

4 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

4.0 APPROACH TO THE ANALYSIS

4.0.1 INTRODUCTION

Consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15126.2, Chapter 4 of this Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is focused on an evaluation of topic areas where significant impacts on the physical environment associated with the Highway 12 Logistics Center Project (the proposed Project) may occur, and identifies feasible mitigation for those impacts, where necessary. These topics areas consist of:

- ▶ aesthetics;
- ▶ air quality;
- ▶ biological resources;
- ▶ cultural and tribal cultural resources;
- ▶ geology, soils, mineral resources, and paleontology;
- ▶ greenhouse gas emissions and energy;
- ▶ hazards, including wildfire, and hazardous materials;
- ▶ hydrology and water quality;
- ▶ land use and planning, including agricultural resources, population, and housing;
- ▶ noise and vibration;
- ▶ public services and recreation;
- ▶ transportation and circulation; and
- ▶ utilities and service systems.

The following discussion addresses the affected environment, regulatory framework, environmental consequences, and mitigation measures for each of the environmental issue areas in Chapter 4; and explains the terminology used in the analysis in Chapter 4. The reader is referred to the individual topic area sections regarding specific assumptions, methodology, and significance criteria (thresholds of significance) used in the analysis and determination of significance of impacts.

4.0.2 FORMAT AND CONTENT

Topic area analyses in Sections 4.1 through 4.13 are organized in the following format:

1. The **Environmental Setting** subsection provides an overview of the baseline physical environmental conditions (i.e., the environmental baseline), in accordance with the CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR Section 15125[a][1]).
2. The **Regulatory Framework** subsection identifies the plans, policies, laws, regulations, and ordinances that are relevant to each topical section based on current conditions.
3. The **Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures** subsection identifies the adverse physical environmental impacts of the proposed Project in accordance with the CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR Sections 15125 and 15143). This subsection is organized as follows:

- The **Thresholds of Significance** provide criteria to define at what level an impact would be considered significant in accordance with CEQA. Thresholds may be quantitative or qualitative; they may be based on examples found in CEQA regulations or the CEQA Guidelines; scientific and factual data relative to the City’s jurisdiction; legislative or regulatory performance standards of federal, state, regional, or local agencies relevant to the impact analysis; or other factors. Generally, however, the thresholds of significance used are derived from Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, as amended; factual or scientific information and data; and applicable regulatory standards of federal, state, regional, and local agencies.
- The **Impact Analysis** describes potential adverse physical environmental effects associated with implementation of the proposed Project. The Impact Analysis specifies why impacts are found to be significant and unavoidable, significant or potentially significant, or less than significant, or why there is no environmental impact, based on the identified thresholds of significance. The impacts are listed numerically and sequentially throughout each section.
- **Mitigation Measures** to avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce, or compensate for significant and potentially significant impacts of the proposed Project, in accordance with the CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR Sections 15370, 15002[a][3], 15021[a][2], and 15091[a][1]), where feasible, are recommended for each significant and potentially significant impact. If implementation of feasible mitigation measures is not sufficient to reduce an impact to a “less-than-significant” level, or no feasible mitigation measures are available, the impacts are described as “significant and unavoidable.”

4.0.3 TERMINOLOGY USED TO DESCRIBE IMPACTS

IMPACT LEVELS

This EIR uses the following terminology to denote the significance of each identified environmental impact throughout Chapter 4.

- ▶ **No impact** indicates that the construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed Project would not have any direct or indirect effects on the environment. It means no change from existing conditions. This impact level does not need mitigation.
- ▶ A **less-than-significant impact** is one that would not result in a substantial or potentially substantial adverse change in the physical environment. This impact level does not require mitigation, even if feasible, under CEQA.
- ▶ A **significant impact** is defined by Public Resources Code Section 21068 as one that would cause “a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in the environment.” CEQA Guidelines Section 15382 further clarifies that the environment includes “any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project.” Levels of significance can vary by project, based on the change in the existing physical condition. Under CEQA, mitigation measures or alternatives to a proposed project must be provided, where feasible, to reduce the magnitude of significant impacts.
- ▶ A **potentially significant impact** is one that, if it were to occur, would be considered a significant impact as described above before the application of mitigation. For CEQA purposes, a potentially significant impact is treated as if it were a significant impact.

- ▶ A **significant and unavoidable impact** is one that would result in a substantial or potentially substantial adverse effect on the environment, and that could not be reduced to a less-than-significant level even with any feasible mitigation. Under CEQA, a project with significant and unavoidable impacts may proceed, but the lead agency is required to prepare a “statement of overriding considerations” in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15093, explaining why specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits, including region-wide or statewide environmental benefits, of a proposed project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects.
- ▶ A **beneficial impact** is an impact that is considered to cause a positive change or improvement in the environment and for which no mitigation measures are required.
- ▶ An impact may have a level of significance that is too uncertain to be reasonably determined, which would be designated **too speculative for meaningful evaluation**, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15145. Where some degree of evidence points to the reasonable potential for a significant effect, the EIR may explain that a determination of significance is uncertain, but is still assumed to be “potentially significant,” as described above. In other circumstances, after thorough investigation, the determination of significance may still be too speculative to be meaningful. This is an effect for which the degree of significance cannot be determined for specific reasons, such as because aspects of the impact itself are either unpredictable or the severity of consequences cannot be known at this time.

This page intentionally left blank