4.18 WILDFIRE

This section of the EIR evaluates the potential impacts associated with wildfire for the proposed project. This section presents the existing conditions, regulatory framework, impacts of the proposed project on the environment, and proposed mitigation measures to mitigate any identified significant wildfire-related impacts. Fire protection services for the project have been addressed in Chapter 4.13, Public Services

4.18.1 Existing Conditions

Wildfire is a continuous threat in Southern California, and is particularly concerning in the wildland-urban interface, the geographic area where urban development either abuts or intermingles with wildland or vegetative fuels. During the summer season, dry vegetation, prolonged periods of drought, and Santa Ana wind conditions can combine to increase the risk of wildfires in the County.

Fire History

The project area, like all of San Diego County, is subject to seasonal weather conditions that can heighten the likelihood of fire ignition and spread. Fire history is an important component of wildfire analysis. Wildfire history information can provide an understanding of fire frequency, fire type, most vulnerable project areas, and significant ignition sources, amongst others. The California Department of Forestry and Fire (CAL FIRE) maintain the Fire and Resource Assessment Program database, which was used to evaluate the project site's fire history to determine whether large fires have occurred in the project area, and thus the likelihood of future fires. Per the recorded fire history database, the site has not been subject to wildfire (CAL FIRE 2021). Recorded wildfire within 5 miles of the project site range from 167 acres (River fire in 2014) to 15,186 acres (Pulgas-Basoline Complex fire in 2014).

Fire Hazard Mapping

CAL FIRE's Fire and Resource Assessment Program database also includes map data documenting areas of significant fire hazards in the state. These maps categorize geographic areas of the state into different Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZs), ranging from moderate to very high. CAL FIRE uses FHSZs to classify anticipated fire-related hazards for the entire state, and includes classifications for State Responsibility Areas, Local Responsibility Areas, and Federal Responsibility Areas. Fire hazard severity classifications take into account vegetation, topography, weather, crown fire production, and ember production and movement. As shown in Figure 4.18-1, Fire Hazard Severity Zones, the project site is not within a Very High FHSZ, but there is a VHFHSZ located approximately 0.4 miles southwest of the project site (CAL FIRE 2009).

Vegetation Communities and Land Covers

Variations in vegetative cover type and species composition have a direct effect on fire behavior. Some plant communities and their associated plant species have increased flammability based on plant physiology (resin content), biological function (flowering, retention of dead plant material), physical structure (leaf size, branching patterns), and overall fuel loading.

A critical factor to consider is the dynamic nature of vegetation communities. Fire presence and absence at varying cycles or regimes affect plant community succession. Succession of plant communities, most notably the gradual conversion of shrublands to grasslands with high frequency fires and grasslands to shrublands with fire exclusion, is highly dependent on the fire regime. Further, biomass and associated fuel loading will increase over time if disturbance or fuel reduction effects are not diligently implemented.

The vegetation types and land covers in the project area were identified during field assessments conducted for the project site. As detailed in Chapter 4.3, Biological Resources, the project site is characterized by Southern Willow Scrub, Non-native Grassland, Disturbed Habitat, and Urban/Developed Land. Figure 4.3-2 within Chapter 4.3 illustrates the distribution of vegetation communities and land covers in the study area.

Topography/Terrain

Topography influences fire risk by affecting fire spread rates. Typically, steep terrain results in faster fire spread up-slope and slower spread down-slope. Terrain that forms a funneling effect, such as chimneys, chutes, or saddles on the landscape can result in especially intense fire behavior, including faster spread and higher intensity. Conversely, flat terrain tends to have little effect on fire spread, resulting in fires that are driven by vegetation and wind. The project site is relatively flat and primarily consists of previously disturbed land, non-native grassland, and southern willow scrub. The San Luis Rey River is located down-slope of the project site to the north and west.

Climate, Weather and Wind

In the City, the summers are warm, arid, and clear and the winters are long, cool, and partly cloudy. During summer months (early July through October), the average daily high temperature is above 74°F, and during the cooler, winter months (November through April), the average daily high temperature is below 67°F. The temperature varies throughout the year but is rarely below 38°F or above 83°F. Like much of Southern California, the City experience seasonal variation in monthly rainfall throughout the year, with the wetter months lasting from November through April.

The project site, like much of Southern California, is influenced by prevailing wind patterns. Prevailing winds are winds that blow from a single direction over a specific area of the Earth. The

predominant average hourly wind speed and direction in the City varies throughout the year. The wind is most often from the west for 10 months, and the wind is most often from the east from early December to late January. The windier part of the year lasts for approximately 7 months (November to June), with average wind speeds of more than 6.2 miles per hour (WeatherSpark 2021).

4.18.2 Regulatory Setting

Federal

National Fire Protection Association Codes, Standards, Practices, and Guides

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) codes, standards, recommended practices, and guides ("NFPA Documents") are developed through a consensus standards development process approved by the American National Standards Institute. This process brings together professionals representing varied viewpoints and interests to achieve consensus on fire and other safety issues. NFPA standards are recommended guidelines and nationally accepted good practices in fire protection but are not law or "codes" unless adopted or referenced as such by the California Fire Code (CFC) or local fire agency.

State

California Fire Code

The CFC is Chapter 9 of Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations. It was created by the California Building Standards Commission and is based on the International Fire Code created by the International Code Council. It is the primary means for authorizing and enforcing procedures and mechanisms to ensure the safe handling and storage of any substance that may pose a threat to public health and safety. The CFC regulates the use, handling, and storage requirements for hazardous materials at fixed facilities. The CFC and the California Building Code use a hazards classification system to determine what protective measures are required to protect fire and life safety. These measures may include construction standards, separations from property lines, and specialized equipment. To ensure these safety measures are met, the CFC employs a permit system based on hazard classification. The CFC is updated every 3 years. Chapter 11, Article II (Fire Prevention) of the City's Municipal Code provide the City's adopted amendments to the 2019 CFC.

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

CAL FIRE is tasked with reducing wildfire-related impacts and enhancing California's resources. CAL FIRE responds to all types of emergencies including wildland fires and residential/commercial structure fires. In addition, CAL FIRE is responsible for the protection of approximately 31 million acres of private land within the state and, at the local level, is responsible for inspecting defensible space around private residences. CAL FIRE is responsible for enforcing

State of California fire safety codes included in the California Code of Regulations and the California Public Resources Code (PRC).

California Strategic Fire Plan

In 2010, the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection issued the California Strategic Fire Plan, a statewide fire plan developed in concert between the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection and CAL FIRE. Goals included improved availability and use of information on hazard and risk assessment, land use planning, development of shared vision in plans such as Community Wildlife Protection Plans (CWPPs), establishment of fire resistance in assets at risk, shared vision among fire protection jurisdictions and agencies, levels of suppression, and post-fire recovery.

In support of this plan, several policies are noted, including creation of defensible space, improving home fire resistance, fuel hazard reduction that creates resilient landscapes and protects wildland and natural resources, adequate and appropriate fire suppression, and commitment by individuals and communities to wildfire prevention and protection through local planning.

The California Strategic Fire Plan's several objectives are as follows: the state will produce tools such as updates to the CAL FIRE VHFHSZ maps, fire history, and data on values and assets at risk; assist government bodies in the development of a comprehensive set of wildland and WUI protection policies; identify minimum key components necessary to achieve a fire safe community; coordinate CAL FIRE Unit Fire Plans with CWPPs; improve regulatory effectiveness, compliance monitoring, and reporting pursuant to PRC 4290 and 4291; and participate in public education efforts concerning regulation, prevention measures, and preplanning.

Local

California Disaster and Civil Defense Master Mutual Aid Agreement

As provided for in the California Emergency Services Act, this agreement was developed in 1950 and adopted by all 58 California counties. This statewide mutual aid system is designed to ensure that adequate resources, facilities, and other support is provided to jurisdictions whenever their own resources prove to be inadequate to cope with a given situation. San Diego County is located in Mutual Aid Region 6 of the state system, which also includes Imperial, Riverside, San Bernardino, Inyo, and Mono counties.

San Diego County Emergency Plan

The San Diego County Emergency Plan is a comprehensive emergency management system that provides for a planned response to disaster situations associated with natural disasters, technological incidents and nuclear defense operations. The Plan includes operational concepts

relating to various emergency situations, identifies components of the Emergency Management Organization and describes the overall responsibilities for protecting life and property and assuring the overall well-being of the population. The plan also identifies the source of outside support that might be provided (through mutual aid and specific statutory authorities) by other jurisdictions, state and federal agencies and the private sector.

City of Oceanside General Plan

Public Safety Element

The Public Safety Element identifies hazards, such as earthquakes, fires, and tsunamis, and provides guidance for proper mitigation measures, such as evacuation routes, to ensure safety. Along with long range policies regarding seismic, flooding, and fire hazards, this element also includes a Public Safety Plan. The Public Safety Plan includes maps of indicating areas that have increased susceptibility to these hazards and relocation routes during emergency evacuations.

4.18.3 Thresholds of Significance

The significance criteria used to evaluate the project impacts to wildfire are based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a significant impact related to wildfire would occur if the proposed project would:

1. If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:
    a. Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.
    b. 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 a wildfire.
    c. 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.
    d. 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.

4.18.4 Impacts Analysis

Would the project substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

The project site is not located within or adjacent to a State Responsibility Area (SRA) or Local Responsibility Area (LRA) Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) (CAL FIRE 2009). The project site is located within an urbanized and developed area of the City. Although the project site borders the San Luis Rey River corridor, this wildland is not in an area subject to high fire risk. The nearest VHRHSZ is a LRA located approximately 0.3 miles southwest of the proposed project site (CAL FIRE 2009). As discussed in Chapter 4.8, Hazards, the project would not conflict with the regional or city emergency response plans, and the City's Fire Department has determined the site would have adequate emergency access. Final site plans for the proposed project would be subject to review by City Fire, prior to project development. Please refer to Chapters 4.8 Hazards, 4.13 Public Services, and 4.15 Traffic and Circulation, for additional information related to fire risk and fire service. The proposed project would not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan and, therefore, impacts are determined to be **less than significant**.

Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, would the project exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?

Please refer to the response to threshold 1) above. The proposed project site is located in a developed area of the City and is not located within or adjacent to a fire hazard severity zone. Although the project site is located adjacent to the San Luis Rey River corridor that includes native vegetation that could experience a relatively small-scale wildfire risk, the proposed project land uses would not exacerbate that risk. The preliminary site plans and emergency access for the proposed project have been reviewed by City Fire and would be in compliance with the Fire Code. It has been determined that the proposed project would not exacerbate wildfire risks, exposing occupants to pollutants and, therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

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?

Please refer to the response to threshold 1) above. While the proposed project would require the installation of water sources and other underground utilities (refer to Chapter 4.17, Utilities and Service Systems), these would not exacerbate fire risks, as the proposed project is not located within or adjacent to a fire hazard severity zone and these improvements would be constructed within an existing right-of-way or within the project site boundary. The proposed project would

not require the installation or maintenance of such infrastructure which would exacerbate fire risk, and therefore, impacts are determined to be **less than significant**.

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?

Please refer to the response to threshold 1) above. The project is not located in a VHFHSZ and risk of wildfire is considered low in the nearby San Luis Rey River corridor due the relative size of the upland habitat area and location. Due to the site location uphill relative to the river corridor, the project would not be subject to downhill flooding or landslides resulting from a fire in the river corridor. The Geotechnical Report (Appendix F) also does not note any significant landslide risks based on the soil types. 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. Therefore, impacts are determined to be **less than significant**.

4.18.5 Mitigation Measures

No significant impacts related to wildfire were identified; thus, no mitigation measures are required.

4.18.6 Level of Significance After Mitigation

As analyzed above, no significant impacts related to wildfire were identified; thus, no mitigation measures are required. Impacts related to wildfire as a result of project implementation would be **less than significant**.

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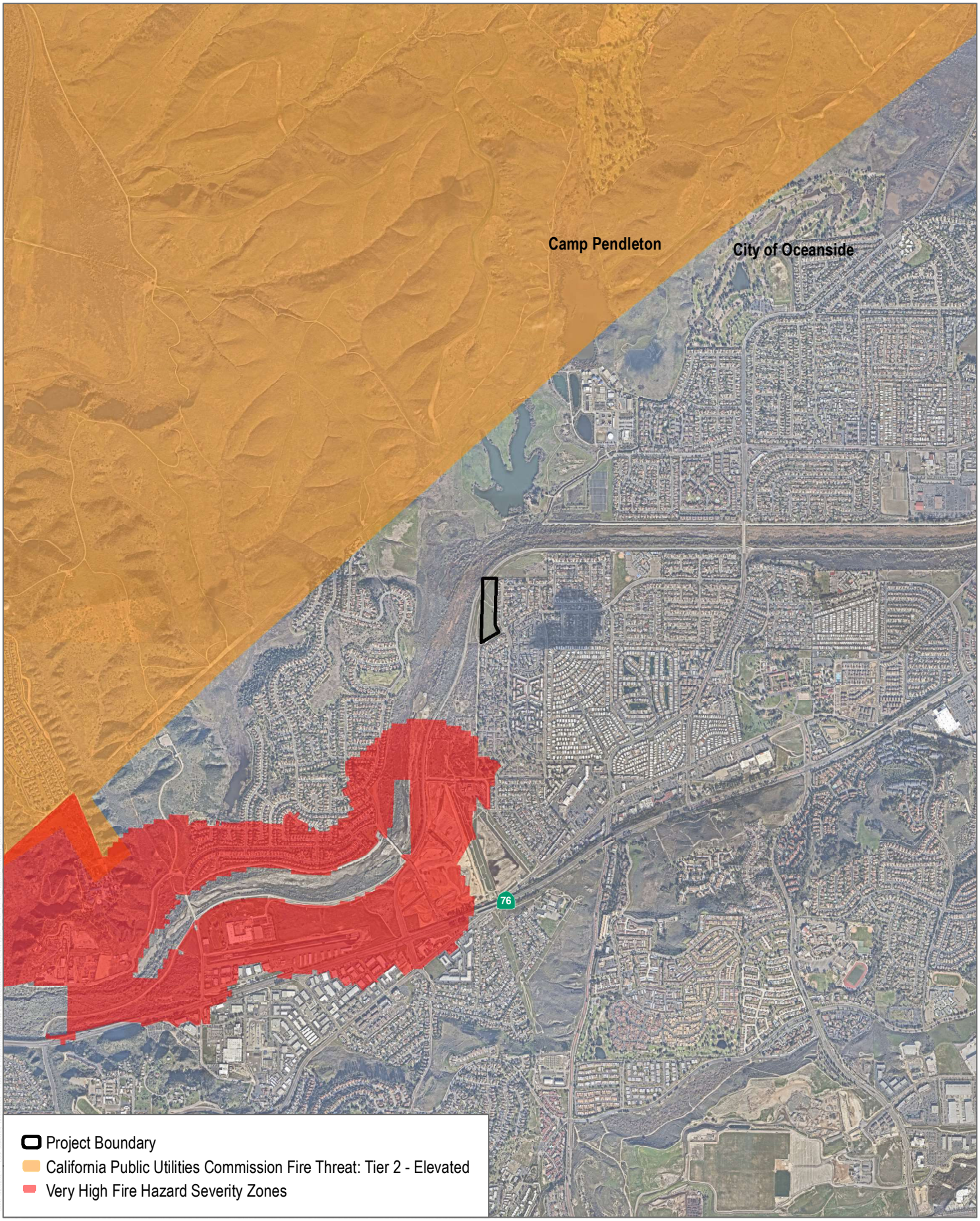

SOURCE: SANGIS 2019, CAL FIRE 2021

DUDEK

0 1,250 2,500 Feet

FIGURE 4.18-1

Fire Hazard Severity Zones

Cypress Point Project Draft Environmental Impact Report

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