

CHAPTER 4

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

This chapter of the EIR evaluates the potential of the proposed project to result in significant impacts to the environment as a result of construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed project. This chapter provides a full scope of environmental analysis in conformance with the State CEQA Guidelines.

The following environmental resources are assessed in this chapter in accordance with Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines (refer to Table 4-1).

Table 4-1. Summary of Environmental Impacts Analysis

Environmental Resource	Less than Significant Impacts	Significant, but Mitigable Impacts	Significant, Unavoidable, Adverse Impacts
Aesthetic Resources		X	
Agricultural Resources	X		
Archaeological Resources		X	
Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases		X	
Biological Resources		X	
Geology and Soils		X	
Hazards and Hazardous Materials		X	
Historical Resources			X
Hydrology and Water Quality		X	
Land Use and Planning	X		
Mineral Resources	X		
Noise		X	
Paleontological Resources	X		
Population and Housing	X		
Public Services and Utilities	X		
Recreation	X		
Transportation and Circulation	X		

Each environmental issue area discussed in Chapter 4 of this EIR has been divided into subsections, as follows:

- **Existing Conditions:** The description of the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project, as they exist at the time of the established baseline physical conditions.

- **Regulatory Setting:** The regulations in force at the time the NOP is published. These are the applicable regulations governing each environmental topic, such as the California Endangered Species Act and its requirements for protecting rare and endangered species. This is not an exhaustive analysis of the regulations, but rather information to assist the reader in understanding the potential impacts of the project from a regulatory perspective. This section also includes an analysis of the project's consistency with applicable goals, policies, and implementation measures specific to the particular environmental topic.
- **Thresholds of Significance:** The thresholds used to evaluate each environmental topic are usually based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, or are standard procedures related to existing regulations or are standards in the industry.
- **Impact Assessment Methodology:** Methodology used to determine the impacts associated with the project, such as measurements or field investigative processes.
- **Impact Assessment and Mitigation Measures:** These include the significant environmental effects of the proposed project, as further defined below. The impacts are identified and then are followed by the mitigation measures that can minimize significant impacts; mitigation measures must be enforceable and feasible. Where more than one mitigation measure could be used to reduce a significant effect, each is discussed and rationale given for determining the preferable mitigation measure. In addition, there must be an essential nexus between the mitigation measure and a legitimate governmental interest, and the mitigation measure also must be "roughly proportional" to the impacts of the project.
- **Residual Impacts:** The statement of the level of impact, significant or insignificant, that would remain after the implementation of identified mitigation.
- **Cumulative Impacts:** The cumulative effects of the project when the project's incremental effect is cumulatively considerable.
- **Secondary Impacts:** If implementation of an identified mitigation measure would cause one or more significant effects in addition to those that would be caused by the project as proposed, the effects of the mitigation measure are discussed but in less detail than the significant effects of the project as proposed.

The term "significance" is used throughout the EIR to characterize the magnitude of the projected impact. For the purpose of this EIR, a significant impact is a substantial or potentially substantial change to resources in the proposed project area or the area adjacent to the proposed project. In the discussions of each issue area, thresholds are identified that are used to distinguish between significant and insignificant impacts. To the extent feasible, distinctions are also made between local and regional significance and short-term versus long-term duration. Where possible, measures have been identified to reduce project impacts to less than significant levels. CEQA states that public agencies should not approve projects as proposed if there are feasible mitigation measures available that would substantially lessen the environmental effects of such projects (PRC §21002). Included with each mitigation measure are the plan requirements needed to ensure that the mitigation is included in the plans and construction of the project and the required timing of the action (e.g., prior to development of final construction plans, prior to commencement of construction, prior to operation, etc.).

Environmental Baseline

An EIR must describe the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project as they exist at the time the NOP is published (or if no NOP is published, at the time environmental analysis is commenced) from both a local and regional perspective (State CEQA Guidelines §15125(a)). The State CEQA Guidelines direct that “this environmental setting will normally constitute the baseline physical conditions by which a lead agency determines whether an impact is significant.”

The environmental setting at the time the NOP for the proposed project was published (February 17, 2015) constitutes the environmental baseline for the analyses in this EIR for all issue areas. Changes in conditions at the site and to the historic residence located at the project site have occurred since the NOP was published, including unpermitted tree removals and neglect, damage, dereliction, and destruction of the historic residence, resulting in various ongoing code enforcement actions being initiated by the County Code Enforcement Division. The historic residence is now in disrepair and a number of restoration activities have been recommended by the Historic Resources Review Board. Most recently, the property owner has replanted trees as part of a Restoration Plan required by the Board of Supervisors (File PLN100418) and stabilized the historic structure pursuant to a “Mothball” Protective Plan required by the Historical Resources Review Board (Construction Permit No. 15CP011861 – 1170 Signal Hill Road). The analysis in Section 4.3, Historical Resources, does not account for these changes in the site setting and condition of the historic residence. The significance of potential impacts of the project have been measured by comparison to the baseline conditions that were existing at the time of NOP issuance.

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