

4.12 POPULATION AND HOUSING

This section analyzes the proposed project's potential population and housing impacts, as well as the potential impacts involving population growth.

4.12.1 Existing Setting

The proposed project site is located at the southeast corner of Avalon Avenue and State Route 62 (SR-62) and is undeveloped. No housing exists on the project site. Adjacent land uses include undeveloped property to the, south and east of the project site, and administrative/office uses to the west of the project site. Low-density residential uses are located farther north across SR-62 and southwesterly across Avalon Avenue from the project site.

4.12.2 Existing Policies and Regulations

Town of Yucca Valley Comprehensive General Plan Policies. The General Plan does not contain any policies related to population and housing that are relevant to the proposed project. The *Comprehensive General Plan* Housing Element contains policies pertaining to adequate housing, rehabilitation programs for multifamily units, housing needs of low-income and moderate-income populations, mobile home parks, and senior housing. None of these policies pertains to the proposed project, which is a commercial project.

4.12.3 Thresholds of Significance

According to Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines*, the proposed project would result in a significant impact if it would cause any of the following:

- Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (e.g., by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (e.g., through extension of roads or other infrastructure);
- Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere; and/or
- Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

4.12.4 Impacts and Mitigation

Less Than Significant Impacts

The following impacts were determined to be less than significant. In each of the following issues, either no impact or a less than significant impact would occur (and, therefore, no mitigation would be required) or adherence to established regulations, standards, and policies would reduce potential impacts to a less than significant level.

Population Growth

Threshold	Would the proposed project induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (i.e., new homes and businesses) or indirectly (i.e., extension of roads and infrastructure)?
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The Town of Yucca Valley *Comprehensive General Plan* (1995) listed the population count in Yucca Valley from a low of 5,470 in 1970 to a high of 17,254 in 1994, and it was anticipated that the population would climb to as much as 18,931 in 1999. These projections were not far off, according to the California Department of Finance counts: the population for 2000 was 16,950, and the projected population for 2005 was 19,726 (Table 4.12.A). This rise in population has supported the General Plan projections, albeit at a slower pace than anticipated by the General Plan. Assuming the trend in population growth continues, in the space of 15 years (2005 to 2020), the population of the Town of Yucca Valley would increase from 19,726 to approximately 27,000.

Table 4.12.A – Town of Yucca Valley Population

Year	Population ^{1,2}	Growth
1970	5,470	Not applicable
1980	10,851	98%
1990	16,403	51%
2000	16,950	3%
2005	19,726	16%
2010*	23,000	17%
2020*	27,000	17%

^{1.} *Comprehensive General Plan, Town of Yucca Valley*, prepared by Town of Yucca Valley community Development Department, p. III-36 (population table), December 14, 1995.

^{2.} California Department of Finance, Tables B-4 and E-1 (City/County Population Estimates).

* Projections have been made using counts from 2000 and 2005 and regression analysis.

The increase in employment within the Town of Yucca Valley has not kept up with the increase in population. The growth trend in employment is decreasing, as residents of the Town of Yucca Valley seek employment outside the area or become unemployed (Table 4.12.B). The preliminary unemployment rate for San Bernardino County in June 2005 was 5.3 percent.¹

Table 4.12.B – Town of Yucca Valley Employment

Year	Employees	Growth
1997	2,219	Not applicable
2002	2,878	30%
2007*	3,600	25%
2012*	4,250	18%

Sources: *Town of Yucca Valley Comprehensive General Plan*, prepared by Town of Yucca Valley Community Development Department, p. III-40 (employment table), December 14, 1995; U.S. Census Bureau, Economic Census, Table 1, Selected Statistics by Economic Sector, 1997 and 2002.

* Projections have been made using counts and regression analysis.

¹ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, San Bernardino County Unemployment Rates – not seasonally adjusted.

Within the decline in employment, according to the Town of Yucca Valley *Comprehensive General Plan* (page III-40), sales and service jobs within the Town increased somewhat:

Employment in the Town of Yucca Valley in 1993 was similar to that of 1990; however, with the influx of large commercial companies, such as Kmart and Wal-Mart, and other businesses and industries, Yucca Valley has developed a larger commercial base, and the availability of sales and service jobs has also expanded.

The *Comprehensive General Plan* goes on to list top employers located within the Town of Yucca Valley. The two biggest employers by far are the Morongo Valley Unified School District and Wal-Mart with an estimated number of 600 and 260 employees, respectively.¹ According to the U.S. Census Bureau,² the top two sectors of employment are retail trade and health care and social assistance. In 1997, retail trade accounted for 45 percent (993 jobs) and health care and social assistance was 19 percent (417 jobs) of employment; in 2002, it was 992 jobs (34%) and 608 jobs (21%), respectively. These numbers indicate that retail trade has remained steady in numbers but not in percentage, as the labor force has increased. Reflecting an increase in employment from 417 to 608 jobs, it would appear that there is more reliance on health care and social assistance.

Utilizing employment factors of one employee for every 400 square feet of retail space and one employee for every 250 square feet of restaurant use,³ the proposed project is anticipated to generate approximately 589 jobs. All of these jobs cannot be assumed to be newly created jobs, as much of the approximately 260 persons employed at the vacated Wal-Mart (*Comprehensive General Plan*, page III-40) are already residing in the area. It can be surmised that approximately 329 new jobs (589 less 260) would be created by the proposed project. The increase of 329 new sales and service jobs may help the employment levels keep up with the population levels. As the new jobs created by the proposed project are likely to be filled by persons already residing in the area, the proposed project would not induce substantial population growth in the area.

Displace Substantial Housing/People

Threshold	Would the proposed project displace substantial numbers of people or existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?
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The project site is currently vacant and undeveloped. The project site is zoned "General Commercial." No housing currently exists on the project site. Of the 7,952 housing units in the Town of Yucca Valley,⁴ some 6,949 or 84 percent are occupied. Of the occupied housing units, 68 percent (4,723) are owner-occupied and 32 percent (2,226) are renter-occupied. There are approximately 1,000 vacant housing units located within the Town of Yucca Valley. If there were new employees who relocated to the Town of Yucca Valley, there appears to be adequate stock of housing available. Because no housing currently exists on the proposed project site, and approximately 1,000 housing

¹ Table III-9, Top Employers in the Town of Yucca Valley 1999, *Town of Yucca Valley Comprehensive General Plan*, Housing Element, August 2000.

² Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Summary File 2 and Summary File 3.

³ Burchell, Robert; Listokin, David; and Dolphin, William, Rutgers University's Center for Urban Policy Research, *Urban Development Impact Assessment Handbook*, 1994; Urban Land Institute.

⁴ *Ibid.*

units are vacant, no substantial displacement of housing or residents will occur due to this project. Thus, potential impacts associated with this issue are less than significant. Implementation of the proposed project will not result in impacts associated with the displacement of housing and/or people.

Potentially Significant Impacts

There are no potentially significant impacts related to population and housing, and no mitigation measures would be required.

4.12.5 Cumulative Impacts

The project includes development of retail uses in compliance with existing zoning for the site as envisioned in the Town's General Plan. Retail uses are typically developed to capture or serve the retail demand that already exists or is expected to exist based on new residential growth in an area. The proposed project together with other retail developments projects in the area will serve the cumulative demand for retail and related services. This is not considered to be a significant cumulative impact on population. The project does not displace any housing and there are no other projects that would work in combination with the project to create such a cumulative impact.