

8. Impacts Found Not to Be Significant

California Public Resources Code Section 21003 (f) states: “it is the policy of the state that... [a]ll persons and public agencies involved in the environmental review process be responsible for carrying out the process in the most efficient, expeditious manner in order to conserve the available financial, governmental, physical, and social resources with the objective that those resources may be better applied toward the mitigation of actual significant effects on the environment.” This policy is reflected in the State California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (Guidelines) Section 15126.2(a), which states that “[a]n EIR [Environmental Impact Report] shall identify and focus on the significant environmental impacts of the proposed project” and Section 15143 which states that “[t]he EIR shall focus on the significant effects on the environment.” The Guidelines allow use of an Initial Study to document project effects that are less than significant (Guidelines Section 15063(a)). Guidelines Section 15128 requires that an EIR contain a statement briefly indicating the reasons that various possible significant effects of a project were determined not to be significant, and were therefore not discussed in detail in the Draft EIR.

As described in the Notice of Preparation (NOP) prepared for the proposed project, Agricultural and Mineral Resources (Categories II and X, respectively) were found not to have any potentially significant impacts. In addition Biological Resources were also originally eliminated based on the conclusions in the NOP/Initial Study. However, based on responses to the NOP, it was determined that an analysis of potential biological impacts should be included in the DEIR. Therefore, all categories except for Agricultural and Mineral Resources have been evaluated in the DEIR.



8.1 ASSESSMENT IN THE INITIAL STUDY

The Initial Study prepared for the proposed project in January 2007 determined that impacts listed below would be less than significant. Due to the revised project description the Initial Study was recirculated for public review in September 2008. The revised project did not result in any changes to the scope of the upcoming EIR from what was previously identified in the January 8, 2007, Initial Study and Notice of Preparation (NOP). Consequently, the impacts that would be less than significant have not been further analyzed in this DEIR. Please refer to Appendix A for explanation of the basis of these conclusions. Impact categories and questions below are summarized directly from the CEQA Environmental Checklist, as contained in the Initial Study.

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<i>Environmental Issues</i>	<i>Initial Study Determination</i>
I. AESTHETICS. Would the project:	
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	No Impact: The project area is in an urbanized area and is currently developed with office, industrial, commercial, and residential uses. The proposed project is not near a state scenic highway and would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista. Therefore, no impacts are anticipated.
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	No Impact: Same as threshold a) above.
II. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES. In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. Would the project:	
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	No Impact: There are no agricultural zoning or operations in the vicinity of the project area and the site is not designated farmland. The proposed project would not result in the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use. Therefore, no impacts would occur.
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	No Impact: None of the lands included in the project area are currently under Williamson Act contract. Therefore, no impacts would occur.
c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?	No Impact: Same as threshold a) above.
IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES. Would the project:	
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	Less than significant: The proposed includes a Creekwalk adjacent to the San Diego Creek. The creek contains habitat that would support sensitive species, which may include federal or state threatened or endangered species. However, no development is proposed in the creek channel, and potential indirect impacts of development of the Creekwalk on property adjacent to the creek are anticipated to be less than significant.
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	Less than significant: Same as threshold a) above.
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	No Impact: The IBC does not contain any riparian habitat, riparian vegetation, wetlands or sensitive natural communities. Therefore, no impacts to sensitive, special status species or federally protected wetlands are anticipated.
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	No Impact: Same as threshold c) above.

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e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	Less than significant: The City's General Plan does not identify any biotic resources in the vicinity of the project site. The proposed project would not affect any protected biological resources. Therefore, implementation of the project would not cause any significant impacts.
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	No Impact: The Natural Communities Conservation Plan for the Central/Coastal Subregion does not designate any sites in the project area for preservation. Therefore, no impacts are anticipated.
VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS. Would the project:	
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:	
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map, issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	No Impact: The project site is not in a designated Alquist-Priolo Zone, so no impacts due to fault rupture are anticipated.
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	No Impact: The project area is currently developed and sewer service is provided by the Irvine Ranch Water District. No septic systems would be required and no impacts are anticipated.
VII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS. Would the project:	
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	No Impact: There are no private airstrips in the vicinity of the project area. Therefore, no impacts would occur.
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	No Impact: The project area is surrounded by urban development and is not adjacent to, or intermixed with, wildlands. Additionally, the project area is not in a High Fire Severity Hazard area as designated by the City's General Plan Safety Element. Therefore, no impacts would occur.
VIII. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY. Would the project:	
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	No Impact: The project area is not in a dam inundation area. Therefore, impacts are anticipated.
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	No Impact: The project area is several miles inland from the Pacific Ocean and is not subject to tsunami hazard. No reservoirs are in the project area and the site consists of flat topography. Therefore, no impact would occur.
IX. LAND USE AND PLANNING. Would the project:	
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	No Impact: The Natural Community Conservation Plan for the Central/Coastal Subregion does not designate the project area for preservation. Therefore, no impacts would occur.



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X. Mineral Resources	
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	No Impact: The project area and surrounding areas are not recognized sources of important mineral resources. Therefore, no impacts would occur.
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	No Impact: Same as threshold a) above.
XI. NOISE. Would the project result in:	
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	No Impact: The project is not in the vicinity of a private airstrip and no impacts are anticipated
XII. POPULATION AND HOUSING. Would the project:	
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	No Impact: The proposed project would not displace any housing or a substantial number of people necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. The proposed project would allow for a total of up to 15,000 dwelling units (not including density-bonus units). Therefore, no impacts are anticipated.
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	No Impact: Same as threshold b) above.
XV. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC. Would the project:	
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	Less than significant impact: The proposed project would not have a significant impact on air traffic patterns. Regional air traffic demands would be accommodated by the airports in the region.
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	No Impact: The City has adopted roadway design standards which would preclude the construction of any unsafe design features. Therefore, no impact is anticipated.