

4.0 Environmental Analysis

Chapter 4 examines the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Project. Each environmental issue area analyzed in this document provides background information and describes the environmental setting (baseline conditions) to help the reader understand the underlying conditions against which an impact would be evaluated. In addition, each section describes how an impact on those underlying conditions is determined “significant” or “less than significant.” Finally, the individual sections recommend mitigation measures to reduce significant impacts. Throughout Section 4, both significant impacts and corresponding mitigation measures are identified with a letter-number designation (e.g., impact BIO.1 and mitigation measure BIO-1)

Effects Not Found to be Significant

Based on an initial review and analysis, the proposed Project would have no impact on these environmental issue areas:

- **Population and Housing.** The Project would not require a change in the number of employees nor result in the construction or modification of new or existing facilities. The Project would not induce substantial population growth in the area nor displace substantial numbers of people or housing units.
- **Agricultural Resources.** The City of Whittier does not have any agricultural resources nor does the Preserve. Therefore, the proposed Project would not impact agricultural resources.

Assessment Methodology

The analysis of each issue area begins with an examination of the existing physical setting (baseline conditions as determined pursuant to Section 15125(a) of the California Environmental Quality Act [CEQA] Guidelines) that may be affected by the proposed Project. The effects of the proposed Project are defined as changes to the environmental setting attributable to project components or operation.

Significance criteria are identified for each environmental issue area. The significance criteria serve as benchmarks for determining if a component action will result in a significant adverse environmental impact when evaluated against the baseline. According to Section 15382 of the CEQA Guidelines, a significant effect on the environment means “a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project.”

Impact Analysis

Impacts are classified as:

- **Significant and Unavoidable.** Significant adverse impact that remains significant after mitigation;
- **Less Than Significant with Mitigation.** Significant adverse impact that can be eliminated or reduced below an issue's significance criteria;
- **Less Than Significant.** Adverse impact that does not meet or exceed an issue's significance criteria; or
- **Beneficial.**

A determination will be made, based on the analysis of any impact within each affected environmental issue area and compliance with any recommended mitigation measure(s), of the level of impact remaining in comparison to the pertinent significance criteria. If the impact remains significant, at or above the significance criteria, it is deemed to be significant and unavoidable. If a "significant impact" is reduced, based on compliance with mitigation, to a level below the pertinent significance criteria, it is determined to no longer have a significant effect on the environment, i.e., to be "less than significant with mitigation". If an action creates an adverse impact above the baseline condition, but such impact does not meet or exceed the pertinent significance criteria, it is determined to be less than significant. An action that provides an improvement to an environmental issue area in comparison to the baseline information is recognized as a beneficial impact.

Formulation of Mitigation Measures and Mitigation Monitoring Program

When significant impacts are identified, feasible mitigation measures are formulated to eliminate or reduce the intensity of the impacts and focus on the protection of sensitive resources. The effectiveness of a mitigation measure is subsequently determined by evaluating the impact remaining after its application. Those impacts meeting or exceeding the impact significance criteria after mitigation are considered residual impacts that remain significant and unavoidable. Implementation of more than one mitigation measure may be needed to reduce an impact below a level of significance. The mitigation measures recommended in this document are identified in the impact sections and presented in a Mitigation Monitoring Program, provided in Section 8.0.

If any measures are incorporated as part of an applicant's project design, they are not considered mitigation measures under CEQA. If they eliminate or reduce a potentially significant impact to a level below the significance criteria, they eliminate the potential for that significant impact since the "measure" is a component of the action.

Cumulative Projects Impact Analysis

Each issue area in Section 4 presents the cumulative impact scenario, which identifies the potential impacts of the Project that might not be significant when considered alone, but that might contribute to a significant impact in conjunction with the other projects. The list and description of cumulative projects is included in Section 3.0, Cumulative Projects.