

## 4.16 Recreation

This section discusses the Project's relationship to existing parks and recreational resources provided in unincorporated areas of the County.

### 4.16.1 Setting

#### 4.16.1.1 Regional and Local Setting

Section 2.2, *Project Location*, provides general information about the Project's regional and local setting. This Section 4.16.1 provides setting information specific to recreation-related resources.

The Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department (SCCPRD) oversees 28 parks and approximately 45,000 acres of publicly accessible recreation areas (County of Santa Clara, 2003; 2008). Regional parks in the County typically are 200 acres or more. SCCPRD further classifies regional parks in the County, or portions of parks within the County, as regional resource banks, regional natural park areas, regional park rural recreation areas, regional park urban recreation areas, and regional historic sites. SCCPRD parks in the Project vicinity include Rancho San Antonio County Park approximately 0.25 miles north of the EMSA, Stevens Creek County Park approximately 2.5 miles south of the Project Area, Sanborn Skyline County Park approximately 5 miles south of the Project Area, and Pescadero Creek County Park approximately 8 miles southwest of the Project Area. Other park lands include state and federal parks and preserves, which are areas with significant natural or cultural features and/or resources that merit preservation for public enjoyment and education. State and federal lands generally are preserved for residents and visitors to protect areas with scenic beauty or special habitat areas.

#### ***Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District***

The Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD) was established by voter initiative in 1972 for the purpose of acquiring and administering open space lands. The District is a public agency funded by a share of the annual total property tax collected within the District (1.7 cents per \$100 of assessed property value). Other revenue sources may include federal and state grants, interest and rental income, donations, land gifts, and note issues. The District is not a regulatory agency and does not have the power of eminent domain; it acquires conservation easements through voluntary transactions with landowners, and also purchases land outright from willing sellers. Over 50,000 acres of mountainous, foothill, and bayland open space is protected within the MROSD, which includes 25 open space preserves and covers an area of 550 square miles. The closest MROSD preserve to the Project Area is the Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve, located adjacent to north of the Quarry site and a portion of the Project Area. The SCCPRD Rancho San Antonio County Park, located on the eastern edge of the Open Space Preserve and approximately 0.25 miles north of the EMSA, is leased to and operated by MROSD. The Rancho San Antonio County Park, combined with the adjacent Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve (RSA Preserve/Park), provide 2,300 acres of trails and other recreational features to the north and west of the Project Area. The PG&E Trail forms the Quarry site's northern property line for most of the western portion of the site; this trail is situated mostly on the north-

facing slope of the hillside approximately 0.25 mile north of the Project Area (SCCPRD, 2011). The Hammond-Snyder Loop Trail is approximately 1 mile northeast of the Project Area.

Other MROSD open space preserves in the area include the Montebello Open Space Preserve, which provides an additional 3,177 acres of contiguous open space further to the west, approximately 2.5 miles from the site; and Picchetti Ranch Open Space Preserve and Fremont Older Open Space Preserve, located approximately 1.5 miles south of the site. All of these preserves contain hiking, equestrian, and bicycle trails. Other nearby trails include Black Mountain Trail to the west, and the Montebello Road/Trail to the south. In addition, there is one planned trail route that runs adjacent to the east of the Project Area (see “Countywide Trails Master Plan Update,” below).

### ***Peninsula Open Space Trust***

The Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) was founded in 1977 as a private, non-profit organization and since has protected more than 55,000 acres in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties by working directly with willing landowners. Using funds from private donors, POST is able to leverage matching funds from state and federal agencies to purchase open spaces. The nearest POST open space preserves and easements to the Project Area are the Nack Conservation Easement, The Class 1 and Class 2 projects within the Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve, the Consigny/Stevens Creek project, and the Schwabacher project within the Monte Bello Open Space Preserve. All are located within approximately 2 miles of the site.

## **4.16.1.2 Regulatory Setting**

### ***County of Santa Clara***

#### **Countywide Trails Master Plan Update**

The *1995 Santa Clara County Countywide Trails Master Plan Update* (CWTMP) provides the County’s trails route map and policies for a Countywide system that has been part of the County’s General Plan since 1980 (County of Santa Clara, 1995). The intent of the CWTMP’s policies is to “direct the County as it incrementally implements the plan while adhering to these five beliefs: 1) to build a realistic trail system that effectively meets the needs of County residents; 2) to respect private property rights through due process in the detail planning and design of trails; 3) to provide responsible trail management; inform the trail user that the idea of ‘shared-use’ includes respecting adjacent land uses; 4) to accept responsibility for any liability arising from the public’s use of County trails; and 5) to implement trails involving private property only when the landowner is a willing participant in the process.”

The *Countywide Trails Master Plan Update* Map indicates that one segment of the planned Regional Trail Route R1-A (Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail-Northern Recreation Retracement Route) runs east of the EMSA on land that is outside of the Project Area, but within the site boundary (County of Santa Clara, 1995). This trail segment is designated as “trail route within private property,” a designation intended for uses such as hiking, off-road bicycling, and

equestrian use, according to the CWTMP. According to the CWTMP Map, these trail routes are to be considered when the landowner is a willing participant.

As stated in the trail policies of the CWTMP, the County shall ensure that trail planning accommodates public recreation and other needs while recognizing the rights of private property owners, the need for safety and the requirements of environmental protection.

### **Open Space Preservation: A Program for Santa Clara County**

A 1987 report, entitled *Open Space Preservation: A Program for Santa Clara County* and also known as the *Report of the Preservation 2020 Task Force*, outlines the County's open space and park acquisition goals, in recognition of continued growth in the County due to the initial expansion of Silicon Valley (County of Santa Clara, 1987). The report identifies and ranks park and open space preservation acquisition priorities. The 4,300 acres surrounding Permanente Creek are designated as Study Area 13. Within this study area, Rancho San Antonio Park was included as a priority for park acquisition and the Permanente Creek study area a priority for open space. This area was recognized for its watershed, viewshed, and urban buffer qualities. It also states that the land use policies of the quarry should be monitored to ensure that the open space buffers surrounding the Quarry pit are maintained.

Implementation of the Project would be consistent with the recreation plans identified above.

## **4.16.2 Baseline**

The baseline used to assess potential effects on recreation-related resources is June 2007. The regional and local setting described above describes the neighborhood and regional parks, preserves, and other recreational opportunities in the vicinity of the Project Area. There were no recreation-related facilities or opportunities within the Project Area in 2007, nor are there now.

## **4.16.3 Significance Criteria**

Consistent with the County's Environmental Checklist and Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Project would have a significant impact on recreation-related resources if it would:

- a) increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated;
- b) include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment;
- c) be on, within or near a public or private park, wildlife reserve, or trail or affect existing or future recreational opportunities; or
- d) result in loss of open space rated as high priority for acquisition in the "Preservation 2020" report.

#### 4.16.4 Discussion of Criteria with No Impact to Recreation

As explained below, the Project would have no impact related to criteria a), b) or d). The potential for the Project to cause an impact related to criterion c) is discussed in Section 4.16.5.

**a) The Project would not increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated.**

The Project does not entail new residential uses. An average of up to 14 additional employees (49 employees) would be required during Phase 1 activities, and up to three additional employees would be required during Phase 2. No additional employees would be required during Phase 3 activities. Given the small number of additional staff, it is anticipated that the temporary positions would be filled from the local labor pool available in the County, with workers expected to commute to the site rather than move. Because the staff increase would come from the local labor pool, these workers are considered part of the existing demand on recreational facilities. Accordingly, the Project would not increase the demand for or use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities, and no substantial physical deterioration of any such facility would occur or be accelerated. The Project would cause no impact related to criterion a).

**b) The Project would not include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.**

The Project does not include recreational facilities and, as discussed above, would not increase demand or require the construction of new or expansion of existing recreational facilities. Accordingly, the Project would not involve any recreation-related construction that could have an adverse physical effect on the environment. The Project would cause no impact related to this criterion.

**d) The Project would not result in loss of open space rated as high priority for acquisition in the “Preservation 2020” report.**

The Permanente Creek area was rated as a high priority for acquisition in the “Preservation 2020” report due to its watershed, viewshed, and urban buffer quality. The proposed reclamation of the Project Area, including the PCRA, would make these lands suitable for future open space uses. The “Preservation 2020” report also suggests that the land use activities on the site should be monitored to ensure that a sufficient buffer is retained between surface mining operations and surrounding areas. The Project would increase the number of vegetated, open space acres set aside to provide physical separation of onsite operations from surrounding offsite uses. The Project would not result in loss of open space rated as high priority for acquisition in the “Preservation 2020” report, and so would cause no impact related to this criterion.

## 4.16.5 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

### c) **Would the Project be on, within, or near a public or private park, wildlife reserve, or trail or affect existing or future recreational opportunities?**

There are no wildlife reserves on or in the vicinity of the Project Area; therefore, the Project would cause no impact related to wildlife reserves. The Project would be implemented on private property, and not on or within public parkland or trails. Further, the landowner has not established any private parks or trails in the Project Area. Consequently, the Project would cause no impact related to a location on or within a public or private park or trail. Implementation of the Project would cause no impact to existing recreational opportunities within the Project Area, because none exist.

#### **Impact 4.16-1: The Project would be near a public park and trail and could affect existing or future recreational opportunities. (*Less than Significant Impact*)**

Recreational opportunities at the existing parks, open space preserves, and trails surrounding the Project Area include hiking, biking, riding horses, and other activities. The Project would not cause direct effects on recreational opportunities at these nearby areas, as construction, operation and maintenance activities would not interfere with access to nearby recreational areas or deteriorate park facilities. The same recreational opportunities that were available in 2007 (and currently) at the existing parks, open space preserves, and recreational trails in the vicinity of the Project Area would continue to exist and be available to the public; Project impacts would therefore be less than significant.

Indirect effects on the quality of recreational opportunities while active reclamation activities are in progress include degradation of views from the increased presence of construction equipment, and increased levels of dust and noise in the vicinity of the Project. Although construction activities required to implement the Project would be similar to and use the same equipment as the baseline activities in the WMSA and Quarry pit portions of the Project Area, in 2007 few to no mining activities were occurring in the EMSA. Consequently, reclamation activities in the EMSA would increase the presence of industrial activities in that portion of the Project Area. However, effects to views (including construction dust) from recreational areas are addressed in Section 4.1, *Aesthetics*; and effects to recreational users from increased noise are addressed in Section 4.13, *Noise*.

Implementation of the Project would cause no adverse impact to future recreational opportunities within or near the Project Area. The Project is designed to make the reclaimed lands suitable for future open space uses. Although implementation of the Project would result in improved suitability of the Project Area for recreational opportunities, there is no evidence that the Project would have any effect on the landowner's willingness to allow public use of its private property for recreational purposes. Accordingly, Project impacts to future recreational opportunities would be less than significant.

## 4.16.6 Alternatives

### 4.16.6.1 Alternative 1: Complete Backfill Alternative

Reclamation activities associated with Alternative 1 would be similar to the Project. Like the Project, Alternative 1 does not contain a residential component that would result in an increased use of existing recreational facilities, include or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, or result in the loss of open space rated as high priority for acquisition in the “Preservation 2020” report. Consequently, like the Project, Alternative 1 would have no impact for criteria a), b), and d). Regarding criterion c), Alternative 1 would cause no impact related to wildlife reserves, would not be located on or within public parkland or trails, and would cause no impact to existing recreational opportunities within the Project Area, because none exist. Alternative 1 would be near the same public parks and trails as the Project, and would not interfere with access to nearby recreational areas. However, Alternative 1 would cause slightly different indirect impacts to the quality of recreational areas than the Project, specifically for visitors to the RSA Park/Preserve. Under Alternative 1, approximately 4.8 million cubic yards of overburden stored in the EMSA would be returned to the Quarry pit during reclamation Phase 2. For visitors to the RSA Park/Preserve, removing the EMSA would eliminate the screening of views of and noises associated with the industrial uses occurring at the Cement Plant. However, effects to views (including construction dust) from recreational areas are addressed in Section 4.1, *Aesthetics*; and effects to recreational users from increased noise are addressed in Section 4.13, *Noise*. Overall, implementation of Alternative 1 would cause comparable impacts related to Recreation as those that would be caused by the Project.

### 4.16.6.2 Alternative 2: Central Materials Storage Area Alternative

Reclamation activities associated with Alternative 2 would be similar to the Project. Like the Project, Alternative 2 does not contain a residential component that would result in an increased use of existing recreational facilities, include or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, or result in the loss of open space rated as high priority for acquisition in the “Preservation 2020” report. Consequently, like the Project, Alternative 2 would have no impact for criteria a), b), and d). Regarding criterion c), Alternative 2 would cause no impact related to wildlife reserves, would not be located on or within public parkland or trails, and would cause no impact to existing recreational opportunities within the Project Area, because none exist. Alternative 2 would be near the same public parks and trails as the Project, and would not interfere with access to nearby recreational areas. Alternative 2 would cause slightly less indirect impacts to the quality of recreational areas than the Project, specifically for visitors to the RSA Park/Preserve. Under Alternative 2, the reclamation of the eastern and central portions of the EMSA would begin immediately, and overburden generated by continued mining in the Quarry pit would be stored in an area farther removed from RSA Park/Preserve. For visitors to the RSA Park/Preserve, some noise impacts would be located further away than under the Project (at the CMSA instead of the EMSA), and reclamation would occur sooner than under the Project, lessening impacts related to views. However, effects to views (including construction dust) from recreational areas are addressed in Section 4.1, *Aesthetics*; and effects to recreational users from

increased noise are addressed in Section 4.13, *Noise*. Overall, implementation of Alternative 2 would be slightly more advantageous than the Project with respect to impacts to Recreation.

### 4.16.6.3 No Project Alternative

Reclamation activities associated with the No Project Alternative would be similar to the Project, but seven years later than under the Project. Like the Project, the No Project Alternative does not contain a residential component that would result in an increased use of existing recreational facilities, include or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, or result in the loss of open space rated as high priority for acquisition in the “Preservation 2020” report. Consequently, like the Project, the No Project Alternative would have no impact for criteria a), b), and d). Regarding criterion c), the No Project Alternative would cause no impact related to wildlife reserves, would not be located on or within public parkland or trails, and would cause no impact to existing recreational opportunities within the Project Area, because none exist. The No Project Alternative would be near the same public parks and trails as the Project, and would not interfere with access to nearby recreational areas. The No Project Alternative would cause similar impacts to views for visitors to the RSA Park/Preserve, and slightly less indirect impacts to the quality of recreational areas because noise impacts would be lessened. However, effects to views (including construction dust) from recreational areas are addressed in Section 4.1, *Aesthetics*; and effects to recreational users from increased noise are addressed in Section 4.13, *Noise*. Overall, implementation of the No Project Alternative would cause comparable impacts related to Recreation as the Project.

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## References – Recreation

- County of Santa Clara. 1987. *Open Space Preservation: A Program for Santa Clara County, Report of the 2020 Task Force*, Santa Clara County Department of the Environment, Recreation and Parks.
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- County of Santa Clara. 2003. *Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation System: Strategic Plan*. Environmental Resources Agency, Parks and Recreation Department. June 19.
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