

3 Environmental Settings and Impacts

Overview

Sections 3.1 through 3.16 analyze the potential environmental impacts that may occur as a result of implementation of the Proposed Project. The environmental issues subject to detailed analysis in the following sections include those that were identified by the City as potentially significant in response to the NOP. There are 15 environmental issues addressed in the following sections, as well as a brief discussion of additional impacts that were determined to be not potentially significant. The environmental topics addressed are as follows:

- 3.1 Aesthetics
- 3.2 Agricultural Resources
- 3.3 Air Quality
- 3.4 Biological Resources
- 3.5 Energy, Greenhouse Gases, and Climate Change
- 3.6 Geology, Soils, and Seismicity
- 3.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- 3.8 Historic, Archeological, and Paleontological Resources
- 3.9 Hydrology and Water Quality
- 3.10 Land Use and Housing
- 3.11 Mineral Resources
- 3.12 Noise
- 3.13 Public Services and Facilities
- 3.14 Public Utilities
- 3.15 Transportation
- 3.16 Impacts Not Potentially Significant

These assessments do not satisfy the need for project-level California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis for individual projects. Individual projects under the Proposed Project will require project-level analysis at the time they are proposed based on the details of those projects and the existing conditions at the time such projects are pursued.

Impacts Considered

According to the CEQA Guidelines, the following general types of environmental impacts must be considered in this program EIR:

- **Direct or primary impacts**, which are caused by the project and occur at the same time and place as the project.
- **Indirect or secondary impacts**, which are caused by the project and occur later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect or secondary impacts may include growth-inducing impacts and other impacts related to induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density, or growth rate, and related impacts on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems. Indirect or secondary impacts may also include cumulative impacts.
- **Short-term impacts**, which are those of a limited duration, such as the impacts that would occur during the construction phase of a project.
- **Long-term impacts**, which are those of greater duration, including those that would endure for the life of a project and beyond.
- **Significant unavoidable impacts**, which cannot be mitigated to a level that is less than significant.
- **Irreversible environmental changes**, which may include current or future irretrievable commitments to using non-renewable resources, or growth-inducing impacts that commit future generations to similar irretrievable commitments of resources. Also, irreversible change can result from risks of accidents and injury associated with the project. Such changes are addressed in Chapter 5: CEQA Required Conclusions.
- **Cumulative impacts**, which include two or more individual impacts that when considered together are considerable or which compound or increase other adverse environmental effects. The individual impacts may be changes resulting from a single project or a program of projects. The cumulative effect from several projects is the change in the environment that results from the incremental effect of the Proposed Project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor, but collectively significant, projects taking place over a period of time. Cumulative impacts are addressed in Chapter 5: CEQA Required Conclusions.

Organization

Each section is formatted to include a summary of existing conditions, including regulatory context; the criteria for determination of significance for each impact; evaluation of potential project impacts; a mitigation framework, if applicable; and a conclusion of significance after mitigation for impacts identified as significant.

The goals, policies, and implementation programs of the proposed General Plan reduce some impacts of the Proposed Project, and cases in which existing and proposed policies and regulations reduce the impacts to a less-than-significant level are documented.

Physical Setting

This subsection provides relevant information about the existing physical environment related to the particular environmental topic. In accordance with Section 15125 of the CEQA Guidelines, the discussion of the physical environment describes existing conditions within the Planning Area at the time the NOP was filed on August 10, 2016, unless otherwise noted.

Regulatory Setting

This subsection describes federal, State, regional, and local plans, policies, regulations, and laws that may apply to the environmental topic under evaluation.

Impact Analysis

This subsection focuses on an analysis of the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Project described in Chapter 2, “Project Description,” of this EIR. All potential direct and indirect impacts in Chapter 3 are evaluated in relation to applicable City, State, and federal standards. Thresholds of significance based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines are used to identify the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Project; the methods used to conduct the impact analysis are summarized; and the impacts analyzed in the respective sub-section are summarized. Following this is a more in-depth analysis of the potential environmental impacts, divided by impact significance criterion, presented in the following format:

Impact 3.X-X The impact statement briefly summarizes the findings of the impact discussion based on the identified threshold of significance. The level of significance is included at the end of the impact statement. Levels of significance listed in this EIR (as described below) are *no impact, less than significant, or significant and unavoidable.*)

The impact discussion is contained in the paragraphs following the impact statement. The analysis compares implementation of the Proposed Project to existing conditions. In addition, the effects of policies in the Proposed Project that will reduce the impacts are discussed.

Proposed General Plan Policies that Would Reduce the Impact

If applicable, relevant proposed General Plan policies that would reduce the impact are summarized.

Mitigation Measures

If the impact is found to be less than significant, no mitigation measures are required. Where no mitigation measures have been identified that could reduce an impact to less than significant, the reason is stated and no mitigation measures are listed.

Determining Level of Significance

For each potential environmental impact identified in this EIR, a statement of the level of significance of the impact is provided. Impacts are assessed as one of the following categories:

The term “no impact” is used when the environmental resource being discussed would not be adversely affected by implementation of the Proposed Project. It means no change from existing conditions. This impact level does not need mitigation.

A “less-than-significant impact” would cause a minor change in the physical environment but the impact would not meet or exceed the significance threshold. This impact level does not require mitigation, even if feasible, under CEQA.

A “significant and unavoidable impact” would cause a substantial adverse effect on the environment, and no known feasible mitigation measures are available to reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level. Under CEQA, a project with significant and unavoidable impacts may be approved, but the lead agency (in this case, the City) must prepare a “statement of overriding considerations” in accordance with Section 15093 of the CEQA Guidelines, explaining how the benefits of the project outweigh the potential for significant impacts.