levels that could theoretically be achieved by the Draft General Plan assuming that all land in the planning area were built out to the maximum density specified in the Draft General Plan.

Unlike a forecast, the theoretical buildout scenario does not have a time horizon, such as 2030, nor does it include transportation, demographic, existing land use, or economic assumptions typically used by a forecasted model to provide more realistic land use planning data. Therefore, due to regulatory constraints, physical constraints, and foreseeable market conditions, realization of this scenario is highly unlikely. Nevertheless, this program EIR includes an analysis of this scenario because the General Plan land use categories do provide the theoretical capacity for residential units and non-residential building square feet to allow the buildout estimates presented in Table 4.15-1.

The theoretical buildout scenario assumes for residential development that existing land uses, located on planned, designated multifamily land, would redevelop or infill to the maximum point of their residential density range. For non-residential (commercial and industrial) uses, the analysis assumes that all existing land uses, located on designated non-residential land, would redevelop or infill at the maximum allowed FAR. Theoretical buildout assumes that existing development which is not at the maximum permitted density or intensity would be replaced or filled in with new development to reach the full development potential of all land in the planning area, pursuant to the maximum density and/or intensity specified in the Land Use Element of the Draft General Plan.

Such development would represent a substantial change in the level of residential and non-residential development described as the baseline. Under the theoretical buildout scenario, when compared to existing conditions, there would be a 105% increase in total housing units, a 658% increase in non-residential (commercial, industrial and public) building square feet, and a 145% increase in population. Although the theoretical buildout scenario does not correlate to a time horizon, it would represent substantially more development than the Draft General Plan in 2030. When comparing the two scenarios, there could be a 39% increase in housing units, a 50% increase in non-residential building square feet, and a 39% increase in population within the planning area.

Given the generalized, highly theoretical nature of this buildout analysis, the analysis does not account for variations due to the implementation of additional regulations or site-specific conditions that could affect attainment of density. For example, parking requirements, slope and other land suitability characteristics, and implementation of environmental regulations may make attainment of maximum densities and/or intensities infeasible, and site-specific easements may restrict development of certain properties. The analysis does not account for density bonus regulations that could allow additional units beyond those identified by maximum densities. The analysis assumes that existing mobile homes and single-family units located on designated multifamily land would be developed as multifamily units. The theoretical scenario also assumes the full utilization of allowable floor area ratio for land that is designated for retail, office, and industrial uses. Another variable is that decision-makers have the authority to approve, deny, or modify discretionary projects based on numerous site-specific factors.

[1] This section was provided to be responsive to a 2003 court decision regarding the El Dorado County General Plan which required that El Dorado County address theoretical build–out.

Table 4.15-1
Comparison between the Theoretical Buildout Scenario and the Draft General Plan for the Planning Area

	Existing	Draft General Plan (2030)	Change from Existing Conditions		Theoretical Buildout	Change from Existing Conditions		Change from Draft General Plan (2030)	
	2006	2030	Numeric	Percent		Numeric	Percent	Numeric	Percent
Dwelling Units	47,795	70,410	22,615	47%	98,000	50,205	105%	27,590	39%
Non-Residential Square Feet (1,000s)	11,781	59,669	47,888	407%	89,304	77,523	658%	29,635	50%
Population	95,384	167,850	72,466	76%	233,634	138,250	145%	65,784	39%

Notes:

[1] The theoretical buildout scenario was prepared solely for the purposes of the General Plan Environmental Impact Report and should not be used for any other long range planning purpose.

[2] Buildout scenario refers to the theoretical maximum buildout of all lands within the planning area in accordance with assigned land use designations.

[3] Theoretical buildout scenario assumes full development of all residentially designated land and mixed-use designated land in the planning area at the maximum allowable General Plan density (units per acre).

[4] The smaller increase in population relative to housing units is due to greater relative capacity for multiple-family dwelling units within the planning area, particularly in designated mixed-use areas, as multiple-family dwelling units feature smaller household sizes than single-family residential units.

[5] Theoretical buildout scenario for non-residential square feet assumes the full utilization of the allowable floor area ratio (FAR) for land that is designated for retail, office, and industrial uses within the Draft General Plan.

[6] Although theoretically possible based only on the allowable maximum density or floor area ratio, there could be constraints in place that would limit or reduce the feasibility of additional residential units or non-residential square footage, including physical constraints, regulatory constraints, or market conditions.

4.15.1 AESTHETICS

For the Draft General Plan, impacts related to adverse effects on scenic vistas, degradation of existing visual character, and creation of new sources of light or glare that would adversely affect nighttime views are less than significant. There are no designated scenic highways in the planning area. The Draft General Plan would result in new urban development that would substantially alter views and visual character, and add new sources of light and glare within the planning area. However, Draft General Plan policies and programs that would apply to new development are designed to reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Under the theoretical buildout scenario, substantially more development could occur within the planning area compared to the proposed project. This additional development would create additional new sources of light and glare, and further alter views and visual character. However, the same Draft General Plan policies and programs would apply to the additional increment of development that would occur under the theoretical buildout scenario, and these impacts would be **less than significant**.

4.15.2 AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

For the Draft General Plan, impacts related to loss of farmland, conflicts with existing agricultural zoning or Williamson Act contracts, or conversion of agricultural land would be significant. The Draft General Plan would also convert farmland to nonagricultural uses. Although a number of Draft General Plan policies and programs are

intended to conserve agricultural lands by supporting the use of tools such as conservation easements, farmland could potentially be converted to non-agricultural uses. Thus, with implementation of the Draft General Plan, impacts on agricultural resources would be significant and unavoidable.

Under the theoretical buildout scenario, the same development footprint would be affected, resulting in **significant and unavoidable** agricultural resource impacts.

4.15.3 AIR QUALITY

The Draft General Plan would include the construction and operation of new land uses, and would emit air pollutants in excess of SCAQMD thresholds for criteria air pollutants and precursors (both short term and long term emissions) for which the region is in non-attainment, conflicting with SCAQMD air quality management efforts. These would be significant and unavoidable impacts. Implementation of the Draft General Plan would potentially expose sensitive receptors to criteria air pollutants, toxic air contaminants, and carbon monoxide. These impacts would also be significant and unavoidable. Potential for exposure to odors would be a less-than-significant impact.

Under the theoretical buildout scenario, substantially more residential units and non-residential square feet would be built than under the proposed general plan. This would result in additional air pollutant and precursor emissions and **significant and unavoidable** air quality impacts.

4.15.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

For the Draft General Plan, impacts related to biological resources and conflicts with local policies, ordinances, and conservation plans to protect special-status plant and animal species and their habitats are less than significant. The Draft General Plan could result in loss or degradation of existing populations or suitable habitat of special-status plant and wildlife species, impacts to riparian habitat or sensitive natural communities, impacts to federally-protected wetlands, impacts to movement of wildlife, conflict with local policies and ordinances, or conflict with the West Riverside County Multi-species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) or Stephens' Kangaroo Rat Habitat Conservation Plan (SKR HCP). However, compliance with the California Endangered Species Act (CESA), CEQA, MSHCP, and SKR HCP (as applicable), as well as Draft General Plan policies and programs that would mitigate for potential direct and indirect impacts on special-status plant species would avoid potential loss within the planning area and reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Under the theoretical buildout scenario, the same development footprint would be affected, resulting in **less-than-significant** biological resources impacts.

4.15.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

For the Draft General Plan, all cultural resource impacts would be less than significant. Draft General Plan programs would ensure that potential historic features are assessed for their significance and consider relocation, architecturally-compatible rehabilitation, or adaptive reuse prior to development applications which propose demolition of potentially historic structures. Although development associated with implementation of the Draft General Plan's policies, programs, and land use plan could affect buried archaeological resources or human remains, the plan includes policies and programs which would require inventorying and evaluation of any resources discovered.

Under the theoretical development scenario, the same development footprint would be affected, resulting in similar **less-than-significant** impacts.

Because the theoretical buildout scenario would replace existing structures and uses with development at the maximum end of the permitted range, effects on historic features and structures would represent a **new significant**

impact under the theoretical buildout scenario that would not occur if the Draft General Plan is implemented as expected through 2030.

4.15.6 GEOLOGY/SOILS

Implementation of the Draft General Plan would provide for construction of new uses in areas potentially subject to fault rupture, seismic ground shaking, soil liquefaction and ground failure, and earthquake induced landslides. New land uses would also potentially be exposed to hazards related to erosion, expansive and collapsible soils, or soils not suitable for septic systems. However, implementation of Draft General Plan policies and programs would include enforcement of regulations, programs, and building code requirements, reducing these impacts to a less-than-significant level. Draft General Plan policies and programs would require protection and conservation of mineral resources, reducing this impact to a less-than-significant level. Implementation of the Draft General Plan would also require investigation and evaluation of paleontological resources discovered during construction activities by a qualified paleontologist, reducing this impact to a less-than-significant level. All geology, soils, mineral, and paleontological resources impacts of implementing the Draft General Plan would be less than significant.

Under the theoretical buildout scenario, the same development footprint would be affected, and the same policies and programs would be implemented, resulting in a **less-than-significant** impact.

4.15.7 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Implementation of Draft General Plan would provide for land use changes resulting in population and employment growth in the planning area, and would result in significant and unavoidable construction and operational GHG emission impacts. Impacts related to climate change effects in the planning area would be potentially significant and unavoidable.

Under the theoretical buildout scenario, a substantially greater increment of new development would occur, increasing both construction and operational emissions of GHGs. These impacts would be **significant and unavoidable**.

Impacts related to climate change effects in the planning area would be **significant and unavoidable** based on a similar development footprint.

4.15.8 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Implementation of the Draft General Plan would increase the routine use, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials, including the potential for hazardous materials handling near schools and development on Cortese-listed site. However, the Draft General Plan requires compliance with existing regulations and implementation of hazardous materials use policies and programs, resulting in less-than-significant impacts. Construction of new residential, commercial, and industrial land uses enabled by the Draft General Plan would increase the number of people in the vicinity of the Hemet-Ryan Airport. However, Draft General Plan policies and programs require review of future development for compatibility with airport safety hazards, resulting in a less-than-significant impact. The Draft General Plan requires conformance with countywide emergency response programs and cooperation with emergency service providers, resulting in a less-than-significant impact related to conflict with an adopted emergency response plan. Although implementation of Draft General Plan land uses would increase the number of people and structures in wildfire hazard zones, the programs and policies requiring adequate access, fire prevention and brush clearing, and fees for fire service, result in a less-than-significant impact.

Under the theoretical buildout scenario, impacts related to use, transportation, and disposal of hazardous materials, including the potential for handling of hazardous materials near schools and development on Cortese-

listed sites, would be increased, while other impacts would be similar. The same Draft General Plan policies, programs, and regulations as would be implemented, reducing those impacts to a **less-than-significant** level.

4.15.9 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Implementation of the Draft General Plan would result in less-than-significant water quality impacts, as Draft General Plan policies and programs enforce regulations protecting water quality. Impacts on stormwater drainage patterns would also be less than significant, as the Draft General Plan includes a requirement that any increased stormwater runoff be retained on site. Draft General Plan groundwater recharge policies and programs would require projects to minimize runoff and retain water on site for recharge, resulting in a less-than-significant impact. Flood hazards, including hazards related to inundation from seiche or dam failure, would be less than significant.

Although the theoretical buildout scenario would provide for substantially more residential units and non-residential square feet, the development footprint would be the same. With implementation of Draft General Plan policies and programs, hydrology and water quality impacts would be **less than significant**.

4.15.10 LAND USE AND PLANNING

For the Draft General Plan, impacts related to division of existing communities, displacement of people or housing, and conflicts with other plans would be less than significant.

The theoretical buildout scenario assumes that existing housing and structures which are at a lower density or intensity than would be permitted under the Draft General Plan would be replaced with new development at the maximum intensity permitted. The resulting displacement of people or housing would be a **new significant impact**.

Other land use and planning impacts would be **less than significant**.

4.15.11 NOISE

The Draft General Plan would result in less-than-significant impacts related to short-term construction noise, exposure of sensitive receptors to stationary and area sources of noise, and aircraft noise from Hemet-Ryan Airport. Impacts related to construction-induced vibration would be significant, but reduced to a less-than-significant level with mitigation. Noise levels associated with traffic on roadways in the planning area would be significant and unavoidable.

Under the theoretical buildout scenario, substantially more new residential units and non-residential development would be constructed. Construction-induced vibration impacts, and impacts related to short-term construction noise, exposure of sensitive receptors to stationary and area sources of noise, and exposure to airport noise would be **less than significant** (although construction vibration impacts would be less than significant only after implementation of Mitigation Measure 4.11-5 in Section 4.11, "Noise", of this EIR).

Impacts associated with traffic on roadways in the planning area would increase because of the greater generation of new vehicle trips through the planning area with additional development anticipated under the theoretical buildout scenario. The theoretical buildout scenario would also result in a **significant and unavoidable** traffic noise impact.

4.15.12 PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The Draft General Plan would result in less-than-significant impacts related to provision of public safety, fire, park, and library facilities.

For the theoretical buildout scenario, Draft General Plan policies and programs would require that public facilities and services be improved or that fees be paid to support improvements, prior to construction of new residential or non-residential uses. Therefore, the same mechanism that would result in less-than-significant public services impacts under the Draft General Plan would result in **less-than-significant** public services impacts for the theoretical buildout scenario.

4.15.13 TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION

Peak hour intersection level of service (LOS) impacts would be less than significant for the Draft General Plan, with two exceptions. The intersections of Sanderson Avenue with Devonshire Avenue and Florida Avenue would not meet minimum LOS standards, representing significant and unavoidable impacts. Other transportation impacts, including effects on air traffic patterns, design hazards, emergency access, non-motorized transportation and transit, and rail hazards would be less than significant.

Under the theoretical buildout scenario, substantially more residences and non-residential uses would be constructed, and significant LOS impacts would likely occur at additional intersections. It is likely that some of these additional impacts could be addressed through additional roadway improvements required as conditions of future projects or implemented through fee mechanisms. However, this additional capacity is not envisioned as part of the project, and the additional traffic that would be generated by the increased development under the theoretical buildout scenario would likely result in **new significant and unavoidable** intersection LOS impacts.

Because the theoretical buildout scenario would include the same Draft General Plan policies and programs, impacts related to air traffic patterns, design hazards, emergency access, non-motorized transportation and transit, and rail hazards would all be **less than significant**.

4.15.14 UTILITIES AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The Draft General Plan would result in less-than-significant impacts related to wastewater conveyance and treatment, water facilities, stormwater drainage facilities, landfill capacity, demand for other utilities, and energy consumption. However, the Draft General Plan would result in significant and unavoidable impacts related to water supply because of uncertainty regarding the quantities of water that will continue to be delivered from the State Water Project and the Colorado Aqueduct, as well as uncertainties about drawdown in the Hemet-San Jacinto Groundwater Basin.

The theoretical buildout scenario would include implementation of the same Draft General Plan policies and programs, so impacts related to wastewater conveyance and treatment, water facilities, stormwater drainage facilities, landfill capacity, and demand for other utilities would be **less than significant**. Because of the substantially greater population and the much larger square footage of non-commercial uses, energy consumption impacts would be **significant** under the theoretical buildout scenario.

Although the increment of growth would be greater under the theoretical buildout scenario, individual projects implementing the Draft General Plan would not be permitted to move forward in the absence of adequate utility service, including construction of needed improvements. Additional population and employment growth beyond the expected buildout of the plan would result in greater water supply impacts, both because of the uncertainty regarding water deliveries and uncertainty surrounding the potential for groundwater drawdown. Furthermore, the additional increment of growth is greater than the growth assumed in the Urban Water Management Plans prepared by the various service providers in the planning area. Therefore, the theoretical buildout scenario would also result in a **significant and unavoidable** impact related to water supply.