

4.18 WILDFIRE

4.18.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to describe the potential wildfire hazards impacts that may result from the implementation of the Beaumont Summit Station Specific Plan (Project) within the City of Beaumont (City) by identifying existing wildfire hazard conditions of the Project site and surrounding area; considering applicable federal, state, regional, and local goals and policies; identifying and analyzing environmental impacts; and recommending measures to minimize or avoid potential adverse impacts resultant of Project implementation.

Information presented in this wildfire hazards impact analysis is derived largely from the City of Beaumont Annex – Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP)¹, County of Riverside Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJLHMP) (2018)², and City of Beaumont General Plan (Beaumont GP) – Safety Element.³ Other information in this section, such as regulatory framework, is derived from the various planning documents including the City of Beaumont General Plan (Beaumont GP), City of Beaumont Municipal Code (Beaumont MC), and pertinent State of California Building Codes (CBC).

4.18.2 Environmental Setting

In general, wildfires pose the greatest risk in the open space and undeveloped portions of the City. The severity of potential wildfires is influenced by four factors: vegetation, climate, slope, and how the fire was started. In the southern and western portions of the City, the vegetation is comprised of native chamise chaparral, California scrub oak, white sage, and manzanita. Sparse vegetation of canyon and live oak can also be found. The grasslands, shrubs, and chaparral in both the flat and hilly areas are considered to be highly flammable. However, since much of the Beaumont area consists of open space and flat areas containing sparse vegetation or included areas used for agriculture, the potential for wildfires is significantly reduced.⁴

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) has mapped areas of significant fire hazards in the state through its Fire and Resources Assessment Program (FRAP). These maps place areas of the state into different Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZs) based on a hazard scoring system using subjective criteria for fuels, fire history, terrain influences, housing density, and occurrence of severe fire weather where urban conflagration could result in catastrophic losses. As part of this mapping system, land where CAL FIRE is responsible for wildland fire protection and generally located in unincorporated areas is classified as a State Responsibility Area (SRA). Where local fire protection agencies, such as the Riverside County Fire Department (RCFD), are responsible for wildfire protection, the land is classified as a Local Responsibility Area (LRA). In addition to establishing local or state responsibility for wildfire

¹ City of Beaumont. 2012. Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. Available at <http://beaumontca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/29599/Beaumont-LHMP-?bId=1>.

² County of Riverside. Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. (2018). Available at https://www.rivcoemd.org/Portals/0/FINAL%20PUBLIC%20VERSION%20Riv_Co_%202018%20Multi%20Jurisdictional%20Local%20Hazard%20Mitigation%20Plan.pdf. (Accessed August 2021).

³ City of Beaumont, General Plan. (2020). Chapter 9, Safety, pg. 223. Retrieved from: https://www.beaumontca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/36923/Beaumont-GPU_Final-rev-22521.

⁴ Ibid.

protection in a specific area, CAL FIRE designates areas as very high fire hazard severity zones FHSZs (VHFHSZ), High (HFHSZ), and Moderate (MFHSZ). According to the State of California Fire Hazard Severity Zone viewer, the entire Project site is designated as LRA.⁵ It should be noted that RCFD and CAL FIRE have contracted with the City for fire protection services since 1978⁶; and therefore, both currently provide services to the Project site.

Wildfire Characteristics

According to the National Park Service (NPS), a wildfire, or wildland fire, is described as a non-structure fire that occurs in vegetation such as trees, grasses, and shrubs, and is not a prescribed fire.⁷ Wildfires have differing causes including lightning strikes, wind-blown embers, but are most commonly caused by human activities. Wildfires may originate in undeveloped areas and spread to developed or urban areas where the landscape and structures are not designed and maintained to be ignition or fire resistant. The International Association of Fire Chiefs' Ready, Set, Go! website defines a Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) as areas where homes are built near or among lands prone to wildland fire.⁸ The potential for wildland fires represents a hazard where development is adjacent to open space or in proximity to wildland fuels or FHSZ. Fires that occur in WUI areas may affect natural resources as well as life and property.

The potential for wildfires to affect an area are largely dependent on vegetation patterns within a given area and the density of the vegetative growth. The vegetation is typically defined as having low, moderate, or high fuel loads. Light fuels typically consist of flammable grasses and annual herbs; medium fuels are brush and shrubs less than six feet in height; and heavy fuels are heavier brush and timber over six feet high. Topography also influences fire risk by affecting fire spread rates. Steep terrain can result in faster fire spread upslope and terrain that create funneling effects, such as canyons, and these landscapes can result in especially intense fire behavior. Conversely, flat terrain or those with slight elevation changes tend to have little effect on fire spread. In these instances, the fire spread is largely driven by vegetation and weather conditions such as humidity and wind.⁹

4.18.3 Regulatory Setting

Federal

Federal Emergency Management Act (FEMA)

In March 2003, FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. FEMA's continuing mission is to lead the effort to prepare the nation for all hazards and effectively manage federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates proactive mitigation activities, trains first responders, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program and the U.S. Fire Administration.

⁵ Calfire. <https://egis.fire.ca.gov/FHSZ/>

⁶ City of Beaumont. Fire Services. Available at <http://beaumontca.gov/Index.aspx?NID=18>, accessed June 2021.

⁷ National Park Service (2018). Types of Wildland Fire. <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/fire/types-of-wildland-fire.htm>. Accessed June 2021.

⁸ International Association of Fire Chiefs (2019). Wildland Urban Interface. https://www.wildlandfirersg.org/s/iafc2/what-is-the-wildland-urban-interface-MCVXRWBHSZFCQ7IV6PER5CF6UVQ?language=en_US. Accessed June 2021.

⁹ City of Beaumont. 2012. City of Beaumont Annex – Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. Available at <http://beaumontca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/29599>, accessed June 2021.

Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000

This Act (42 United States Code [USC] §§ 5121) was signed into law to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief Act of 1988 (42 USC §§ 5121-5207). Among other things, this legislation reinforces the importance of pre-disaster infrastructure mitigation planning to reduce disaster losses nationwide and is aimed primarily at the control and streamlining of the administration of federal disaster relief and programs to promote mitigation activities. Some of the major provisions of this Act include:

- i. Funding pre-disaster mitigation activities;
- ii. Developing experimental multi-hazard maps to better understand risk;
- iii. Establishing state and local government infrastructure mitigation planning requirements;
- iv. Defining how states can assume more responsibility in managing the hazard mitigation grant program; and
- v. Adjusting ways in which management costs for projects are funded.

The mitigation planning provisions outlined in § 322 of this Act establish performance-based standards for mitigation plans and require states to have a public assistance program (Advance Infrastructure Mitigation [AIM]) to develop county government plans. The consequence for counties that fail to develop an infrastructure mitigation plan is the chance of a reduced federal share of damage assistance from 75 percent to 25 percent if the facility has been damaged on more than one occasion in the preceding 10-year period by the same type of event.

National Fire Plan¹⁰

In 2000, the National Fire Plan was developed by the Secretaries of the Departments of Agriculture and Interior as a report on how to respond to severe, ongoing fire activity, reduce impacts of fires on rural communities and the environment, and ensure sufficient firefighting resources in the future. This report, entitled *Managing the Impacts of Wildfire on Communities and the Environment: A Report to the President in Response to the Wildfires of 2000*, became the basis of the National Fire Plan. The National Fire Plan addresses five objectives: Firefighting, Rehabilitation, Hazardous Fuels Reduction, Community Assistance, and Accountability (FAR NFP). The National Fire Plan developed its implementation strategy via its 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy and its Implementation Plan. Based on these two reports, in 2002 the President at the time (George W. Bush) announced the Healthy Forest Initiative to implement the National Fire Plan; this became the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003. The National Fire Plan, as enacted under the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003, works towards the goals of reducing the devastation of wildland fires and improving the health of forests and rangelands.

The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy¹¹

Under the direction of the Federal Land Assistance, Management, and Enhancement Act of 2009 (the FLAME Act), the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture created the National

¹⁰ US Department of the Interior and USDA Forest Service. National Fire Plan. (2002).

https://www.fs.fed.us/database/budgetoffice/NFP_final32601.pdf. (accessed August 2021).

¹¹ National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. <https://www.fs.fed.us/restoration/cohesivestrategy.shtml>. (accessed August 2021).

Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy report. This report contains a cohesive wildfire management strategy as directed by the FLAME Act and under the advisement of the intergovernmental Wildland Fire Leadership Council. The most recent version of this report is 2014's *The National Strategy: The Final Phase in the Development of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy*.

State

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

CAL FIRE protects the people of California from fires, responds to emergencies, and protects and enhances forest, range, and watershed values providing social, economic, and environmental benefits to rural and urban citizens. Another major responsibility of CAL FIRE's is to use their firefighters, fire engines, and aircraft to respond to wildland fires. In 2020 (between January 1 and December 29) there were a total of 8,112 wildfires in the state.¹²

The Office of the State Fire Marshal supports CAL FIRE's mission by focusing on fire prevention. It provides support through a wide variety of fire safety responsibilities including by regulating buildings in which people live, congregate, or are confined; by controlling substances and products which may, in and of themselves, or by their misuse, cause injuries, death, and destruction by fire; by providing statewide direction for fire prevention in wildland areas; by regulating hazardous liquid pipelines; by reviewing regulations and building standards; and by providing training and education in fire protection methods and responsibilities.

State Fire Regulations

Fire regulations for California are established in § 13000 et seq. of the California Health and Services Code (HSC) and include regulations for structural standards (similar to those identified in the CBC); fire protection and public notification systems; fire protection devices such as extinguishers and smoke alarms; standards for high-rise structures and childcare facilities; and fire suppression training. The State Fire Marshal is responsible for enforcement of these established regulations and building standards for all state-owned buildings, state-occupied buildings, and state institutions within California.

California Fire Plan

The California Fire Plan is a cooperative effort between the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection and CAL FIRE. By placing the emphasis on what needs to be done long before a fire starts, the Fire Plan looks to reduce firefighting costs and property losses, increase firefighter safety, and to contribute to ecosystem health. The 2018 Strategic Fire Plan for California is the most current plan.¹³

California Public Resources Code (PRC) §§ 4290 and 4291

These regulations, which implement minimum fire safety standards related to defensible space, apply to the perimeters and access to all commercial, industrial, and residential building construction with an SRA

¹² CALFIRE. (2021). <https://www.fire.ca.gov/stats-events/>. (accessed August 2021).

¹³ 2018 Strategic Fire Plan for California. (2018). https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/media/5590/2018-strategic-fire-plan-approved-08_22_18.pdf. (accessed August 2021).

(approved after January 1, 1991), and within lands classified and designated as VHFHSZ (after July 1, 2021). The person(s) who control, lease, maintain, operate, or own said building in, upon, or adjoining a mountainous area, forest-covered lands, brush-covered lands, grass-covered lands, or land that is covered with flammable materials is required to preserve a defensible space of 100 feet from the perimeter of the building. The regulations shall include the following:

1. Road standards for fire equipment access.
2. Standards for signs identifying streets, roads, and buildings.
3. Minimum private water supply reserves for emergency fire use.
4. Fuel breaks and greenbelts.

These regulations do not supersede local regulations which equal or exceed minimum regulations adopted by the state.

California Government Code § 66474.02

This regulation states that before a county can approve a tentative map, or a parcel map for which a tentative map was not required, for an area (development) located in an SRA or a VHFHSZ, the following findings must be made:

1. A finding supported by substantial evidence in the record that the subdivision is consistent with regulations adopted by the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection pursuant to §§ 4290 and 4291 of the PRC or consistent with local ordinances certified by the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection as meeting or exceeding the state regulations.
2. A finding supported by substantial evidence in the record that structural fire protection and suppression services will be available for the subdivision through any of the following entities:
 - A. A county, city, special district, political subdivision of the state, or another entity organized solely to provide fire protection services that is monitored and funded by a county or other public entity.
 - B. The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection by contract entered into pursuant to §§ 4133, 4142, or 4144 of the PRC.

Upon approving a tentative map, or a parcel map for which a tentative map was not required, for an area (development) located in an SRA or VHFHSZ, the county shall transmit a copy of the findings and accompanying maps to the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection.

2019 California Building Code, Chapter 7A

Chapter 7A of the CBC focuses primarily on preventing ember penetration into homes, a leading cause of structure loss from wildfires. These codes have been developed through decades of after fire structure “save” and “loss” evaluations to determine what causes buildings to ignite or avoid ignition during wildfires. The resulting fire codes now focus on mitigating former structural vulnerabilities through

construction techniques and materials so that the buildings are resistant to ignitions from direct flames, heat, and embers, as indicated in the 2019 CBC (Chapter 7A, § 701A Scope, Purpose and Application).

2019 California Fire Code, Chapter 49 Requirements for WUI Fire Areas

This code provides minimum standards to increase the ability of a building or structure to resist the intrusion of flame or burning embers being projected by a vegetation fire and contributes to a systematic reduction in fire losses through the use of performance and prescriptive requirements. Buildings and structures located on unincorporated land designated as an SRA Moderate, High, and VHFHSZ and land designated as VHFHSZ by a city or other local agency shall maintain the required hazardous vegetation and fuel management standards.

Fire hazard designations are based on topography, vegetation, and weather, amongst other factors with more hazardous sites including steep terrain, unmaintained fuels/vegetation, and WUI locations. Projects situated in HFHSZ's require fire hazard analysis and application of fire protection measures that have been developed to specifically result in defensible communities in these WUI locations.

2019 California Fire Code

CCR Title 24, Part 9 (2019 California Fire Code) contains regulations relating to construction and maintenance of buildings, the use of premises, and the management of WUI areas, among other issues. The California Fire Code is updated every three years by the California Building Standards Commission and was last updated in 2019 (adopted January 1, 2020). The Fire Code sets forth regulations regarding building standards, fire protection and notification systems, fire protection devices such as fire extinguishers and smoke alarms, high-rise building standards, and fire suppression training. It contains regulations relating to construction, maintenance, and use of buildings. Topics addressed in the code also include fire department access, fire hydrants, automatic sprinkler systems, fire alarm systems, fire and explosion hazards safety, hazardous materials storage and use, provisions intended to protect and assist fire responders, industrial processes, and many other general and specialized fire-safety requirements for new and existing buildings and the surrounding premises. Development under the Project would be subject to applicable regulations of the California Fire Code.

Title 8 California Code of Regulations §§ 1270 and 6773

In accordance with CCR, Title 8 § 1270 "Fire Prevention" and § 6773 "Fire Protection and Fire Equipment," the California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Cal-OSHA) has established minimum standards for fire suppression and emergency medical services. The standards include, but are not limited to, guidelines on the handling of highly combustible materials, fire hose sizing requirements, restrictions on the use of compressed air, access roads, and the testing, maintenance, and use of all firefighting and emergency medical equipment.

2019 California Building Standards Code

California building standards are published in the CCR, Title 24, also known as the California Building Standards Code (CBSC). The CBSC, which applies to all applications for building permits, consists of 12 parts that contain administrative regulations for the California Building Standards Commission and for

all state agencies that implement or enforce building standards. Local agencies must ensure the development complies with the guidelines contained in the CBSC. Cities and counties can adopt additional building standards beyond the CBSC including the CBSC Part 2, named the CBC which is based upon the 2018 International Building Code, and Part 11, named the California Green Building Standards Code, also called the CalGreen Code.

California Health and Safety Code

State fire regulations are set forth in California Health and Safety Code §§ 13000 et seq., and include provisions concerning building standards, fire protection and notification systems, fire protection devices, and fire suppression training, as also set forth in the 2019 CBSC and related updated codes.

Emergency Mutual Aid Agreements (EMAA)

The EMMA system is a collaborative effort between city and county emergency managers in the Office of Emergency Services (OES) in the coastal, southern, and inland regions of the state. EMMA provides service in the emergency response and recovery efforts at the Southern Regional Emergency Operations Center, local Emergency Operations Centers, the Disaster Field Office, and community service centers. The purpose of EMMA is to support disaster operations in affected jurisdictions by providing professional emergency management personnel. In accordance with the EMAA, local and state emergency managers have responded in support of each other under a variety of plans and procedures.

California Governor's Office of Emergency Management Agency (Cal-EMA)

In 2009, the State of California passed legislation creating the Cal-EMA and authorizing it to prepare a Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) program (Title 19 CCR §§ 2400 et seq.), which sets forth measures by which a jurisdiction should handle emergency disasters. Non-compliance with SEMS could result in the state withholding disaster relief from the non-complying jurisdiction in the event of an emergency disaster.

Cal-EMA serves as the lead state agency for emergency management in the state. Cal-EMA coordinates the state response to major emergencies in support of local government. The primary responsibility for emergency management resides with local government. Local jurisdictions first use their own resources and, as these are exhausted, obtain more from neighboring cities and special districts, the county in which they are located, and other counties throughout the state through the statewide mutual aid system. In California, the SEMS provides the mechanism by which local government requests assistance. Cal-EMA serves as the lead agency for mobilizing the state's resources and obtaining federal resources; it also maintains oversight of the state's mutual aid system.

Local

City of Beaumont 2040 General Plan

Implementation of the following General Plan goals and policies will assist in minimizing adverse impacts related to wildfire. The City's Beaumont 2040 General Plan includes the following goals and policies, the adherence to which will reduce potential environmental impacts to wildfire:

Community Facilities and Infrastructure Element

Goal 7.1: **City-wide infrastructure to support existing development and future growth.**

Policy 7.1.8 As feasible, identify the long-term risks from climate change, including changes in flooding, storm intensity, water availability, and wildfire, during infrastructure planning and design to adapt to those changes. This policy is implemented through the Safety Element.

Goal 7.2: **A clean and sustainable water supply that supports existing community needs and long-term growth.**

Policy 7.2.2 Coordinate with the Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District to ensure that adequate water supplies and pressures are available during a fire, earthquake, or both.

Goal 7.8: **City-wide access to high-quality energy utility and telecommunication services.**

Policy 7.8.3 When feasible, place new utilities underground to promote attractive neighborhoods and streetscapes and reduce wildfire risk.

Safety Element

Goal 9.4: **A City that is protected from the effects of natural and manmade disasters.**

Policy 9.4.1 Continue coordinated review of development proposals with the Police Department and Fire Safety Specialist to ensure that police and fire staff and resources keep pace with new development planned or proposed in the City and City's Sphere of Influence.

Policy 9.4.5 Require new development to provide access roads that allow both safe and efficient access of emergency equipment and community evacuation.

Goal 9.5: **A City with enhanced fire and emergency response services.**

Policy 9.5.5 Coordinate with the Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District to ensure that water pressure for existing and future developed areas is adequate for firefighting purposes.

Policy 9.5.6 Provide fire suppression water system guidelines and implementation plans for existing and acquired lands, including fire protection water volumes, system distribution upgrades, and emergency water storage.

Policy 9.5.7 Continue to provide technical and policy information regarding structural and wild land fire hazards to developers, interested parties, and the general public through all available media.

Goal 9.6: **A City that protects human life, land, and property from the effects of wildland fire hazards.**

Policy 9.6.6 Require property owners to clear brush and high fuel vegetation and maintain fire-safe zones (a minimum distance of 30 feet from the structure or to the property line, whichever is closer) to reduce the risk of fires. For structures located within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, the required brush distance is up to 200 feet from structures up to their property line.

Policy 9.6.7 Continue to enforce the weed abatement ordinance to mitigate potential fire hazard risks.

Policy 9.6.8 Require that developments located in wildland interface areas incorporate and enforce standards for construction, including a fuel modification program (i.e., brush clearance, planting of fire-retardant vegetation) to reduce the threat of wildfires.

Goal 9.9: **A City that promotes preparedness related to the adverse effects of high winds common in the Pass area.**

Policy 9.9.1 Consider potential risk posed by high winds in the City in the review of new development applications including those for signs.

City of Beaumont Municipal Code

Chapter 15.20, § 010 relates to the adoption of the 2019 California Fire Code. This Section states, “Except as otherwise provided in this Chapter, the California Fire Code, Title 24, California Code of Regulations, Part 9, including Chapter 1, Division II - Scope and Administration, except that §§ 103.2 and 109.3 are not adopted, and Chapters 3, 25, and §§ 403.12, 503, 510.2, and 1103.2 are adopted, including any and all amendments set forth in this Chapter, and including any and all amendments thereto that may hereafter be made and adopted by the State of California, is hereby adopted as the City Fire Code.” More specifically, subsection Q of § 15.20.020 of the Beaumont MC recognizes that FHSZs and maps as defined in the California Fire Code includes § 4904 and the revision related to CGC §§ 51175 through 51189 for VHFSZs and that these resources are retained on file at the office of the Fire Chief.

Beaumont MC § 17.06.030 relates to water efficient landscape requirements and discusses plant selection for projects in high fire hazard areas and that a defensible space or zone around a building or structure is required pursuant to PRC § 4291 and Riverside County Ordinance No. 695. Fire-prone plant materials and highly flammable mulches are required to be avoided to address fire safety and prevention.

City of Beaumont Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP)

The purpose of the LHMP is to identify the City’s hazards, review and assess past disaster occurrences, estimate the probability of future occurrences, and set goals to mitigate potential risks to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from natural and man-made hazards.

The LHMP was prepared pursuant to the requirements of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 to achieve eligibility and potentially secure mitigation funding through FEMA Flood Mitigation Assistance, Pre-Disaster Mitigation, and Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs.

4.18.4 Impact Thresholds and Significance Criteria

State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G contains the Environmental Checklist Form, which includes questions concerning wildfire. The questions presented in the Environmental Checklist Form have been utilized as significance criteria in this section. Accordingly, the Project would have a significant effect on the environment if it would:

- Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan;

- Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose Project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of wildfire;
- Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment; or
- Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes.

4.18.5 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impact 4.18-1 If located in or near SRA or lands classified as Very High FHSZ, would the Project substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Level of Significance: Less than Significant Impact

The Project is entirely in an LRA. Due to the City currently contracting with CAL FIRE and RCFD for fire services, Project buildout would not affect fire services as CAL FIRE and RCFD would both continue to provide fire services.

The City's planning process, as it does for the proposed Project, follows methodologies consistent with FEMA and Cal-EMA guidance. This process includes conducting meetings with the Operational Area Planning Committee (OAPC) coordinated with the RCFD, Office of Emergency Services, and ensuring compliance with all other applicable regulations set forth by federal, state, and local jurisdictions agencies related to evacuation and safety from fire hazards. It should be noted that the City also recognizes other potential hazards and threats that could occur from earthquakes, flooding, and hazardous materials. Because of this, the City is prepared on numerous fronts to implement an evacuation should it be needed, in accordance with the LHMP.¹⁴

The City's LHMP has identified routes near the Project that would serve as emergency evacuation routes: State Route 60 (SR-60), Interstate 10 (I-10), Beaumont Avenue (Highway 79), and 4th Street. Additionally, the City uses a Reverse 911 Emergency Notification System which is managed by the City's Police Department Dispatch Center. This system allows the City to get information to residents if any emergency event that may happen in the area. An evacuation, should it be necessary, would be coordinated by the Beaumont Police Department, California Highway Patrol, and other cooperating law enforcement agencies have primary responsibility for evacuations. These agencies work closely with the responding fire department personnel who assess fire behavior and spread, which ultimately influence evacuation decisions.

¹⁴ City of Beaumont. 2012. City of Beaumont Annex – Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. Available at <http://beaumontca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/29599>, accessed June 2021.

Therefore, while construction and operation of the Project would occur within proximity to SR-60 and I-10, neither construction nor operation of the proposed Project would impede the use of either of the freeways or local roadways needed to access them. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is necessary.

Level of Significance

Less than significant impact.

Impact 4.18-2 *If located in or near SRA or lands classified as Very High FHSZ, would the Project, due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildlife risks, and thereby expose Project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?*

Level of Significance: No Impact

As stated previously, the Project site is not within a Very High FHSZ zone nor is it located in an SRA. The Project site is within an LRA zone. Since the Project is with an LRA zone, provision of fire protection services would continue under contract to the RCFD. Fire protection services provided to Project site would not substantially differ from services available through the County; only the service funding mechanism would change. Furthermore, development from the Project site would be subject to Fire Department review. Department review ensures that the design of proposed developments conform to the RCFD requirements and thereby reduce demands on fire protection services. Additionally, payment of the Fire Protection impact fees, property taxes, and other revenues generated by development within the Project area would be available to the City to offset any increased costs for fire protection services with little or no net effect on the City's budget. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is necessary.

Level of Significance

No impact.

Impact 4.18-3 *If located in or near SRA or lands classified as Very High FHSZ, would the Project require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?*

Level of Significance: Less than Significant Impact

As noted in **Section 4.8, Hazards and Hazardous Materials**, Wildland Hazards, the Project site is not located within a moderate, high, or very high Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ). Additionally, the Project

site is not located in or near a State Responsibility Area (SRA). The Project includes development consisting of e-commerce, commercial, and open space land uses, on vacant and previously developed lots. Improvements to both adjacent roadways would be made as part of the Project in accordance with all City and design standards as part of planned improvements for the area. All improvements would occur within areas already planned for disturbance as part of the Project or within existing or planned roadways or within easements that have been previously disturbed. None of the Project improvements, including landscaping or installation of interior circulation driveways or emergency access lanes, would result in impacts to the environment not analyzed in the respective chapters of this Draft EIR. Because the Project is not located within a VHFHSZ and is not in or near an SRA the Project would also be consistent with Policy 9.6.3 which seeks to ensure that developments in VHFHSZ minimize the risks of wildfires. For these reasons, impacts in this regard would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is necessary.

Level of Significance

Less than significant impact.

Impact 4.18-4 If located in or near SRA or lands classified as Very High FHSZ, would the Project expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?

Level of Significance: Less than Significant Impact

The Project site is not located in an SRA or in an area classified as very high FHSZ. The Project site's topography to the northwestern area of the site possesses several east-west and southeast-northwest trending drainage courses. The drainage features possess gradual to steep sidewalls with elevation differences of up to $15\pm$ feet below the surrounding topography. To the south of the leech pits, the site slopes towards the south to southwest at a gradient of $10\pm$ percent. The topography descends by $50\pm$ feet in this area. Another significant east-west trending drainage is located at the base of the descending slope, located in the southern-most region of the site. The drainage possesses gradual to steep sidewalls with an elevation difference up $10\pm$ feet below the surrounding topography. A hill, located to the southeast of this drainage, is approximately 20 to 30 feet higher than the surrounding topography. The hill possesses slope gradients ranging from 14 to $40\pm$ percent.

Slope is important relative to wildfire because steeper slopes typically facilitate more rapid-fire spread upslope. The portion of the Project where the highest variations of topography elevations exist is in the portion of the site planned for Open Space with no planned development. Additionally, no significant amounts of below-grade construction, such as basements or crawl spaces, are expected to be included in the proposed Project. Based on the assumed topography, cuts of $45\pm$ feet and fills of up to $65\pm$ feet are expected to be necessary to achieve the proposed site grades.

As discussed in Draft EIR **Section 4.6, Geology and Soils**, landslide risks from the Project are less than significant with compliance with existing codes and regulations, including the CBC (as adopted by the Beaumont MC). Project flooding and drainage is discussed in Draft EIR **Section 4.9, Hydrology and Water Quality**; runoff, flooding, and drainage impacts are less than significant with implementation of relevant Beaumont GP policies and existing regulations, such as compliance with the Beaumont MC. Specifically, Beaumont GP Goal 8.5 and its supporting policies, and Beaumont GP Policies 3.1.6, 3.1.9, 3.1.12, 3.12.2, 3.12.3, 7.4.1, 7.4.3, all help to address and maintain open areas, preserve or discourage development in hillside areas, or drainages that can lead to flooding or downstream risk after fire events. Through compliance with existing regulations and Beaumont GP goals and policies there are no significant risks as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes.

The Project would not expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes since the Project site is not located in an SRA nor is it located within a very high FHSZ and no development is planned in Planning Area 3 which is where the greatest topography height variation occurs. Additionally, total flows from the discharge points would drain to the west and would not be in excess of pre-Project flows. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is necessary.

Level of Significance

Less than significant impact.

4.18.6 Cumulative Impacts

Projects have the potential to be cumulatively considerable, when evaluated in the context of other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable projects that make a cumulative contribution to impacts. Similar to the Project, cumulative development occurring within the vicinity and similar FHSZs would be subject to risk of wildfire hazards. Cumulative projects also would be subject to compliance with the CBC and California Fire Code, as well as local regulations and all proposed construction would be required to meet minimum standards for fire safety. Development occurring within the City, or those future projects annexed from the County lands adjacent to and near the Project site would be subject to review by the City to ensure cumulative development is designed to provide a minimum of fire safety and support fire suppression activities. This would include compliance with state and local fire codes, inclusion of fire sprinklers if required, proper fire hydrant system, paved access, and secondary emergency access routes. Implementation of these plans and policies, in conjunction with compliance with the Fire Code and City standards, would ensure cumulative impacts with respect to wildfire hazards are less than significant.

4.18.7 Significant Unavoidable Impacts

No significant unavoidable impacts have been identified.

4.18.8 References

City of Beaumont. 2020. *Beaumont General Plan*.

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National Park Service (2018). Types of Wildland Fire. <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/fire/types-of-wildland-fire.htm>.