

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

FORMAT OF ISSUE AREAS

The *East Garrison Specific Plan* (EGSP) DSEIR provides analysis of impacts for those environmental topics where it was determined in the Notice of Preparation (NOP) (see Appendix A) or through subsequent analysis that the proposed project would result in “potentially significant impacts.” Sections 4.1 through 4.12 discuss the environmental impacts that may result with approval and implementation of the proposed EGSP project.

Environmental topics evaluated include land use and related planning programs; geology and soils; hydrology and water quality; transportation and circulation; air quality; noise; biological resources; cultural resources; aesthetics; population, housing, and employment; public services and utilities; and hazardous materials. Each environmental issue area in Sections 4.1 through 4.12 contains a description of:

1. The environmental setting as it relates to the specific issue;
2. The methodology used in identifying the issues;
3. The significance criteria;
4. An evaluation of the project-specific impacts and identification of mitigation measures; and
5. A determination of the level of significance after mitigation measures are implemented.

Each subsection is organized into the three parts described below.

- **Environmental Setting.** This section describes the onsite and, if pertinent, surrounding environmental conditions at the time the NOP was published (August 2003), pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, § 15125.
- **Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures.** This section describes the methodology used in determining the environmental issues to be analyzed. This section also includes the thresholds of significance, which are the significance criteria used to evaluate the project impacts, as discussed in more detail below. This is followed by a discussion of environmental impacts that may occur as a result of the EGSP project and identification of corresponding mitigation measures, as necessary. Specifically, this section includes the following information:
 - Project-related impacts are described in individual impact statements, which include a brief explanatory summation of the impact conclusion.
 - This is followed by a discussion of the impacts, including providing the technical information necessary in formulating conclusions and characterizing the degree of the project-specific impacts.
 - As appropriate, the reader is referred to the DSEIR appendices where more detailed discussions of technical information are located.
 - When warranted and feasible, each impact is followed by a description of proposed mitigation. Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines § 15002, § 15021, and § 15126.4, feasible mitigation measures are required when significant impacts are identified.

Mitigation measures must be fully enforceable through permit conditions, agreements, or other legally binding instruments.

- **Significance After Mitigation.** This section identifies the significance of the project-related impact (less than significant or significant and unavoidable) after the mitigation is applied.

DETERMINING LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

Determining the severity of project impacts is fundamental to achieving the objectives of CEQA. CEQA Guidelines § 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 § 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 DSEIR 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 regulatory schemes (e.g., Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District); local/regional plans (i.e., 1982 *Monterey County General Plan*) and ordinances; accepted practice; consultation with recognized experts; and professional opinions of Monterey County staff.

Following each impact statement, the significance criteria for each impact are identified in parentheses: less than significant; less than significant after mitigation; or significant and unavoidable.

- **Less than Significant** impacts are those impacts that will not cause a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any physical conditions within the area affected by the project and do not require the use of mitigation measures.
- **Less than Significant After Mitigation** impacts are those impacts that would cause a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any physical conditions prior to mitigation, but whose impact would be reduced to less than significant after mitigation. Mitigation measures are identified to reduce impacts to a level that is less than significant.
- **Significant and Unavoidable** impacts are those impacts that cannot be avoided or mitigated to a less than significant level. This designation can be given to impacts for which no feasible mitigation is available, or to impacts for which feasible mitigation measures can be applied but are not sufficient to reduce impacts to a level that is considered less than significant.

IMPACT ANALYSIS AND MITIGATION MEASURES FORMAT

The paragraphs following the impact statement discuss the impact in more detail. If the impact is identified as Less than Significant, there will be no further evaluation of the impact. If the impact is identified as Less than Significant After Mitigation, proposed mitigation measures will be listed. Significant and Unavoidable impacts may or may not have proposed feasible mitigation measures. The standard format used to present the evaluation of impacts is as follows:

Summary Heading of Impact

Impact 4.12-1 An impact summary heading appears immediately preceding the impact description (Summary Heading of Impact in this example). The impact number identifies the section of the report (4.12 in the example) and the sequential order of the impact (1 in the example) within that section. To the right of the impact number is the impact statement, which identifies the potential impact. At the end, the level of significance is included within parenthesis. (Less than Significant, Less than Significant After Mitigation, Significant and Unavoidable)

Mitigation Measures

In some cases, following the impact discussion, reference is made to state and federal regulations and agency policies that would fully or partially mitigate the impact. Also, policies and programs from applicable local land use plans that partially or fully mitigate the impact may be cited.

Project-specific mitigation measures, beyond those contained in other documents, are set off with a summary heading and described using the format presented below:

4.12-1-A Project-specific mitigation is identified that would reduce the impact to the lowest degree feasible. The mitigation number links the particular mitigation to the impact it is associated with (**4.12-1** in this example); the letter identifies the sequential order of that mitigation for that impact (**A** in this example).

Significance After Mitigation

The discussion concludes by describing how the mitigation measures will reduce the impact. It then identifies the resulting level of significance of the impact following mitigation.

