

Section 5.0 Environmental Analysis



5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

The following subsections of the EIR contain a detailed environmental analysis of the existing conditions, project impacts (including direct and indirect, short-term and long-term, and cumulative impacts), recommended mitigation measures, and unavoidable significant impacts. The EIR analyzes those environmental issue areas where potentially significant impacts have the potential to occur, as stated in Appendix 15.1, *Initial Study and Notice of Preparation*.

The EIR will examine environmental factors outlined in Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines, Environmental Checklist Form*, as follows:

- 5.1 Traffic and Circulation;
- 5.2 Air Quality;
- 5.3 Hydrology, Drainage, and Water Quality; and
- 5.4 Public Services and Utilities.

Each environmental issue is addressed in a separate section of the EIR and is organized into six sections, as follows:

- ◆ “Environmental Setting” describes the physical conditions that exist at the present time and that may influence or affect the issue under investigation.
- ◆ “Regulatory Setting” lists and discusses the laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards that apply to the project.
- ◆ “Impact Thresholds and Significance Criteria” provides the thresholds that are the basis of conclusions of significance, which are primarily the criteria in Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines* (California Code of Regulations, Sections 15000 – 15387).

Primary sources used in identifying the criteria include the *CEQA Guidelines*; local, state, federal, or other standards applicable to an impact category; and officially established significance thresholds. “. . . An ironclad definition of significant effect is not possible because the significance of any activity may vary with the setting” (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064[b]). Principally, “. . . a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within an area affected by the project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic and aesthetic significance” constitutes a significant impact (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15382).

- ◆ “Impacts and Mitigation Measures” describes potential environmental changes to the existing physical conditions, which may occur if the proposed project is implemented. Evidence, based on factual and scientific data, is presented to show the cause and effect relationship between the proposed project and the potential changes in the environment. The exact magnitude, duration, extent, frequency, range, or other parameters of a potential impact are ascertained, to the extent possible, to determine whether impacts may be



significant; all of the potential direct and reasonably foreseeable indirect effects are considered.

Impacts are generally classified as potentially significant impact, less than significant impact, or no impact. The “Level of Significance After Mitigation” identifies the impacts that would remain after the application of mitigation measures, and whether the remaining impacts are or are not considered significant. When these impacts, even with the inclusion of mitigation measures, cannot be mitigated to a level considered less than significant, they are identified as “unavoidable significant impacts.”

“Mitigation Measures” are project-specific measures that would be required of the project to avoid a significant adverse impact; to minimize a significant adverse impact; to rectify a significant adverse impact by restoration; to reduce or eliminate a significant adverse impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations; or to compensate for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environment.

- ◆ “Cumulative Impacts” describes potential environmental changes to the existing physical conditions that may occur as a result of the proposed project together with all other reasonably foreseeable, planned, and approved future projects producing related or cumulative impacts.
- ◆ “Significant Unavoidable Impacts” describes impacts that would be significant and cannot be feasibly mitigated to less than significant, so would therefore be unavoidable. To approve a project with unavoidable significant impacts, the Lead Agency must adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations. In adopting such a statement, the Lead Agency is required to balance the benefits of a project against its unavoidable environmental impacts in determining whether to approve the project. If the benefits of a project are found to outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects, the adverse effects may be considered “acceptable” (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15093[a]).