

CHAPTER 4 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the environmental setting, evaluates the potential significant environmental impacts, and identifies appropriate mitigation measures for each environmental element discussed in this Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS ANALYZED IN THE DRAFT EIR

The scope of this EIR is based on the project description outlined in Chapter 2, as well as comments received during the scoping process, focusing on environmental issues that could result in potentially significant impacts. This chapter of the EIR addresses seven environmental resources, which were determined to be potentially significant in the Notice of Preparation (NOP) and during the scoping process. These environmental elements are addressed in the following sections:

- Section 4.1, “Aesthetic and Visual Resources”
- Section 4.2, “Air Quality”
- Section 4.3, “Biological Resources”
- Section 4.4, “Cultural Resources”
- Section 4.5, “Greenhouse Gas Emissions”
- Section 4.6, “Hydrology and Water Quality”
- Section 4.7, “Traffic”

Sections 4.1 through 4.7 provide a detailed discussion of the environmental setting, regulatory framework, impacts associated with the proposed project, and mitigation measures designed to reduce significant impacts where required and when feasible. The residual impacts following the implementation of any mitigation measures also are discussed.

ORGANIZATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

Each section (Sections 4.1 through 4.7) addresses an environmental element and contains the following information for each component of the proposed project:

- **Existing Conditions.** This section describes the physical environmental conditions in the project area as they relate to the issue in question. The CEQA Guidelines establish that existing conditions normally constitute the baseline physical conditions by which the lead agency determines whether or not an impact is significant.
- **Regulatory Framework.** This section summarizes the regulations, plans, and standards that apply to the proposed project and relate to the specific issue area in question.
- **Thresholds of Significance.** This section identifies the significance criteria or, where applicable, the thresholds of significance that will be used to evaluate the proposed project’s impacts. The criterion or threshold for a given environmental effect is the level at which the City finds the effect to be significant. The significance criteria can be a quantitative or

qualitative standard, or set of criteria, pursuant to which the significance of a given environmental effect may be determined (CEQA Guidelines § 15064.7).

- **Project Impacts and Mitigation.** The environmental analysis considers the proposed project's potential impacts resulting from short-term construction and long-term operation of the project. While the criteria for determining significant impacts are unique to each issue area, the analysis applies a uniform classification of the impacts based on the following definitions:
 - A **significant but unavoidable impact (Class I)** would cause a substantial adverse effect on the environment, and no feasible mitigation measures would be available to reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level.
 - A **less-than-significant impact with mitigation incorporated (Class II)** would avoid substantial adverse impacts on the environment through mitigation.
 - A **less-than-significant impact (Class III)** would cause no substantial adverse change in the environment.

Based on the above criteria, the environmental impact analysis assesses each issue area to determine the significance level.

- **Cumulative Impacts.** This subsection identifies the potential for significant effects to occur as a result of the project in combination with other development anticipated in the vicinity of the project site. Where this potential exists, a determination is made as to whether or not the project's contribution to this impact is cumulatively considerable and therefore significant.
- **Mitigation Measures.** Mitigation measures are identified for each significant project and cumulative impact that would occur as a result of the project. Although not required under CEQA, in some cases mitigation measures are also recommended for impacts that are considered less than significant in order to further reduce such impacts.
- **Residual Impacts.** This subsection identifies the levels of significance for project impacts following the implementation of mitigation measures, specifically identifying significant unavoidable adverse impacts (i.e., impacts that cannot be mitigated to less-than-significant levels).