

CHAPTER 4 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING, IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION

This chapter focuses upon evaluating the significant environmental effects of proposed Downtown Inglewood and Fairview Heights Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Plan, which is described in Chapter 3, *Project Description*. This Chapter describes the existing physical environmental setting (also referred to as “baseline”) for each environmental topic, and the impacts that would result from implementation of proposed Downtown Inglewood and Fairview Heights Concept Plans and Transit Oriented Development Zoning. Because existing federal, state, and local regulations also will shape how these concept plans and TOD zoning are implemented and provide requirements for avoiding and reducing environmental impacts, a discussion of relevant plans, programs, and policies pertinent to each environmental issue addressed in this Chapter is provided. Finally, this chapter identifies feasible mitigation measures to reduce the significant impacts of proposed Downtown Inglewood and Fairview Heights Concept Plans and Transit Oriented Development Zoning.

4.1 ENVIRONMENTAL TOPICS

The following sections in this chapter analyze the environmental topics listed below:

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| 4.A Land Use and Planning Policy | 4.I Noise and Vibration |
| 4.B Population and Housing | 4.J Hazards and Hazardous Materials |
| 4.C Aesthetics and Visual Resources | 4.K Hydrology and Water Quality |
| 4.D Cultural Resources | 4.L Geology, Soils, and Seismicity |
| 4.E Traffic and Circulation | 4.M Public Services |
| 4.F Air Quality | 4.N Utilities, Service Systems, and Water Supply |
| 4.G Greenhouse Gas Emissions | 4.O Recreational Resources |
| 4.H Energy Resources | |

This EIR evaluates the direct and indirect impacts resulting from construction and ongoing operations of development permitted by the proposed Downtown Inglewood and Fairview Heights Transit Oriented Development Plan. Under CEQA, EIRs are intended to focus their discussion on significant impacts, and may limit discussion of other impacts to a brief explanation of why the impacts are not significant. As discussed in Chapter 6, *Significant Unavoidable Impacts, Growth Inducement, Cumulative Impacts, Effects Found Not to Be Significant, and Other CEQA Considerations*, proposed Downtown Inglewood and Fairview Heights Transit Oriented Development Plan would have no effect on Agricultural and Forestry Resources since the site is located within a fully urbanized area, does not contain lands zoned or used for agriculture, does not contain any state-designated farmland, and does not contain or abut any forest resources. In relation to Mineral Resources, the Downtown Inglewood and Fairview Heights Transit Oriented Development Plan will be undertaken in a developed urban area with no known existing mineral resources. Therefore, CEQA does not require further detailed evaluation of these topics.

Consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15128, details of the no impact determination for these two topics are briefly discussed in Chapter 6, *Significant Unavoidable Impacts, Growth Inducement, Cumulative Impacts, Effects Found Not to Be Significant and Other CEQA Considerations*. Determinations that impact would be less than significant were also reached for certain significance criteria related to the environmental topics listed above. These determinations and the accompanying analysis are presented as part of the impact assessments for individual environmental topics.

4.2 FORMAT OF ENVIRONMENTAL TOPIC SECTIONS

Each environmental topic section in this Chapter generally includes the following main subsections:

- *Introduction*, outlining what the section will address and provides definitions of technical terms used in the section.
- *Applicable Plans, Policies, and Regulations*, describing federal, state, and local plans, policies, and regulations that implementation of proposed Downtown Inglewood and Fairview Heights Transit Oriented Development Plan must address and will thus shape its implementation.
- *Environmental Setting*, describing the existing physical environmental conditions (environmental baseline) related to the environmental topic being analyzed.
- *Significance Criteria*, setting forth the thresholds of significance (significance criteria) used to determine whether impacts are “significant.”
- *Impacts and Mitigation*, setting forth and analyzing one or more impact statements for each identified significance threshold. The analysis of each impact statement is organized as follows:
 - A statement of the impact being analyzed, along with the EIR’s conclusion as to the significance of the impact.
 - A description of the methodology used to analyze the impact and determine whether it would be significant or less than significant.
 - An impact assessment that evaluates the changes to the physical environment that would result from proposed Downtown Inglewood and Fairview Heights Transit Oriented Development Plan.
 - A significance conclusion comparing identified impacts of proposed Downtown Inglewood and Fairview Heights Transit Oriented Development Plan to the relevant significance threshold and presenting a determination as to the significance of each impact prior to the implementation of any required mitigation.
 - For each impact determined to be significant, all feasible mitigation measure(s) to be implemented are presented. Mitigation measures include enforceable actions to:
 - avoid a significant impact;
 - minimize the severity of a significant impact;
 - rectify an impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the effected physical environment;
 - reduce or eliminate the impact over time through preservation and/or maintenance operations during the life of the project; and/or

- compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environmental conditions.
- Actions to be taken to ensure effective implementation of required mitigation measures.
- Analysis as to the effectiveness of identified mitigation measure(s) to avoid or reduce significant impacts to a less than significant level.

This EIR identifies all thresholds, impacts, and mitigation measures with an alpha-numeric designation that corresponds to the environmental topic addressed in each section (e.g., “4.C” for Section 4.C *Aesthetics and Visual Resources*). The numbering of thresholds, impacts, and mitigation measures is accomplished as follows.

- The significance thresholds are provided with numbers related to the section in which they are found. For example, aesthetics significance thresholds in Section 4.C, *Aesthetics and Visual Resources*, are numbered 4.C-1 through 4.C-4.
- Impact statements are numbered based on the environmental threshold they address. For example, Impact 4.C-1 provides analysis in relation to Threshold 4.C-1. Where more than one impact statement is analyzed in relation to a specific threshold, each impact statements is provided with a unique number. For example, the two impact statements analyzed in relation to Threshold 4.C-4 are numbered Impact Statement 4.C-4.1 and Impact Statement 4.C-4.2.
- Similarly, each mitigation measure is numbered to correspond to the impact that it addresses. Where multiple mitigation measures address a single impact, each mitigation measure is numbered sequentially. For example, “Mitigation Measures 4.C-1a, 4.C-1b, and 4.C-1c” all address a single impact (i.e., “Impact 4.C-1”).

4.3 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING/BASELINE

The “Environmental Setting” subsections describe current conditions with regard to the environmental resource area reviewed. CEQA Guidelines Section 15125 states that *“An EIR must include a description of the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project, as they exist at the time the notice of preparation is published, or if no notice of preparation is published, at the time the environmental analysis is commenced, from both a local and regional perspective. The environmental setting will normally constitute the baseline physical conditions by which a Lead Agency determines whether an impact is significant. The description of the environmental setting shall be no longer than is necessary to gain an understanding of the significant effects of the proposed project and its alternatives.”*

CEQA Guidelines and case law recognize that the date for establishing an environmental baseline cannot be rigid (see CEQA Guidelines Sections 15146, 15151, and 15204). In some instances, information is presented in the environmental setting that differs from the precise time of the Notice of Preparation (NOP). This information is considered representative of baseline conditions. Furthermore, environmental conditions may vary from year to year, and in some cases it is necessary to consider conditions over a range of time periods.

The Notice of Preparation was published in April 2016. Except as specified otherwise within the document, any reference to “existing” conditions throughout this EIR refers to the baseline condition

as of May 2016. Where technical studies or other baseline information refer to a date other than May 2016, an explanation of the validity of the baseline information in relation to May 2016 baseline conditions is provided.

The baseline conditions relevant to the environmental issues being analyzed are described within each section in this Chapter. In some cases, (such as in Section 4.A, *Aesthetics and Visual Resources*), discussion of baseline conditions is also provided in the impacts analyses to provide context for the impact in the most reader-friendly format and organization.

4.4 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE/SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

CEQA Guidelines Section 15382 defines a significant effect on the environment 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. A social or economic change related to a physical change may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant.*”

The “Significance Criteria” subsections provide the specific thresholds of significance by which impacts are judged to be significant or less than significant in this EIR. These include identifiable quantitative or qualitative standards or sets of criteria pursuant to which the significance of each given environmental effect can be determined. Exceedance of a threshold of significance normally means the effect will be determined to be “significant” (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.7(a)). However, an iron-clad definition of a “significant” effect is not always possible because the significance of an activity may vary with the setting (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064(b)). Therefore, a Lead Agency has the discretion to determine whether to classify an impact described in an EIR as “significant,” depending on the nature of the area affected. The thresholds of significance used to assess the significant of impacts are based on those provided in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines.

IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE CLASSIFICATIONS

The following classifications are used throughout the impact analysis in this EIR to describe the level of significance of environmental impacts:

- **Significant Impact** - A significant impact 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.” As defined in this EIR, a significant impact exceeds the defined significance criteria and therefore requires mitigation.
- **No Impact** – No adverse effect on the environment would occur, and mitigation measures are not required.
- **Less than Significant** – The impact does not reach or exceed the defined threshold (criterion) of significance. Therefore, no mitigation is required.

- **Significant but Mitigable** – The impact reaches or exceeds the defined threshold (criterion) of significance, and mitigation is therefore required. Feasible mitigation measures, including standard conditions of approval, when implemented, will reduce the significant impact to a less-than-significant level.
- **Significant and Unavoidable** – The impact reaches or exceeds the defined threshold (criterion) of significance, and mitigation is therefore required. However, application of all feasible mitigation measures and standard conditions of approval would not reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level.

While CEQA requires that an EIR identify all feasible mitigation to avoid or reduce the significant impacts of a project, it also permits public agencies to approve a project even though it would result in one or more significant unavoidable environmental effects. For a Lead Agency to approve project with one or more significant unavoidable impacts, it must first prepare a statement of overriding considerations, which identifies the specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits of the project, including region-wide or statewide environmental benefits, that outweigh its significant unavoidable effects, and thereby warrant its approval (Public Resources Code Section 21083; CEQA Guidelines Section 15093). The statement of overriding considerations must be supported by substantial evidence in the record (CEQA Guidelines Section 15093(a)).

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