

## 3.11 WILDFIRE

This section analyzes the potential impacts the Project elements would have on wildfires in the Project vicinity. The Project is in a Local Responsibility Area (LRA)<sup>1</sup> and is not in or near a State Responsibility Area (SRA)<sup>2</sup>. The Project is not located on lands classified as Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ) (CalFire, 2020). In addition to the Project vicinity, this evaluation considers at a programmatic or general level of analysis, the potential wildfire impacts of development of an off-site borrow area, one of the Project elements. The 1992 Yolo County Central Landfill (YCCL) Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and 2005 YCCL EIR prepared for the YCCL did not include Wildfire as a Section. Wildfire was added as a section in Appendix G in the 2019 update to the *CEQA Guidelines*.

### 3.11.1 SETTING

According to the 2030 Countywide General Plan, wildland fire danger varies throughout Yolo County. To quantify potential risk from wildland fire, Cal Fire has developed a Fire Hazard Severity Scale that uses three criteria (fuel loading, fire weather and topography) to determine fire hazard severity. As discussed above, the project is not located in a VHFHSZ. The high risk for wildland fires occurs in the western portion of Yolo County, west of Esparto and west of Winters. The County and its municipalities fight a large number of vegetation fires (mainly in the summer). These fires tend to occur along major highways and railroads, and usually do not damage structures (Yolo County, 2009). The YCCL is situated in an area dominated by agriculture, which is not prone to wildfires.

## Regulatory Setting

### ***2030 Countywide General Plan***

The Health and Safety Element of the 2030 Countywide General Plan ensures that appropriate consideration of both natural and human-made hazards and risks are factored into land use decision-making. The element includes the following policies pertaining to Wildfire that are relevant to the project:

*Goal HS-3: Wildland Fires.* Protect the public and reduce damage to property from wildfire hazard.

*Policy HS-3.1:* Manage the development review process to protect people, structures, and personal property from unreasonable risk from wildland fires.

*Policy HS-3.2:* Encourage well-organized and efficient coordination between fire agencies and the County.

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<sup>1</sup> Local Responsibility Area (LRA). LRAs are areas not protected by Cal Fire, generally they are densely populated areas, incorporated cities, and agricultural lands.

<sup>2</sup> State Responsibility Area (SRA). CAL FIRE has a legal responsibility to provide fire protection on all SRA lands, which are defined based on land ownership, population density and land use.

*Action HS-A38:* Require new and/or existing development to establish “defensible space” by providing for clearance around structures, using fire resistant ground cover, building with fire-resistant roofing materials, fuel load reduction, and taking other appropriate measures.

*Action HS-A45:* Coordinate with fire districts to ensure fire safe design and construction of new development.

### 3.11.2 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

#### Significance Criteria

Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines* states that a project would result in a significant impact to Wildfire if located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones and 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 a 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 of 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.

The Project is not within Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ) (Cal Fire, 2020).

#### Impact Analysis

##### **Impact 3.11.1: The Project could result in an increased risk in wildfires. (Less than Significant)**

The Project would have the potential to result in wildfire through inadvertent events at the YCCL. However, as discussed above, the Project is not located in or near an SRA or within VHFHSZ. The YCCL is located in an LRA. The Davis Fire Department provides fire protection services to the YCCL. The risk of off-site wildfires reaching the YCCL is minimized by maintaining graded perimeter access roads that serve as fire breaks. Several off-site fires along County Road 104 have been stopped at the perimeter road in the past, along with the help from the on-site water truck. The YCCL would continue maintaining the graded perimeter access roads and continue to keep a water truck on-site for fire suppression and support. The Project would not conflict with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. The Project would continue to follow existing fire control measures, emergency plans at the YCCL and continue to keep staff trained to detect and handle small on-site fires. The Project would continue to comply with the Davis Fire Department’s fire suppression requirements. The Project would not expose Project occupants to pollutants from wildfire or spread of wildfire including fire hazards from slope, prevailing winds,

and other factors that exacerbate wildfire risks. The Project would not require installation of associated infrastructure that may exacerbate wildfire risk. As discussed in **Section 3.14 Public Services and Utilities**, extensive fire control measures are implemented at the YCCL that have proven to be effective at minimizing fire risks. In addition, **Section 3.14** includes several mitigation measures intended for fire protection services at the landfill (including operational policies, temperature control, California Fire Code, and other applicable regulations) prior to development of future Project elements to reduce exposure of people or structures to significant risk from wildfire. The existing fire control and suppression measures at YCCL efficiently reduce the risk of wildfires at the Project site, thus implementation of the Project would not substantially increase the risk of wildfire and the impacts related to wildfire would be less than significant.

### *Mitigation Measures*

None Required.

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### **Impact 3.11.2: The non-specific off-site borrow area Project element could create impacts related to wildfire. (Less than Significant)**

The proposed non-specific off-site borrow area has not yet been identified, and no parcel of land has been purchased for site development. As discussed above, there are areas in Yolo County that are classified as VHFHSZ. However, those zones are located in western Yolo County. The nearest VHFHSZ is located at least 16 miles west of the Project site. Therefore, it is unlikely that the future off-site borrow area would be in western Yolo County, as this distance would have high hauling costs that would discourage selection of an off-site borrow area this far from YCCL. A more feasible off-site borrow area would ideally be located near the YCCL in an LRA under the Davis Fire Department's jurisdiction for fire protection services. Depending on the location of the off-site borrow area and the existing site conditions, there could be a potential for wildfires from natural vegetation. However, soil borrow activities would include removal of any form of natural vegetation from the area in order to excavate soil. The future off-site borrow area is not anticipated to require any infrastructure or maintenance for fire suppression that would cause environmental impacts or development of permanent on-site structures that could be damaged during a wildfire. Further, the location of the off-site borrow area would likely not be located in an area where slope, wind, flooding, landslides, and drainage would exacerbate wildfire risks. The off-site borrow area would implement fire control measures, emergency plans, and staff training to detect and handle small on-site fires. Since fire control and suppression measures could efficiently reduce the risk of wildfires at the proposed off-site borrow area, it would not substantially increase the risk of wildfires and impacts related to wildfire would be less than significant. However, a more detailed, site-specific wildfire analysis should be part of project-level environmental review of this project component when a location for the off-site borrow area has been identified.

### *Mitigation Measures*

None required.

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### 3.11.3 REFERENCES

Cal Fire. *Fire Hazard Severity Zone Viewer*. <https://egis.fire.ca.gov/FHSZ/>. Accessed December 16, 2020.

Yolo County. 2009. *2030 Countywide General Plan, Health and Safety Element*. November 2009.

Yolo County. 2018. *Joint Technical Document, Yolo County Central Landfill, Yolo County, California*. June 2018.

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