Chapter 3
Environmental Analysis

Introduction

This chapter describes the framework within which impacts of the Proposed Project and alternatives are evaluated under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and defines the terminology used in this document. Sections 3.1 through 3.4 in this chapter discuss the possible environmental effects of the Proposed Project and alternatives for each specific environmental resource area identified in the Notice of Preparation and Initial Study (NOP/IS; see Appendix A) for inclusion in this Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR).

The NOP for the Proposed Project was issued in February 2023 and contained an IS based on the CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR §15000 et seq.). This Draft EIR is based upon the analyses in the 2023 IS; CEQA Guidelines issue areas not considered in this Draft EIR were dismissed from further consideration in the IS because there would be either no impacts or impacts would be less than significant.

To assist the reader in comparing information about the various environmental issues, Sections 3.1 through 3.5 each present the following information for their specific resource area:

- The environmental setting (as described in Section 2.4, the environmental setting, which is the CEQA baseline, for this Draft EIR is the physical conditions that existed for the 12-month calendar year 2021);
- Applicable regulations;
- Impact assessment methodology;
- Thresholds of significance (i.e., the criteria against which the significance of impacts is judged);
- Impact determination;
- Mitigation measures;
- Lease measure;
- Alternatives;
- Residual impacts;
- Summary of impact determinations;
- Mitigation monitoring; and
- Significant unavoidable impacts.

Terminology Used in This Environmental Analysis

In evaluating the potential impacts of the Proposed Project and alternatives, the significance of an impact is determined by applying the appropriate threshold of significance (significance criterion). The thresholds of significance used to evaluate impacts are described in each of the four resource sections. The following terms are used to describe impacts:

- *No Impact*. A designation of no impact is given 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 or alternatives would cause no substantial adverse change in the environment (i.e., the impact would not reach the threshold of significance).
- *Significant Impact*. A significant impact would create a substantial or potentially substantial adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the Proposed Project or alternatives. Such an impact would exceed the applicable significance threshold established by CEQA but would be reduced to less than significant by the application of mitigation.
- *Significant Unavoidable Impact*: As required by CEQA Guidelines §15126.2(a), this designation is given when a residual impact would cause a substantial adverse effect on the environment that could not be reduced to less than significant through any feasible mitigation measure(s) or alternative.
- *Mitigation*. Mitigation refers to feasible 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; or
  - Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

  The mitigation measures would be proposed as a condition of 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.

Requirement to Evaluate Alternatives

CEQA Guidelines §15126.6 requires that an EIR describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, that could feasibly attain most of the basic project objectives but would avoid or substantially lessen any significant environmental impacts. An EIR should compare merits of the alternatives and determine an environmentally superior alternative.