

4.13 POPULATION AND HOUSING

4.13.1 Regulatory Setting

Southern California Association of Governments

Imperial County is included within the regional planning area of the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), which is a Joint Powers Authority under California state law. SCAG was established as an association of local governments and agencies that voluntarily convene as a forum to address regional issues and represents 6 counties, 191 cities, and more than 18 million residents within an area covering more than 38,000 square miles. SCAG has prepared regional population projections for Imperial County which are described below in Section 4.13.2.

County of Imperial General Plan Housing Element

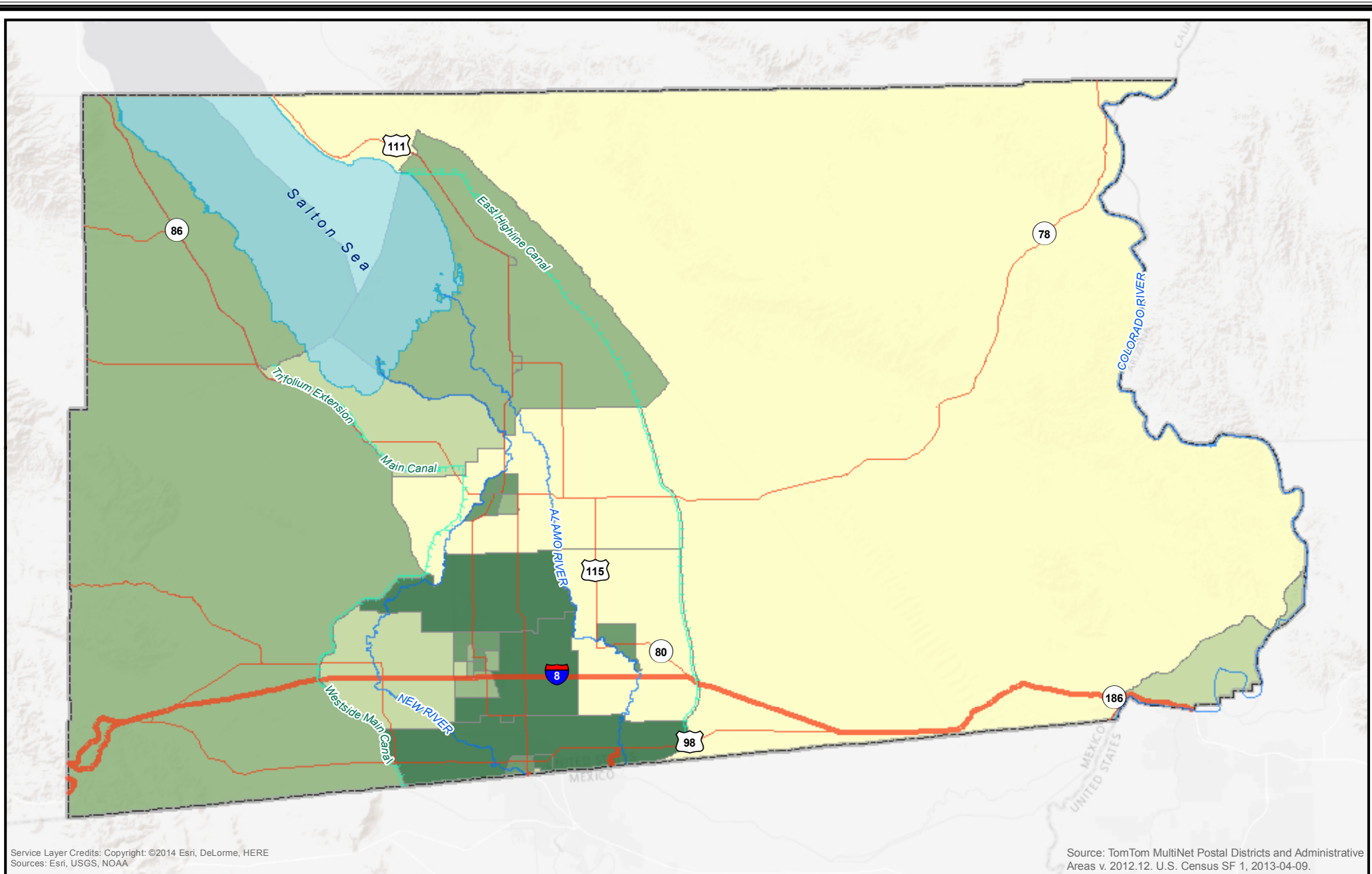
The *Housing Element* of the County of Imperial General Plan is one of the seven County of Imperial General Plan elements mandated by the State of California, as articulated in Sections 65580 and 65589.8 of the Government Code. Each city and county is required to discuss how it will meet its fair share of the housing need in the state. The purpose of the *Housing Element* is to ensure that local governments adequately plan to meet the housing needs of all people within the community (ICPDS 2008a). The County of Imperial *Housing Element* for 2008–2014 includes policies that address housing, employment, and growth management, as well as the adequate provision of resources, facilities, and services (ICPDS 2008a). The *Housing Element* contains a number of goals and policies to encourage continuous analysis and evaluation of population trends and housing needs to allow for the development of sites and facilities that sustain population growth in the County and development in existing communities. The *Housing Element* also acknowledges the governmental, environmental, infrastructure, and land use constraints on residential development in the County.

4.13.2 Existing Environmental Setting

Imperial County is the least populated county in the region, with approximately 177,000 residents. The two largest cities within the County are El Centro and Calexico, each with over 35,000 persons. Figure 4.13-1 shows existing population levels by census tract within Imperial County.

Population by Race and Ethnicity

The U.S. Census Bureau reports that in the year 2010, 58 percent of the population in Imperial County identified as White, representing the largest race category within the County. Six percent of the County's population identified as Black, American Indian & Alaskan Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander. Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islanders make up less than 1 percent of the population within the County, representing the smallest group. Thirty percent of the population identified as "Other," and 4 percent reported two or more races. Eighty percent of the population identified as persons of Hispanic origin. See Table 4.13-1 for racial and ethnic composition.



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Sources: Esri, USGS, NOAA

Source: TomTom MultiNet Postal Districts and Administrative Areas v. 2012.12. U.S. Census SF 1, 2013-04-09.

Legend

Population by Census Tract (2010)

- 933 - 2,000
- 2,001 - 4,000
- 4,001 - 6,000
- 6,001 - 8,000
- 8,001 - 13,000

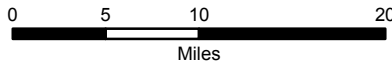


Figure 4.13-1
Imperial County Renewable Energy and
Transmission Element Update PEIR
Existing Population

Table 4.13-1: Racial and Ethnic Composition, 2010

Race	Imperial County
White	102,553
Black or African American	5,773
American Indian & Alaskan Native	3,059
Asian	2,843
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander	165
Other	52,413
Two or More Races	7,722
Total	174,528
Persons of Hispanic Origin	140,271
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010	

Population by Age

The age characteristics of a population are an important factor in evaluating current and future housing needs. Each age group consists of distinct lifestyles, income ranges, family types and sizes, and housing preferences. Evaluating the age breakdown of a community is important in determining future housing development.

Residents aged 25 to 54 are considered to be in their prime working years and represent approximately 40 percent of the population within the County. School-age and young adults represent 32 percent of the population. Persons aged 65 and older account for 10 percent of the population in the County. The retirement age group consists of a significantly smaller portion of the population than the population in their prime working years. This could suggest that Imperial County has more appeal to the working-age population than to persons of retirement age. Imperial County attracts many seasonal migratory workers and retired people, especially from November through February (ICPDS 2008a).

Table 4.13-2: Population by Age, 2010

Age (years)	Imperial County
Under 5	13,526
5-14	28,377
15-19	15,047
20-24	13,188
25-34	24,197
35-44	22,941
45-54	22,497
55-64	16,603
65 and over	18,152
Total	174,528
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010	

Trends

Within the Southern California region, six neighboring counties cover over 38,000 square miles: Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura. The urban center of the region is Los Angeles County, which contains 54 percent of the region’s population.

Table 4.13-3: Population Trends – Imperial County and Neighboring Counties

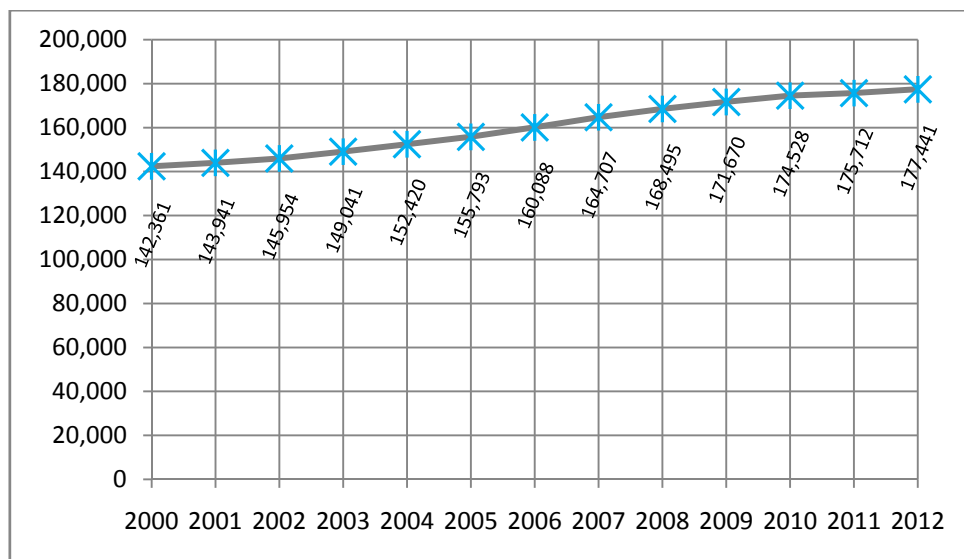
County	Year		Change	
	2000	2010	Number	Percent
Imperial	142,361	174,528	32,167	18.43%
Los Angeles	9,519,338	9,818,605	299,267	3.05%
Orange	2,846,289	3,010,232	163,943	5.45%
Riverside	1,545,387	2,189,641	644,254	29.42%
San Bernardino	1,709,434	2,035,210	325,776	16.01%
Ventura	753,197	823,318	70,121	8.52%
Total	16,516,006	18,051,534	1,535,528	8.51%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000, 2010

Between the years 2000 and 2010, the six counties in the Southern California region grew by approximately 1,500,000 people, representing an 8.5 percent growth in regional population. The majority of the growth occurred in Riverside County, where 42 percent of the total increase occurred.

As shown in Figure 4.13-2 and Table 4.13-4, the total population in Imperial County increased by 35,080 between 2000 and 2012. According to the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), during this 12-year period, the County’s population rate of 24.6 percent was higher than the SCAG region rate of 10.4 percent. Imperial County has 0.97 percent of the total population within the Southern California region (SCAG 2013a).

Figure 4.13-2: Imperial County Population Change from 2000 to 2012



Source: Southern California Association of Governments 2013

Table 4.13-4: Population Change in Imperial County Cities from 2000 - 2012

City	Year		Change	
	2000	2012	Number	Percent
Brawley	22,052	25,465	3,413	13.40%
Calexico	27,109	39,533	12,424	31.43%
Calipatria	7,289	7,980	691	8.66%
El Centro	38,025	43,396	5,371	12.38%
Holtville	5,612	6,049	437	7.22%
Imperial	7,560	15,353	7,793	50.76%
Westmorland	2,131	2,270	139	6.12%
Unincorporated County Area	32,583	37,395	4,812	12.87%
Total	142,361	177,441	35,080	19.77%

Source: Southern California Association of Governments, California Department of Finance

Population Projections

The Housing Needs Assessment prepared for the Imperial County General Plan *Housing Element* provides information on the expected population growth for the County from 2000 to 2050 (Table 4.13-5). The County is expected to experience a strong growth rate, growing by 26 percent from 2010 to 2020 and growing another 19 percent from 2020 to 2030.

Table 4.13-5: Population Projections

	2000	2010	2020	2030	2040	2050
Imperial County	143,763	189,675	239,149	283,693	334,951	387,763

Source: Imperial County General Plan *Housing Element* 2008, California Department of Finance P-3 Report January 2007

Housing

The County of Imperial adopted its current *Housing Element* of the General Plan in 2008, including the County's housing goals, objectives, policies, and programs. The County is currently in compliance with State regulations, and no changes to the existing *Housing Element* are being made.

Household Characteristics

Prior to determining existing housing problems and anticipating future housing needs, current housing occupancy characteristics should be identified. A household consists of any group of people living together in a residence, regardless of relation. For example, two people living in an apartment as roommates is considered a household, just as a couple with two children living in the same dwelling unit is considered a household. A survey of household characteristics is useful to determine household size

trends, income, overcrowding or under-utilization of housing, and the number of special needs households.

Housing Inventory and Market Conditions

Persons per Household

An important indicator of the relationship between population growth and household formation is “persons per household.” If persons per household were increasing, then population would be growing faster than households. Conversely, if the number of persons per household is decreasing, then households would be forming at a faster rate than population growth. In Imperial County, persons per household increased by 0.30 percent from 2000 to 2010 (Table 4.13-6).

Table 4.13-6: Persons per Household

Area	2000	2010	Percent Change
Imperial County	3.33	3.34	0.30%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000, 2010			

Number of Households

According to the General Plan *Housing Element*, 9,148 households occupied the unincorporated portions of Imperial County in 2000. Approximately 30 percent of the households were renter-occupied, while the remaining 70 percent were owner-occupied. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of households in California and Imperial County increased by approximately 9 percent and 20 percent, respectively (Table 4.13-7).

Table 4.13-7: Total Households

Area	2000	2010	Percent Change
California	11,502,870	12,577,498	8.54%
Imperial County	39,384	49,126	19.83%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000, 2010			

Vacancy Rates

The vacancy rate is a measure of the general availability of housing and an indicator of the relationship between housing supply and demand in the County of Imperial. If the demand for housing is greater than the available supply, then the vacancy rate is probably low; and the price of housing will most likely increase or remain stable. A high vacancy rate may indicate either the existence of a high number of units undesirable for occupancy or an oversupply of housing units. The availability of vacant housing units provides households with choices of different unit types to accommodate changing needs. The 2010 U.S. Census reports a homeowner vacancy rate of 3.5 percent and a rental vacancy rate of 7.5 percent. These rates represent a 2.1 percent and 4.7 percent increase, respectively, from 2000.

Income

Table 4.13-8 provides a list of the income distributions of households in Imperial County between 2007 and 2011. The table also shows that the overall median income for the County was \$39,402. The households listed in the “less than \$10,000” category are considered “extremely low-income.” According to the *Housing Element*, the projected extremely low-income housing need over the 2008 to 2014 planning period is 1,658 units (or 50 percent of the very low-income RHNA allocation).

Table 4.13-8: Imperial County Household Income

Income	Number	Percent*
Less than \$10,000	4,392	9.1%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	4,706	9.8%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	7,315	15.2%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	5,846	12.1%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	5,882	12.2%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	7,852	16.3%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	4,929	10.2%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	4,849	10.1%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1,446	3.0%
\$200,000 or more	900	1.9%
Total	48,117	
Imperial County Median Income	39,402	
*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding		
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey		

Poverty

The State of California issues annual income limits for each county that are used in determining eligibility for assisted housing programs within each county. The California Health and Safety Code requires that the limits established by the State for the low, very low, and extremely low income categories are the same as those in the equivalent levels established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for its Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8 program). Table 4.13-9 provides the income limits by household size.

Table 4.13-9: State Income Limits for 2013, Imperial County

Income Category	Number of Persons in Household							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Extremely Low-	12,150	13,900	15,650	17,350	18,750	20,150	21,550	22,950
Very Low-	20,300	23,200	26,100	28,950	31,300	33,600	35,900	38,250
Low -	32,450	37,050	41,700	46,300	50,050	53,750	57,450	61,150
Median -	40,550	46,300	52,100	57,900	62,550	67,150	71,800	76,450
Moderate -	48,650	55,600	62,550	69,500	75,050	80,600	86,200	91,750
Source: California Department of Housing and Community Development, February 2013								

Table 4.13-10 shows the poverty rates for each age group in the County as well as for single-parent households. In Imperial County, 23.3 percent of the population is below the poverty level.

Table 4.13-10: Population below Poverty Level, 2007-2011

	Percent Below
Children < 18 years	30.5%
Adults (18-64) years	20.8%
Elderly (65+) years	16.1%
Female Headed Single Family	39.6%
Total Population Below Poverty Level	23.3%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey	

4.13.3 Significance Criteria

The thresholds for significance of impacts for the analysis are based on the environmental checklist in Appendix G of the State California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. Consistent with the CEQA Guidelines and the professional judgment of the County's staff and environmental consultants, the proposed Project would result in a significant impact on the environment if it would:

- Induce substantial population growth in an area either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example through extension of roads or other infrastructure)
- Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere
- Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere

4.13.4 Impacts and Mitigation

POP-1: Induce substantial population growth in an area either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example through extension of roads or other infrastructure)

Construction and Operation

The proposed Project has been developed to identify new opportunities for renewable energy and assures that the Imperial County General Plan can meet the needs for future development while remaining consistent with identified land use and environmental goals. Consequently, implementation of the proposed Project would be limited to construction of future renewable energy facilities within the proposed overlay zones. The proposed Project would not construct any new housing or business that would induce population growth, nor would the proposed Project extend roads that would indirectly induce population growth. Renewable energy facilities constructed under the proposed Project would meet future local and regional demand for power and would not generate excessive energy capacity that would induce population growth.

Development of future renewable energy facilities under the proposed Project would generate new jobs and may increase population on a temporary basis during construction. Although it is anticipated that a substantial portion of the construction workforce for each future renewable energy facility would come from communities within Imperial County, it is likely that some specialized workers would be required that may come from outside the region. Future renewable energy facilities developed under the proposed Project would occur over a long period of time, and it is unlikely that a large number of future facilities would be developed concurrently. Consequently, it is unlikely that a substantial number of construction personnel would relocate to Imperial County at one time and thereby affect housing availability within Imperial County. Based on the existing homeowner vacancy rate of 3.5 percent and rental vacancy rate of 7.5 percent described in Section 4.13.2 above, adequate housing supply exists to accommodate the limited number of construction personnel that may come from outside the region to work on future renewable energy facilities.

Operation of future renewable energy facilities would not require large numbers of onsite operations and maintenance employees. Although some in-migration of permanent workers with specialized skills would be required for operation of future facilities, the number of new workers would be relatively low and is not expected to exceed existing population growth projections for Imperial County. Based on the existing homeowner vacancy rate of 3.5 percent and rental vacancy rate of 7.5 percent described in Section 4.13.2 above, adequate housing supply exists to accommodate the limited number of permanent workers that may come from outside the region to operate future renewable energy facilities. Therefore, the proposed Project would not result in temporary or long-term population growth, and impacts would be less than significant. No mitigation measures would be required.

POP-2: Displace substantial numbers of existing housing or people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere

Construction and Operation

The proposed Project has taken steps to minimize potential displacement of housing and people by developing a 0.5-mile buffer around all urban areas for the overlay zones. Consequently, all future renewable energy facilities developed under the proposed Project would be located at least 0.5 mile from any urban area within Imperial County, thereby avoiding displacement of housing for people within existing communities. Additionally, project proponents of future renewable energy facilities would likely seek sites that do not include rural residential properties. Renewable energy facilities typically require large tracts of vacant land with few or no structures on them, thereby minimizing the potential for displacement of housing and people.

In the event that displacement of rural residential properties would be required for development of future renewable energy facilities, project proponents would be required to assess any necessary land acquisitions prior to an application for development, with both parties agreeing to such purchases. If residential displacements were required for any future facilities, it is unknown if residents would seek relocation within the same area or seek housing outside Imperial County. Due to the existing homeowner vacancy rate of 3.5 percent and a rental vacancy rate of 7.5 percent described in Section 4.13.2 above, it is unlikely that such displacements would necessitate construction of housing in excess of growth projected to occur independently of the proposed Project. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation measures would be required.

4.13.5 Cumulative Impacts

It is not anticipated that future renewable energy facilities developed under the proposed Project would result in cumulative impacts related to population and housing. It is unlikely that the majority of the foreseeable projects within the County would be under construction at the same time as future renewable energy facilities developed under the proposed Project. Furthermore, future renewable energy facilities developed under the proposed Project would occur over a long period of time, and it is unlikely that a large number of future facilities would be developed concurrently. Due to the long duration that both foreseeable projects within the County and facilities to be developed under the proposed Project would be spread across, it is unlikely that a substantial number of construction personnel would relocate to Imperial County at one time and thereby affect housing availability within Imperial County. Similarly, it is not anticipated that foreseeable projects within the County would displace substantial numbers of existing housing or people. Therefore, cumulative impacts associated with population and housing would be less than significant.