

Section 5.0
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS





5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

The next subsections of the EIR contain a detailed environmental analysis of the existing conditions, project impacts (including direct and indirect, short-term and long-term, and cumulative), recommended mitigation measures, and unavoidable adverse impacts. This EIR analyzes those environmental issue areas as stated in the *Notice of Preparation* and *Initial Study* (Appendix A, *Initial Study/Notice of Preparation*) where potentially significant impacts have the potential to occur.

The EIR will examine the following environmental factors outlined in the *CEQA Guidelines* Appendix G, Environmental Checklist:

- 5.1 Land Use
- 5.2 Population, Employment and Housing
- 5.3 Aesthetics, Light, and Glare
- 5.4 Traffic and Circulation
- 5.5 Air Quality
- 5.6 Noise
- 5.7 Geology, Soils, and Seismicity
- 5.8 Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- 5.9 Hydrology and Water Quality
- 5.10 Fire Protection Services
- 5.11 Sheriff Services
- 5.12 Schools/Education
- 5.13 Solid Waste
- 5.14 Electricity
- 5.15 Natural Gas
- 5.16 Water Supply
- 5.17 Wastewater

Each environmental issue is addressed in a separate section of the EIR, and is organized into five sections, as follows:

- ◆ “Environmental Setting” describes the physical conditions that exist at this time and that may influence or affect the issue under investigation.
- ◆ “Significance Threshold Criteria” provides the thresholds that are the basis of conclusions of significance, which are primarily the criteria in the *CEQA Guidelines* Appendix G, Environmental Checklist.

Major sources used in crafting criteria include the *CEQA Guidelines*; local, state, federal, or other standards applicable to an impact category; and officially established significance thresholds. “...An ironclad definition of significant effect is not possible because the significance of any 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).

◆ “Impacts and Mitigation Measures”

- The “Level of Significance Before Mitigation” identifies the impact significance level prior to analysis and prior to the imposition of mitigation measures. Impacts are generally classified as potentially significant impact, less than significant impact, or no impact.
- Project impacts are the potential environmental changes to the existing physical conditions that may occur if the proposed project is implemented.

Evidence, based on factual and scientific data, is presented to show 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 direct and reasonably foreseeable indirect effects are considered.

- Mitigation measures are those project-specific measures that would be required of the project to avoid a significant adverse impact; to minimize a significant adverse impact; to rectify a significant adverse impact by restoration; to reduce or eliminate a significant adverse impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations; or to compensate for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environment;¹ and
- The “Level of Significance After Mitigation” identifies the impacts that will remain after the application of mitigation measures, and whether the remaining impacts are or are not considered significant. When these impacts, even with the inclusion of mitigation measures, cannot be mitigated to a level considered less than significant, they are identified as “unavoidable significant impacts.”

◆ “Cumulative Impacts and Mitigation Measures” describes potential environmental changes to the existing physical conditions that may occur with the proposed project together with all other reasonably foreseeable, planned, and approved future projects;

◆ “Significant Unavoidable Impacts” describes impacts that would be significant, but cannot be feasibly mitigated to less than significant, so would be unavoidable. To approve a project with unavoidable significant impacts, the lead agency must adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations. In adopting such a statement, the lead agency is required to balance the benefits of a project against its unavoidable environmental impacts in determining whether to approve the project. If the benefits of a project are found to outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects, the adverse effects may be considered “acceptable” and the project approved (CEQA Guidelines Section 15093[a]).

¹ The measures presented in this EIR are either “project design measures” (those that would be implemented as part of project design) or mitigation measures (those that would mitigate project impacts above and beyond any reduction in impacts accomplished by project design features).