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ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

In accordance with Sections 15128 and 15143 of the State CEQA Guidelines, this chapter contains a discussion of the possible environmental effects of the proposed Project for the specific issue areas that were identified through the scoping process. Sections in this chapter cover the following issues: Aesthetics; Air Quality; Biological Resources; Climate Change; Cultural Resources; Geology, Seismicity, and Soils; Hazards and Hazardous Materials; Hydrology and Water Quality; Land Use and Planning; Noise; Population and Housing; Public Services and Recreation; Transportation, Circulation, and Parking; and Utilities.

Each environmental resource category in this Draft PEIR is discussed separately and includes the following:

- Introduction to the section
- Existing Conditions
- Regulatory Setting – Federal, State, and Local
- Impact Analysis, which includes Thresholds of Significance and Project-related Impacts and Mitigation Measures
- Significant and Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

The existing environmental conditions and regulatory setting described in these sections serve as a baseline for the impact analyses for each resource area. The significance criteria identified for each environmental impact category are consistent with Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, and the environmental impact analyses focus on the significant effects that could occur from approving and implementing the General Plan Update. As required by CEQA, mitigation measures are identified to reduce or eliminate significant adverse impacts to the extent feasible. All direct and indirect impacts that can be avoided or reduced to less-than-significant levels by the mitigation measures are discussed herein. The project's contribution to cumulative impacts is analyzed in Chapter 5 of this Draft PEIR. The alternatives to the proposed General Plan Update are presented in Chapter 6.

Environmental Analysis Terminology

In evaluating the potential impacts of the proposed project and the project alternatives, the level of significance is determined by applying the threshold of significance presented for each resource evaluation area. The following terms are used to describe each impact:

No Impact: This conclusion is reached when no adverse changes in the environment are expected.

Less-than-Significant Impact: A less-than-significant impact would be identified when the proposed project would cause no substantial adverse change in the environment (i.e., the impact would not reach the threshold of significance).

Significant Impact: A significant (but mitigable, or avoidable) impact would create a substantial or potentially substantial adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the proposed project. Such an impact would exceed the applicable significance threshold established by CEQA but would be reduced to a less-than-significant level by the required application of a mitigation measure.

Significant and Unavoidable Impact: As required by Section 15126.2(b) of the CEQA Guidelines, an impact is significant and unavoidable when a residual impact that would cause a substantial adverse effect on the environment – which may or may not be reduced somewhat – could not be reduced to a less-than-significant level through any feasible mitigation measure(s).

Mitigation: Mitigation refers to measures that would be implemented to avoid or lessen potentially significant impacts. Mitigation includes:

- avoiding the impact completely by not taking a certain action or parts of an action;
- minimizing the impact by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation;
- rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment;
- reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action; and
- compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

The mitigation measures will be incorporated into the General Plan or required as a condition of future development project approval and would be monitored to ensure compliance and implementation.

Residual Impacts: This is the level of impact after the implementation of mitigation measures and, if applicable, will describe the adverse secondary effects, if any, associated with implementation of the mitigation measures.