Section 4.13
Population and Housing

4.13.1 Introduction

This section addresses potential impacts of the proposed project on population, housing, and employment in the project area; and provides an overview of current population estimates, projected population growth, current housing, employment trends, and the regulatory setting.

Sources of information and data provided in this section include but are not limited to the Kern County General Plan and Housing Element, the 2000 Regional Housing Assessment Plan, and demographic information from the California Department of Finance (DOF), the California Economic Development Department (CEDD), the U.S. Census Bureau, and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

4.13.2 Environmental Setting

Regional and Local Population Trends

With an area of 8,202 square miles, Kern County is the third largest county in California. Because of its size, the Kern County Housing Element divides the County into nine subareas. The project site would be located in the following two subareas:

- **Tehachapi Subarea.** The Tehachapi subarea encompasses 1,264 square miles, and had a population of 33,077 in 2006 with 21,098 residents in its unincorporated areas (Kern County, 2008). Within this subarea, the city of Tehachapi is the only incorporated city, and the unincorporated communities within the Tehachapi subarea include Golden Hills, Stallion Springs, Bear Valley Springs, Cummings Valley, Alpine Forest and Old Town, none of which are in the vicinity of the proposed project site.

- **Lake Isabella Subarea.** The Lake Isabella subarea encompasses 1,570 square miles, which is geographically the largest subarea. The population was 16,288 in 2006. The subarea is a mountainous region without any incorporated cities. The largest unincorporated communities are Wofford Heights, Bodfish, Lake Isabella and Kernville. (Kern County, 2008)

The project area is sparsely populated. There are no residential structures located within the project site, and a total of four residential structures are located within one mile of the boundaries of the proposed project site.

Table 4.13-1 presents current population trends in Kern County, based on the population estimates and projections from DOF with the 2000 benchmark (DOF population estimates are projections and are subject to change). As shown in the table, population growth in Kern County is heavily concentrated in the incorporated cities.