

4.11 Mineral Resources

This section describes the existing mineral resources conditions of the project site and vicinity, identifies associated regulatory requirements, evaluates potential impacts, and identifies mitigation measures related to implementation of the proposed project.

Summary of Notice of Preparation Comments

A Notice of Preparation (NOP) was circulated from January 19, 2019, to February 19, 2019. A total of 150 letters were received during this comment period. No comments related to mineral resources were received. Please see Appendix 1-1, NOP Scoping Comments, for a complete compilation of comments received on the NOP.

4.11.1 Existing Conditions

The project site is located on approximately ~~172~~173 acres within the Mission Valley community of the City of San Diego (City). The project area is surrounded by major freeways, roadways, existing urban development, and the San Diego River. Historically, Mission Valley was home to gravel and rock quarries, agricultural uses, and natural open space. Over the past 60+ years, the area has been developed with office buildings along both the north and south side of Interstate 8, hotels, and large shopping areas, as well as over 10,000 residential units in numerous mixed-use and multifamily developments (City of San Diego 2015).

The project site is underlain by fill soils placed during grading for Stadium construction in 1966, Quaternary alluvial flood-plain deposits, and the Friars Formation. The fill material used at the project site was primarily derived from the Stadium Conglomerate (clayey sand and gravel) and some of the underlying Friars Formation. Fill thickness is estimated to range up to 35 feet at the project site (Appendix 4.8-2). The topography of the project site generally slopes from the east to west and from north to south with the perimeter around the existing San Diego County Credit Union (SDCCU) Stadium elevated to create adequate drainage away from the existing stadium.

As required by the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) of 1975 (California PRC, Sections 2710–2796), the California State Mining and Geology Board classifies California mineral resources with the Mineral Resource Zones (MRZs) system. These zones have been established based on the presence or absence of significant sand and gravel deposits and crushed rock source (e.g., products used in the production of cement). As shown in Figure 4.11-1, the project site is located within MRZ-2, as indicated on the State of California Department of Conservation California Geological Survey (DOC 1996). The MRZ-2 mineral resource classification indicates areas known or inferred to have mineral resources, the significance of which is undetermined based on available data (DOC 2000).

4.11.2 Relevant Plans, Policies, and Ordinances

State

Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975

As mandated by SMARA, the California State Mining and Geology Board classifies the state's mineral resources with the MRZ system. This system includes identification of presence/absence conditions for meaningful sand and gravel deposits.

The classification system emphasizes Portland Cement Concrete aggregates, which are used in manufacturing strong, durable concrete, and have stricter specifications than other aggregate materials.

Mineral land classification for the region is designated as follows (California PRC, Sections 2710–2796):

- **MRZ-1** – Areas where adequate information indicates that no significant mineral deposits are present or where it is judged that little likelihood exists for their presence.
- **MRZ-2** – Areas where adequate information indicates that significant mineral deposits are present or where it is judged that there is a high likelihood for their presence.
- **MRZ-3** – Areas containing mineral deposits, the significance of which cannot be evaluated from available data.
- **MRZ-4** – Areas where available information is inadequate for assignment to any other MR zone.

Additionally, SMARA Sections 2762 and 2763 require that jurisdictions issue a Statement of Reasons for projects that include the elimination of the potential for extraction in areas of regionally significant minerals resources. SMARA requires that the lead agency consider this elimination of extraction potential in their land use decisions. The Statement of Reasons lists potential reasons to approve the proposed project and to include elimination of the potential for extraction of all of this resource; decision makers may adopt or modify any of these. The Statement of Reasons must be forwarded to the State Geologist and California State Mining and Geology Board for review in conjunction with the environmental review of the proposed project.

Local

San Diego State University (SDSU) is part of the California State University (CSU), which is a state agency, and as such, the proposed project is not subject to local government planning and land use plans, policies, or regulations. However, for informational purposes, the proposed project has considered local planning documents and the project's site location within, and relationship to, each. The proposed project would be subject to federal and state agency planning documents, but would not be subject to regional or local planning documents such as the City's General Plan, Mission Valley Community Plan, or City municipal zoning code.

City of San Diego General Plan

The following goal and policies from the City of San Diego General Plan Conservation Element address mineral resources.

- **Goal** – Balance mineral production and conservation with habitat and topography protection.
- **Policy CE-K.1.** Promote the recycling and reclamation of construction materials to provide for the City's current and future growth and development needs.
- **Policy CE-K.2.** Permit new or expanded mining operations within the MHPA [Multi-Habitat Planning Area] in accordance with MSCP [Multiple Species Conservation Plan] policies and guidelines.
- **Policy CE-K.3.** Produce sand and gravel with minimal harm and disturbance to adjacent property and communities.
- **Policy CE-K.4.** Plan rehabilitation of depleted mineral areas to facilitate reuse consistent with state requirements, the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA), and local planning goals and policies, including the MSCP.

4.11.3 Significance Criteria

The significance criteria used to evaluate the project impacts to mineral resources are based on Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines. According to Appendix G, a significant impact related to mineral resources would occur if the project would:

1. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?
2. Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?

4.11.4 Impacts Analysis

Would the project result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?

As discussed in Section 4.11.1, the project site is located within MRZ-2, as indicated on the State of California Department of Conservation California Geological Survey, which indicates areas known or inferred to have mineral resources, the significance of which is undetermined based on available data (DOC 2000). However, the project site is underlain by fill soils placed during grading for Stadium construction in 1966, Quaternary alluvial flood-plain deposits, and the Friars Formation. The fill material used at the project site was primarily derived from the Stadium Conglomerate, which possesses a relatively high percent of gravel, cobbles, and boulders. Some fill material was also derived from the underlying Friars Formation. The surface and intermediate gravels, which are more easy to access, are not as widespread, and therefore not a reliable resource. Specifically, although there is a significant amount of cobble within the subsurface soils on the project site, they are not found in continuous thick zones across the site, but appear to be localized stream channel deposits that vary in thickness from a few feet to 15 to 20 feet. The exception would be the basal gravel layer atop the Friars Formation. These gravels are up to 25 feet thick and are relatively continuous; however, these materials are very deep, at depths of approximately 40 to 75 feet, and therefore, more costly to obtain. These minerals underlying the project site may have the potential to be mined, processed, and utilized as a source of sand and gravel.

Prior to implementation of the proposed project, the project site could be mined for any existing mineral resources on site. However, the site is urban, currently the location of existing development, and does not have an operating mine, sampling, or availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state per the City of San Diego's General Plan. Therefore, the project site is not currently a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state.

In addition, the existing land uses surrounding the project site would preclude the majority of the project site from extractive operations. Mining operations require an adequate setback from certain land uses due to the variety of environmental issues associated with mining, which include, but are not limited to, noise, truck traffic, air quality, and visual resources impacts. Incompatible land uses may include improvements of high cost, such as high-density residential developments, intensive industrial developments, commercial developments, sensitive biological resources, and major public facilities.

The majority of the project site is surrounded by various incompatible land uses, including high-density residential developments to the northwest and east, lower density residential developments to north, and commercial developments to the west and south. The project site borders the City's MHPA Preserve to the south. Additionally, the Metropolitan Transit System Trolley Green Line transects the project site with the Stadium Trolley Station located on site. Therefore, these resources are already constrained by the existing conditions of the project site.

For instance, typical extractive operations require a 1,300-foot setback from such incompatible land uses in the County of San Diego (County of San Diego 2008). According to the County of San Diego Guidelines for Determining Significance for Mineral Resources, the primary typical adverse effect to mineral resources in San Diego County is the loss of their availability by the placement of inappropriate and incompatible land uses, which either directly or indirectly make the resource inaccessible for future extraction. Using this setback, due to the location of incompatible land uses surrounding the project site, only the central portion of the project site, which is largely compromised of the footprint of the existing SDCCU Stadium, would not be located within this 1,300-foot buffer or other conflicting land uses as shown in Figure 4.11-2. Development of the proposed project would also place incompatible uses on site, including high-density residential and office/commercial land uses.

Additionally, while the proposed project would not be under the jurisdiction of the City of San Diego, the current City zoning for the project site is Mission Valley Planned District – Commercial Visitor (MVPD-MV-CV) (City of San Diego 2019). According to the City's Zoning Regulations, mining and extractive industries are not permitted within the Commercial Visitor zone. Therefore, mining and extractive industries would not be a permitted use under the site's current zoning.

Further, in consideration of San Diego Municipal Code Section 22.0908, the new multipurpose stadium and proposed River Park would be completed no later than 7 years from the date of execution of the Purchase and Sale Agreement between CSU/SDSU and the City. Thus, any potential extractive operations would not be financially viable within this short time frame to complete the Stadium and River Park.

Lastly, while there may be potential mineral resources on the project site, mining operations would be restricted due to the presence of groundwater across the project site, which creates difficult and cost-prohibitive mining conditions. Therefore, because the project site is not currently a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state, and due to existing, surrounding development, the presence of shallow groundwater, and the constrained time frame contemplated by San Diego Municipal Code Section 22.0908 for development of the River Park and stadium on any potential mining operations that could occur, impacts to mineral resources are considered **less than significant**.

Would the project result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?

The project site is not delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan as a locally important mineral resource recovery site. The project site is located within MRZ-2 as indicated in the City and County of San Diego General Plans, similar to the State of California Department of Conservation CGS previously discussed. However, as discussed above, while the proposed project would result in the permanent loss of potential mineral resources, impacts on any potential mining operations that could occur on the project site are considered **less than significant** due to the presence of existing surrounding land uses, the presence of shallow groundwater, and the constrained time frame per San Diego Municipal Code Section 22.0908.

Would the project result in a cumulative impact to mineral resources?

The cumulative impact area for mineral resources is the San Diego region. While cumulatively considerable projects, including those listed in Table 3-1 of Chapter 3, may impact mineral resources, the project site is not a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state per the City of San Diego's General Plan, nor is the project site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan as a locally important mineral resource recovery site. Therefore, the proposed project **would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact** to mineral resources.

4.11.5 Summary of Impacts Prior to Mitigation

Impacts to mineral resources would be **less than significant**.

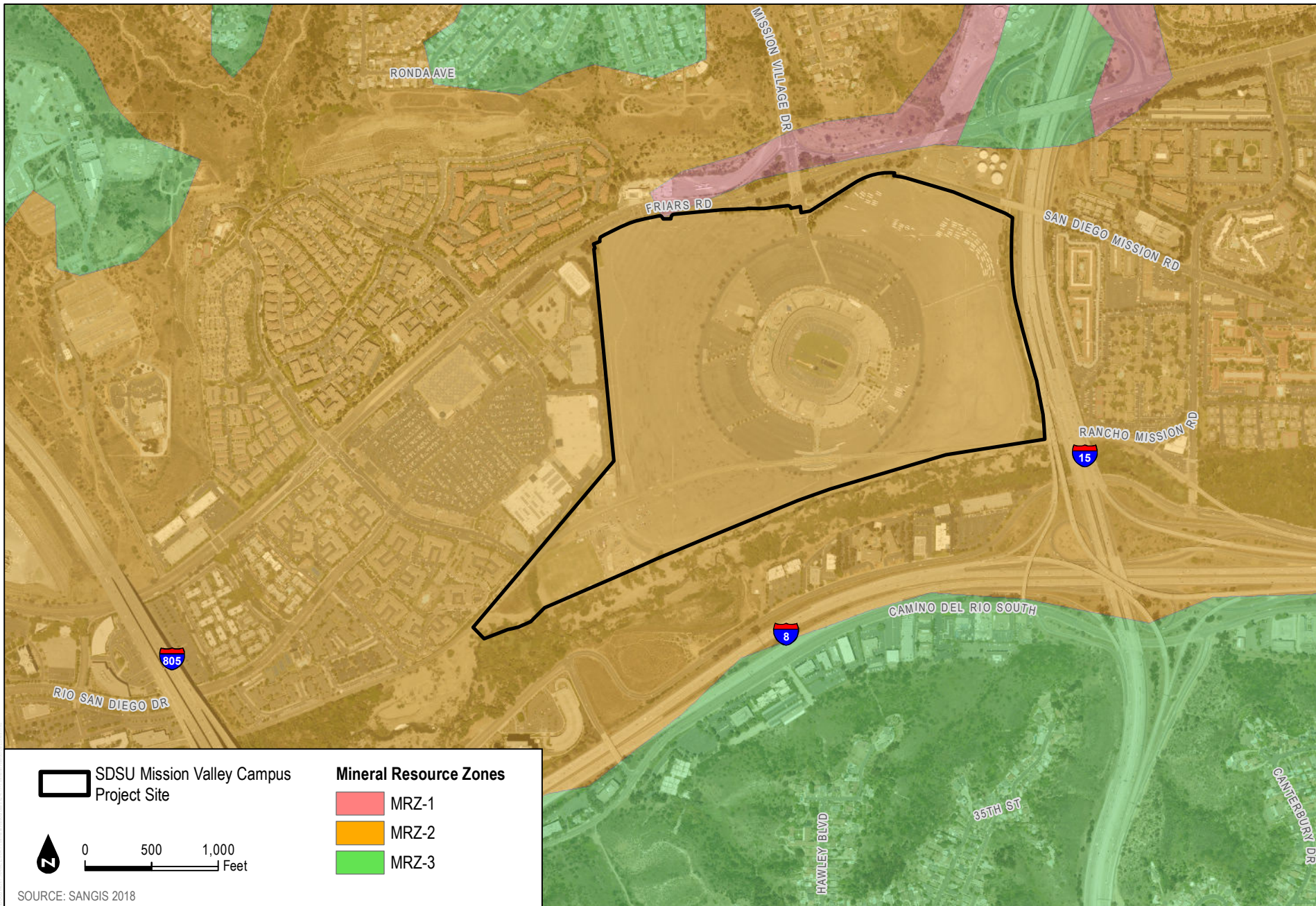
4.11.6 Mitigation Measures

Impacts to mineral resources would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

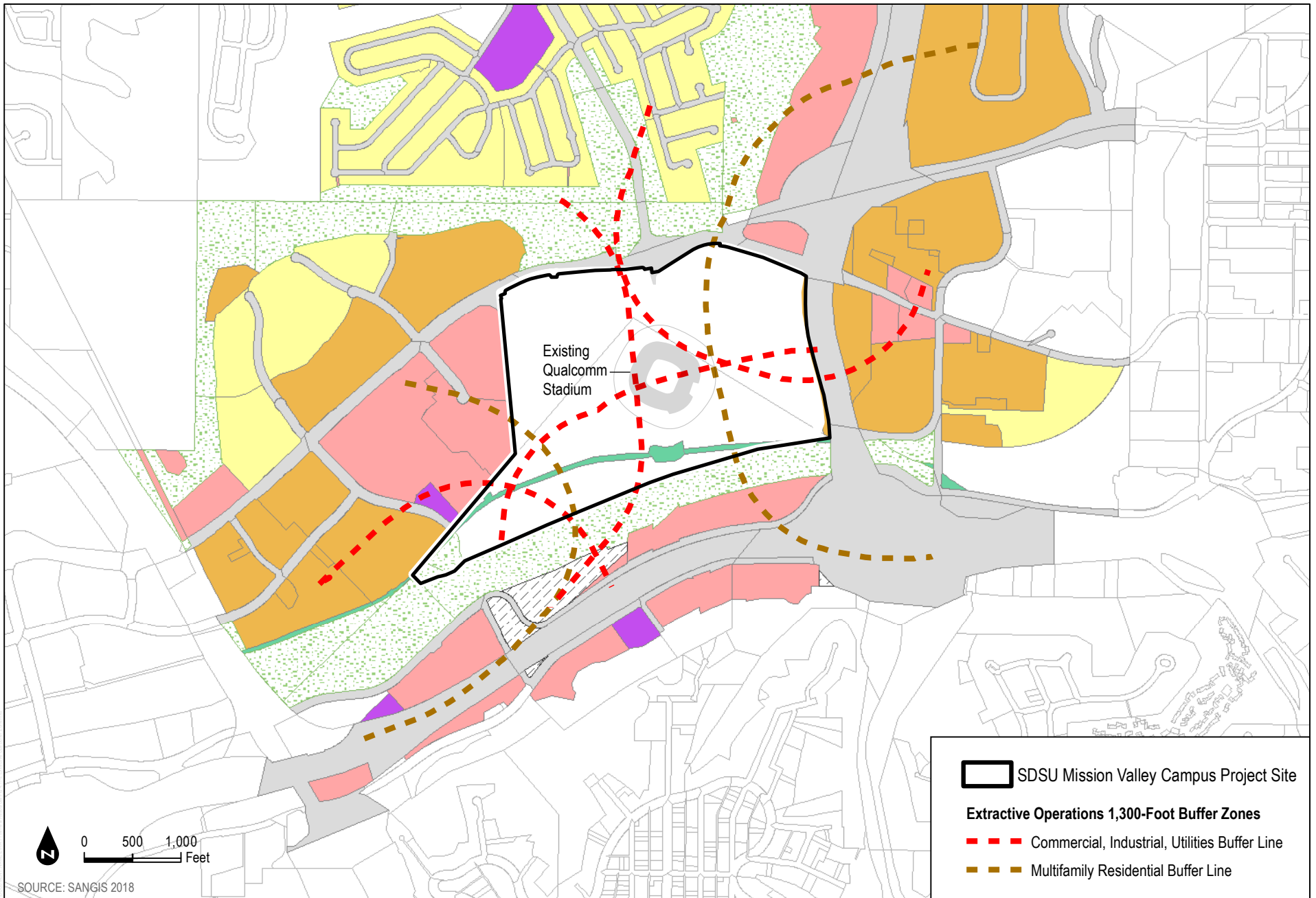
4.11.7 Level of Significance After Mitigation

Impacts to mineral resources would be **less than significant**.

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