

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

This Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR) provides analysis of impacts for those environmental topics where it was determined in the Notice of Preparation, or through subsequent analysis that the proposed project would result in “potentially significant impacts.” Sections 4.1 through 4.15 discuss the environmental impacts that may result with approval and implementation of the proposed project.

“Significant effect” is defined by the State CEQA Guidelines §15382 as “a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment, but may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant.”

Determining the severity of project impacts is fundamental to achieving the objectives of CEQA. CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 requires that decision makers mitigate, as completely as is feasible, the significant impacts identified in the Final EIR. If the EIR identifies any significant unmitigated impacts, CEQA Guidelines Section 15093 requires decision makers in approving a project to adopt a statement of overriding considerations that explains why the benefits of the project outweigh the adverse environmental consequences identified in the EIR.

The level of significance for each impact examined in this EIR was determined by considering the predicted magnitude of the impact against the applicable threshold. Thresholds were developed using criteria from the CEQA Guidelines and checklist; state, federal, and local schemes; local/regional plans and ordinances; accepted practice; consultation with recognized experts; and other professional opinions.

The assessment of each issue area begins with any relevant setting information that is needed to provide context for the impact analysis that follows. Extraneous setting information that does not shed light on the impact analysis is not included in the EIR.

Within the impact analysis, the first subsection identifies the methodologies used and the “significance thresholds”, which are those criteria adopted by the State, County, other agencies, universally recognized, or developed specifically for this analysis to determine whether potential effects are significant. Each effect under consideration for an issue area is separately listed in bold text, with the discussion of the effect and its significance following. Each bolded impact listing also contains a statement of the significance determination for the environmental impact as follows:

Class I. Significant and Unavoidable: An impact that cannot be reduced to below the threshold level given reasonably available and feasible mitigation measures. Such an impact requires a

Statement of Overriding Considerations to be issued if the project is approved per §15093 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

Class II. Significant but Mitigable: An impact that can be reduced to below the threshold level given reasonably available and feasible mitigation measures. Such an impact requires findings to be made under §15091 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

Class III. Not Significant: An impact that may be adverse, but does not exceed the threshold levels and does not require mitigation measures. However, mitigation measures that could further lessen the environmental effect may be suggested if readily available and easily achievable.

Class IV. Beneficial: An effect that would reduce existing environmental problems or hazards.

Following each environmental effect discussion is a list of programmatic mitigation measures (if required) and the residual effects or level of significance remaining after the implementation of the measures. In those cases where the mitigation measure for an impact could have a significant environmental impact in another issue area, this impact is discussed as a residual effect. The impact analysis concludes with a discussion of cumulative effects, which evaluates the impacts associated with the proposed project in conjunction with other future development in the area.

It should be noted that the environmental impacts are assessed at a “program” level of detail that is more conceptual and general than for a development project, and mitigation measures, if required, are more programmatic and policy-oriented. These are intended to augment the regulatory framework of the proposed Community Plan, not provide development-specific direction, which is not appropriate for this level of analysis. Individual development projects that are within the Plan Area would need to undergo project-specific CEQA review if they are discretionary in nature. The environmental determination and analysis for those projects may refer to and use information from this program level EIR as appropriate.

Please refer to the *Executive Summary* for this EIR, which clearly summarizes all impacts and mitigation measures that apply to the project.