

CHAPTER 5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

This section of the EIR discusses each of the potentially significant effects of implementing the Orange Draft General Plan and identifies mitigation measures to reduce impacts found to be potentially significant in the EIR analysis. This EIR analyzes those environmental issue areas identified in the Initial Study (IS) (Appendix A of this EIR) where significant impacts have the potential to occur. All answers are discussed in the IS in accordance with the CEQA Guidelines, Section 15063(c); no further analysis is required for those effects that are not considered potentially significant.

The environmental issue areas analyzed in this EIR include:

1. Aesthetics
2. Agricultural Resources
3. Air Quality
4. Biological Resources
5. Cultural Resources
6. Geology/Soils
7. Hazards and Hazardous Materials
8. Hydrology and Water Quality
9. Land Use and Planning
10. Noise
11. Population and Housing
12. Public Services and Utilities
13. Recreation
14. Transportation/Traffic

Each environmental issue, for which the IS identified a potentially significant impact, is analyzed in one of the issue areas listed above in the following manner:

Environmental Setting describes the existing conditions in the environment in the vicinity of the project before the commencement of the project (i.e., at the time the NOP was released) to provide a baseline for comparing “before the project” and “after the project” environmental conditions.

Threshold for Determining Significance defines and lists specific criteria used to determine whether an impact is or is not considered to be potentially significant. Major sources used in crafting criteria appropriate to the specifics of the project include the CEQA Guidelines; local, state, federal or other standards applicable to an impact category; and officially established thresholds of significance. "...An ironclad definition of significant effect is not possible because the significance of an 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, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic and aesthetic significance" constitutes a significant impact (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15382).

Environmental Impact presents evidence, based to the extent possible on scientific and factual data, for 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 effects, including direct effects, reasonably foreseeable indirect effects, and considerable contributions to cumulative effects, are considered.

Mitigation Measures identify the means by which potentially significant impacts could be reduced or avoided in cases where the EIR analysis determines such impacts to be potentially significant. Standard existing regulations, requirements, programs, and procedures that are applied to future development projects in addition to General Plan programmatic mitigation, often in the form of General Plan Implementation Programs, may be needed to reduce potentially significant 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]).

Impact after Mitigation identifies the impacts that will remain after application of mitigation measures, and whether the remaining impacts are or are not significant. When these impacts, even with the inclusion of mitigation measures, cannot be mitigated to a level of less than significant, they are identified as "unavoidable potentially significant impacts." To approve a project with significant unavoidable impacts, the lead agency must adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations. In adopting such a statement, the

lead agency finds that it has reviewed the EIR and determined that the benefits of the project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects. Thus, the adverse environmental effects may be considered “acceptable” (CEQA Guidelines Section 15093 [a]).

Potentially significant impacts to the issue area Mandatory Findings of Significance (see IS) are addressed generally throughout this section of this EIR, or specifically in Chapter 7.0, Analysis of Long-Term Effects, of this EIR.

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