Section 5.0:

Approach to Environmental Analysis

SECTION 5.0
APPROACH TO ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Sections 5.1 through 5.21 of this EIR contain discussions of the existing conditions, project impacts (including direct/indirect, short-term/long-term, and cumulative), recommended mitigation measures, and unavoidable significant impacts. The EIR sections listed below examine the environmental issues, as identified in Appendix G, *Environmental Checklist Form*, of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines (*CEQA Guidelines*), and as concluded in Appendix 13.1, Notice of Preparation/Initial Study Checklist.

5.1 Land Use and Planning
5.2 Population, Housing, and Employment
5.3 Aesthetics and Light/Glare
5.4 Traffic and Circulation
5.5 Air Quality
5.6 Noise
5.7 Geology and Soils
5.8 Hydrology and Water Quality
5.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials
5.10 Cultural Resources
5.11 Biological Resources
5.12 Fire Protection
5.13 Police Protection
5.14 Schools
5.15 Parks and Recreation
5.16 Water Supply
5.17 Wastewater
5.18 Solid Waste
5.19 Electricity
5.20 Natural Gas
5.21 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Each environmental issue/section is organized into subsections, as follows:

- "Purpose" describes the purpose of the section.
- "Existing Regulatory Setting" identifies and summarizes the laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards that apply to the project, at the local, state, and federal levels, as they exist at the time the Notice of Preparation (NOP) is published.
- "Existing Environmental Setting" describes the physical environmental conditions in the project vicinity that may influence or affect the issue under investigation, from both a local and regional perspective, as they exist at the time the NOP is published. The environmental setting constitutes the baseline physical conditions by which the determination of significance is made.

- "Significance Thresholds and Criteria" provides the thresholds that are the basis of conclusions of significance. Primary sources used in identifying the thresholds and criteria include Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines* (California Code of Regulations, Sections 15000 – 15387); local, state, federal, or other standards applicable to an impact category; and officially adopted 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, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise and objects of historic and aesthetic significance" constitutes a significant impact (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15382).

- "Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures" evaluates the project's environmental impacts in consideration of all phases, including planning, acquisition, development, and operation. This subsection also discusses the potential changes to the existing physical environmental conditions, which may occur if the proposed project is implemented. Evidence, based on factual and scientific data, is presented to show the cause and affect relationship between the proposed project and the potential changes in the environment. All of the potential direct and reasonably foreseeable indirect effects are considered. The exact magnitude, duration, extent, frequency, range, or other parameters are ascertained, to the extent possible, to determine their significance.

  The Project's environmental effects are categorized as either "effects found not to be significant" or "potentially significant impact," based on the findings of the Project Initial Study. The effects found not be significant category provides a brief discussion of the reasons that various possible significant effects of the Project were found not to be significant. The potentially significant category identifies and focuses on the proposed project's significant environmental effects. Direct and indirect significant effects of the project on the environment are clearly identified and described, giving due consideration to both the short-term and long-term effects.

  "Mitigation Measures" are 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.

  The "Level of Significance" presents the significance determination. This statement identifies which impacts would remain after the application of mitigation measures and whether the remaining impacts are or are not considered significant. When 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" describes potential environmental changes to the existing physical conditions that may occur as a result of the proposed project together with all other reasonably foreseeable, planned and approved future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, as set forth in Section 4.0, Cumulative Impacts. A cumulative impact analysis is provided only for those thresholds that result in a less than significant, potentially significant, or significant unavoidable impact. A cumulative impact analysis is

not provided for Effects Found Not to be Significant, which result in no project-related impacts.

- "Significant Unavoidable Impacts" describes impacts that would be significant and cannot be feasibly mitigated to less than significant, so would therefore 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" (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15093[a]).

- "Sources Cited" cites the sources used during the course of the issue analysis.

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