

SECTION 4.0
EXISTING SETTING, IMPACTS, MITIGATION MEASURES
AND LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

4.0 EXISTING SETTING, IMPACTS, MITIGATION MEASURES AND LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section documents the environmental analysis for those parameters which the proposed project may or would result in potentially significant adverse impacts. These environmental parameters were identified in the findings of the Initial Study (IS) which was included as part of the Notice of Preparation (NOP). Environmental subjects not included in this section be found in Section 3.0 (Impacts Found Not To Be Significant). The NOP and IS are included in Appendix A of this DEIR. Each environmental parameter is discussed in the following manner.

Environmental Setting describes the existing conditions in the environment in the vicinity of the project site, as it exists before the commencement of the project, and at the time of preparation of the NOP/IS, to provide a baseline for comparing “before the project” and “after the project” environmental conditions.

Thresholds of Significance defines and lists specific criteria used to determine whether an impact is or is not considered to be potentially significant. The CEQA Guidelines; local, state, federal or other standards applicable to that impact category; and officially established thresholds of significance are the major sources used in identifying criteria appropriate to the specifics of the project, because “... an ironclad definition of significant effect is not possible because the significance of an activity may vary with 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 proposed project, including land, air, water, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic and aesthetic significance” constitutes a significant impact (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15382).

Methodology briefly describes how the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project related to each environmental parameter were identified and assessed.

Impact presents evidence, based to the extent possible on scientific and factual data, about the cause and effect relationship between the proposed project and the potential changes in the environment that would be caused by the proposed project. The exact magnitude, duration, extent, frequency, range or other parameters of a potential impact are ascertained to the extent possible to provide facts in support of finding the impact to be or not to be significant. In determining whether an impact may be significant, all the potential impacts, including direct impacts, reasonably foreseeable indirect impacts, and considerable contributions to cumulative impacts (see Section 5.0), were considered.

Mitigation identifies the means by which an adverse project-related impact could be reduced or avoided in cases where the EIR analysis determined such impact to be significant or potentially significant. Standard existing regulations, requirements and procedures that are applied to all similar projects were taken into account in identifying what additional project-specific mitigation may be needed to reduce significant adverse project impacts. Mitigation, in addition to measures that the Lead Agency will implement, can also include measures that are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15091[a][2]).

Level of Significance After Mitigation indicates what adverse impact, if any, will remain after application of mitigation measures and whether the remaining impacts are or are not considered significant. When an adverse impact, even with the inclusion of mitigation measures, cannot be mitigated to below a level of significance, it is identified as an “unavoidable significant adverse impact.” To approve a project with significant unavoidable adverse impacts, the Lead Agency must adopt a Statement of Overriding

Considerations (SOC). In adopting an SOC, the lead agency must find that it has reviewed the EIR, has balanced the benefits of the proposed project against its significant adverse impacts and has concluded that the benefits of the proposed project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental impacts, and therefore, the adverse environmental impacts may be considered acceptable (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15093[a]).

The following sections (Sections 4.2 to 4.14) discuss the assessment of the potential impacts related to the implementation of the proposed project:

- 4.2 Aesthetics
- 4.3 Air Quality
- 4.4 Cultural Resources
- 4.5 Geology and Soils
- 4.6 Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- 4.7 Hydrology and Water Quality
- 4.8 Land Use and Planning
- 4.9 Noise
- 4.10 Population and Housing
- 4.11 Public Services
- 4.12 Recreation
- 4.13 Transportation and Traffic
- 4.14 Utilities and Service Systems