

Chapter 5

EXISTING CONDITIONS, IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION

This chapter of the EIR contains a discussion of the potential environmental effects resulting from implementation of the proposed Collier Park Renovations Project, including information related to the relevant regulatory framework, existing conditions, thresholds for determining the significance of impacts, analysis of impacts, feasible mitigation measures that would minimize significant adverse impacts, and the level of significance of impacts before and after implementation of mitigation measures.

Scope of the Environmental Impact Analysis

The project proposes the construction of recreational facilities and other improvements, such as walking paths, traffic circulation, parking, landscaping, and security, at Collier Park in the City of La Mesa, San Diego County, California. Detailed analysis will be conducted in order to ascertain the proposed project's effects on the environment and the relative degree of impact. Where impacts are determined to be significant, mitigation measures will be prescribed with the purpose of reducing the proposed project's effects on those impacts either completely or to the maximum extent feasible. The following environmental topics were identified as requiring detailed analysis in this EIR:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Noise
- Transportation and Traffic

Impacts to the following environmental topics were determined to be "Effects Not Found to be Significant" according to Section 15128 of the CEQA Guidelines: Agricultural and Forestry Resources, Land Use and Planning, Mineral Resources, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, and Utilities and Services Systems. These environmental topics are discussed in Chapter 7, Other CEQA Considerations, of this EIR.

Format of the Environmental Impact Analysis

Regulatory Framework

The Regulatory Framework subsection provides a summary of the applicable regulations, policies, and plans of federal, state, regional, and local agencies that are relevant to each environmental topic.

Existing Conditions

The Existing Conditions subsection describes the environmental setting for the proposed project pertinent to each environmental topic. According to Section 15125 of the CEQA Guidelines, an EIR must include a description of the existing physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of a project to provide the baseline condition against which project-related impacts are compared. Normally, the baseline condition is the physical condition that exists at the time the Notice of Preparation (NOP) is published. The baseline condition for analysis of the proposed project is the physical condition of the Collier Park project site and vicinity on October 17, 2011, when the NOP for this EIR was published.

Thresholds of Significance

The Thresholds of Significance subsection identifies the criteria used to determine whether potential environmental impacts are significant. The thresholds of significance, which are primarily based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, define the type, amount, and/or extent of impact that would be considered a significant adverse change in the environment. Some thresholds of significance, such as those for Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions, are quantitative, while others, such as those for Aesthetics, are qualitative. The thresholds of significance are intended to assist the reader in understanding how and why the EIR reaches a conclusion regarding the significance of an impact.

Impacts

The Impacts subsection describes the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project and, based upon the thresholds of significance, concludes whether the environmental impacts would be considered less than significant, potentially significant, or significant and unavoidable. The analysis of environmental impacts considers both the construction and operational phases associated with implementation of the proposed project. As required by Section 15126.2(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, direct, indirect, short-term, long-term, on-site, and/or off-site impacts are addressed, as appropriate, for each environmental factor being analyzed. The following terms are used to describe the level of significance of impacts identified during the course of the environmental impact analysis:

- **Less than Significant:** This term is used to refer to two conditions: (1) impacts resulting from implementation of the proposed project that are not likely to exceed the defined thresholds of significance; and (2) potentially significant impacts that are reduced to a level that does not exceed the defined thresholds of significance after implementation of mitigation measures.
- **Potentially Significant:** This term is used to refer to impacts resulting from implementation of the proposed project that may exceed the defined thresholds of significance before identification of mitigation measures.

- **Significant and Unavoidable:** This term is used to refer to impacts resulting from implementation of the proposed project that cannot be eliminated or reduced to below the defined thresholds of significance through implementation of feasible mitigation measures.

A “significant effect” is defined by Section 15382 of the CEQA Guidelines as “a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment [but] may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant.”

Mitigation Measures

The Mitigation Measures subsection describes feasible mitigation measures that would minimize significant adverse impacts of the proposed project, as required by Section 15126.4 of the CEQA Guidelines. Under Section 15364 of the CEQA Guidelines, feasible is defined as capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, legal, social, and technological factors.

Significance Determination

The Significance Determination subsection identifies the significance of impacts resulting from implementation of the proposed project before and after mitigation.

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