

3 Introduction to Environmental Analysis

Overview

Sections 3.1 through 3.15 analyze the potential environmental impacts that may occur as a result of implementation of the proposed Plan. 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 14 environmental topics 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 Land Use, Population, and Housing
- 3.2 Traffic and Transportation
- 3.3 Air Quality
- 3.4 Energy, Greenhouse Gases, and Climate Change
- 3.5 Aesthetics
- 3.6 Noise and Vibration
- 3.7 Biological Resources
- 3.8 Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- 3.9 Hydrology and Water Quality
- 3.10 Utilities and Service Systems
- 3.11 Public Services and Recreation
- 3.12 Geology and Soils
- 3.13 Cultural and Tribal Resources
- 3.14 Agricultural Resources
- 3.15 Impacts Not Potentially Significant

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.

- **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 Plan 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 the existing physical and regulatory setting, the criteria for determination of significance for each impact, the methodology for evaluating each potential project impact, the impact analysis, and a conclusion of the impact significance.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

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 April 5, 2016, unless otherwise noted.

Regulatory Setting

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

IMPACT ANALYSIS

Significance Criteria

This subsection provides the applicable significance criteria based on CEQA guidelines Appendix G. These criteria are used to evaluate potential impacts of the proposed Plan.

Methodology and Assumptions

This subsection describes the data sources reviewed to determine potential impacts resulting from implementation of the proposed Plan.

Impacts

This subsection includes the analysis of potential environmental impacts of implementing the proposed Plan described in Chapter 2: Project Description. All potential impacts in Chapter 3 are evaluated in relation to the thresholds of significance in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines and any applicable local, State, or federal standard. The methods used to conduct the impact analysis are also 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, less than significant with mitigation, or significant and unavoidable.)

The impact discussion is contained in the paragraphs following the impact statement. The analysis compares implementation of the proposed Plan to existing conditions. In addition, the effects of policies in the proposed Plan that will reduce the impacts are discussed. Any existing or proposed policy that would reduce the impact is listed in the Impact Analysis. Any feasible mitigation measures that could reduce an impact to less than significant is provided. Where no mitigation measures have been identified that could reduce an impact to less than significant, 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 there is no change from existing conditions and the environmental resource being discussed would not be adversely affected by implementation of the proposed Plan. This impact level does not require mitigation or policies to reduce the impact.

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. Under CEQA, this impact level does not require mitigation, even if feasible.

A “less than significant with mitigation impact” would have a substantial adverse effect on the physical environment, but can be reduced to a less-than-significant level with mitigation. Under CEQA, mitigation measures must be provided, where feasible, to reduce the magnitude of significant or potentially significant impacts.

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.