

Introduction to the Analysis

Chapter 3.0 of this EIR contains individual sections that describe the environmental impacts of the Proposed Project. Each topical section (3.1 through 3.13) describes the existing setting, regulatory setting, and provides background information to help the reader understand the conditions that could be affected by the Proposed Project. In addition, each section includes a discussion of the criteria used in determining whether an effect of the Proposed Project would be considered a “significant environmental impact.” Finally, each section includes mitigation measures for identified significant and potentially significant impacts.

Significance of Environmental Impacts

According to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an EIR should define the threshold of significance and explain the criteria used to determine whether an impact is above or below that threshold (14 California Code of Regulations [CCR] 15064(f)). Significance criteria are identified for each environmental category to determine whether implementation of the Proposed Project would result in a significant environmental impact when evaluated against the environmental setting baseline conditions. The significance criteria vary depending on the environmental category. In general, effects can be either significant (above threshold), or less than significant (below threshold). In some cases a significant impact may be identified as significant and unavoidable if no feasible mitigation measure(s) is/are available to reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level. If a project is subsequently adopted despite identified significant impacts that would result from the project, CEQA requires the lead agency to prepare and disclose a statement of overriding considerations describing the social, economic, and other reasons for adoption (14 California Code of Regulations [CCR] 15064(a)(2)).

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