

4.1 INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

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This section contains an analysis of each environmental issue and, as such, constitutes the major portion of this DEIR. Sections 4.2 through 4.13 describe for each environmental issue area: (1) the focus of the analysis; (2) a summary of the environmental setting as it relates to the specific issue; and (3) project-specific impacts and mitigation measures. The format for each section is further described below.

Determination of Significance

As identified herein, general definitions of the various levels of significance used to characterize project impacts are as follows:

Less-than-Significant - The impact would cause no substantial change in the existing or projected future environment, therefore, no mitigation is required. Said another way, while there may be some associated impact, it is insignificant or acceptable as defined by the applicable thresholds of significance.

Potentially Significant - May be used to denote an element of speculation. Where used, the applicable circumstances are described.

Significant - Under CEQA, a significant effect is defined as a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in the environment (Public Resources Code 21068). The Guidelines implementing CEQA direct that this determination be made by the decision-making body, and that it be based on scientific and factual data, to the extent possible. As such, the specific criteria for determining the significance of a particular impact for this project are identified prior to the project-specific impact analysis in each section, and are consistent with significance criteria set forth in the guidelines implementing CEQA. The Guidelines go on to state that an "ironclad" definition of significant effect is not possible because the significance of an activity may vary with the setting. Significant impacts can be mitigated to less-than-significant levels by implementation of identified mitigation measures.

Significant and Unavoidable - The impact is one that would cause a substantial effect on the environment and for which no mitigation has been identified as feasible to reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level.

Format of Issue Sections

Each issue section has three parts: (1) Introduction; (2) Setting; and (3) Impacts and Mitigation Measures.

The Introduction describes the purpose of the section, references, and other data sources for the analysis. The Setting section describes the existing conditions at the regional, subregional and local level, and applicable plans, policies and regulations.

The Impacts and Mitigation Measures section identifies the potential impacts of the proposed project and each of the alternatives. This section identifies standards for determining impact significance.

The pre-mitigation level of significance for each impact is established. Project-specific mitigation measures and potential impact significance after implementation of the mitigation measures are identified. Each impact and mitigation measure is numbered consecutively for individual sections of the EIR.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures are provided for all significant impacts. The State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15370) defines mitigation as:

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

Except for unavoidable significant impacts, the mitigation measures recommended in this EIR would be sufficient to reduce impacts to less-than-significant levels. Unless otherwise noted, when more than one mitigation measure is recommended for a specific impact, all mitigation measures would be required to reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level.

It should be noted that, pursuant to CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines, the Yolo County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors may balance the benefits of adoption of the CCRMP against the unavoidable environmental impacts in determining whether to approve the project. If the benefits are found to outweigh the impacts, the adverse effects may be considered "acceptable" and any or all of the identified mitigation measures may be rejected.