



5.0 Environmental Analysis



5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

The following subsections of the SEIR contain a detailed environmental analysis of the existing conditions, project impacts (including direct and indirect, short-term, long-term, and cumulative impacts), recommended mitigation measures, and unavoidable significant impacts, if any. The SEIR analyzes those environmental issue areas, where potential significant impacts have the potential to occur, as stated in [Appendix 11.1, *Modified Initial Study and Notice of Preparation*](#).

Based on the Modified Initial Study, as stated in [Appendix 11.1](#), no significant impacts or no new significant impacts beyond those identified in the OSA PEIR upon the following environmental issue areas, as outlined in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines are anticipated:

- Light and Glare;
- Agricultural Resources;
- Biological Resources;
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials;
- Land Use and Relevant Planning;
- Mineral Resources;
- Population and Housing;
- Public Services and Utilities; and
- Recreation.

As a result, these issues are addressed in [Section 8.0, *Effects Found Not To Be Significant*](#).

In accordance with the City's *CEQA Significance Thresholds Guide* and Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines*, the following environmental issue areas were determined to have a potentially significant impact, as identified in [Appendix 11.1](#), and have been included within this SEIR for further analysis:

- 5.1 Aesthetics;
- 5.2 Cultural Resources;
- 5.3 Geology and Soils;
- 5.4 Hydrology/Water Quality;
- 5.5 Transportation/Traffic;
- 5.6 Air Quality;
- 5.7 Greenhouse Gas Emissions; and
- 5.8 Noise.

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

- “Existing Setting” describes the physical conditions that exist at the present time of issuance of the Notice of Preparation (NOP) 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, as well as those agencies that may have jurisdiction over the project and would be implementing such laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards.
- “Impact Thresholds and Significance Criteria” provides the thresholds that are the basis of conclusions of significance, which include the criteria in the City’s *CEQA Significance Thresholds Guide* and 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).

The City’s *CEQA Significance Thresholds Guide* is a document that provides guidance and does not require mandatory application of all thresholds for every project. The guidance provided in this document does not substitute for the use of independent judgment to determine significance or the evaluation of the evidence in the record, but is intended to provide sufficient flexibility to use the most appropriate criteria (i.e., on a case-by-case basis) for a particular project. CEQA includes additional topics and requirements that are not addressed in this City’s *CEQA Significance Thresholds Guide*.

- “Overview of the OSA PEIR Analysis” provides a summary of the topical analyses, recommended mitigation measures, and conclusions from the *City of Lake Forest Opportunities Study Final Program Environmental Impact Report* (OSA PEIR).
- “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. For the purposes of this environmental analysis, impacts were analyzed in each environmental issue area for the proposed project. If necessary, mitigation measures are recommended in order to reduce any significant impacts. As SEIR is being prepared for the Portola Center Project, the Standard Conditions of Approval and OSA PEIR Mitigation Measures are applied as appropriate. The “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. Modifications to the OSA PEIR Mitigation Measures are made in strikethrough and double underline text. Where further Mitigation Measures are required beyond what was recommended in the OSA PEIR, Additional Mitigation Measures are prescribed.

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.”

- “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. The environmental analysis includes cumulative considerations for both the proposed project and the project alternative.
- “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]).



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