

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

This section discusses the possible environmental effects of the project for the specific issue areas that were identified through the Notice of Preparation (NOP)/Initial Study Scoping process as having the potential to experience significant impacts.

IMPACT CLASSIFICATION

“Significant effect” is defined by the *State CEQA Guidelines* §15382 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.”

The assessment of each issue area begins with a discussion of the environmental setting related to the issue, which is followed by the impact analysis. Within the impact analysis, the first subsection identifies the methodologies used and the “significance thresholds,” which are those criteria adopted by the City, other agencies, universally recognized, or developed specifically for this analysis to determine whether potential effects are significant. The next subsection describes each impact of the proposed project, mitigation measures for significant impacts, and the level of significance after mitigation. Each effect under consideration for an issue area is separately listed in bold text, with the discussion of the effect and its significance following. Each bolded impact listing also contains a statement of the significance determination for the environmental impact as follows:

Class I. Significant and Unavoidable: An impact that cannot be reduced to below the threshold level given reasonably available and feasible mitigation measures. Such an impact requires a Statement of Overriding Considerations to be issued if the project is approved per §15093 of the CEQA Guidelines.

Class II. Significant but Mitigable: An impact that can be reduced to below the threshold level given reasonably available and feasible mitigation measures. Such an impact requires findings to be made under §15091 of the CEQA Guidelines.

Class III. Not Significant: An impact that may be adverse, but does not exceed the threshold levels and does not require mitigation measures. However, mitigation measures that could further lessen the environmental effect may be suggested if readily available and easily achievable.

Class IV. Beneficial: An effect that would reduce existing environmental problems or hazards.

Following each environmental impact discussion is a listing of mitigation measures (if recommended or required) and the residual effects or level of significance remaining after the implementation of the measures. In those cases where the mitigation measure for an impact could have a significant environmental impact in another issue area, this impact is discussed and evaluated as a secondary impact. The impact analysis concludes with a discussion of cumulative effects, which evaluates the impacts associated with the project in conjunction with other future development in the area.



Please also refer to the Executive Summary of this EIR, which clearly summarizes all impacts and mitigation measures that apply to the project.

APPROACH TO TIERED ANALYSIS

As described in Section 1.0, *Introduction*, the City's 2014 Land Use and Circulation Element Update EIR (LUCE Update EIR) provided a program-level environmental analysis that covers the project site. The LUCE Update EIR serves as the basis for the project-specific environmental analysis in the San Luis Ranch Project EIR. The environmental analysis included in this EIR considers and expands upon previous environmental analysis and findings from the LUCE Update EIR. As described in Section 15152 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, tiering refers to "using the analysis of general matters in a broader EIR (such as one prepared for a general plan or policy statement) with later EIRs and negative declarations on narrower projects; incorporating by reference the general discussions from the broader EIR; and concentrating the later EIR or negative declaration solely on the issues specific to the later project."

The tiered approach to analysis in this EIR focuses review on project-specific impacts not fully analyzed in the LUCE Update EIR and allows for a more expansive evaluation of environmental effects previously identified. This tiered EIR incorporates by reference the information, analysis, and mitigation measures from the LUCE Update EIR that are relevant to this project. This EIR also incorporates and relies upon relevant analysis from the LUCE EIR related to the evaluation of cumulative impacts and expands upon and refines such information where warranted.

This EIR summarizes the LUCE Update EIR environmental analysis in each impact section, including impacts and mitigation measures identified for a particular resource. The environmental impact analysis further evaluates specific details of the project that were assessed only in general terms when the LUCE Updated EIR was prepared. As the majority of mitigation measures in the LUCE Update EIR were included in the 2014 LUCE as policies, these measures are included in the regulatory section of each environmental impact section to inform the reader regarding measures that address and potentially mitigate potential project impacts. Where specific mitigation measures from the LUCE Update EIR are directly relevant, they are summarized in the project analysis to provide a clear linkage with project impacts.

APPROACH TO EVALUATION OF PRADO ROAD/U.S. 101 IMPROVEMENTS

As described in Section 1.1.3, *Relationship of the Project to the Land Use and Circulation Elements*, the proposed project does not include any improvements related to a possible Prado Road overpass or interchange with U.S. 101. However, the project recognizes the General Plan, which describes either a full access interchange or overpass at Prado Road (Land Use Element Policy 8.1.4 and Circulation Element Policy 9.2.2). The project proposes to dedicate the necessary right-of-way and financially participate in the overpass or interchange project in accordance with an equitable share analysis. The traffic study conducted for this EIR is, in part, intended to identify if and when implementation of the Prado Road overpass or interchange is necessary to achieve acceptable levels of service on City roadways and intersections, in consideration of vehicle trips generated by the proposed San Luis Ranch Project, in combination with existing and anticipated development in the City. Accordingly, the environmental impacts of improvements at U.S.



101/Prado Road are not evaluated throughout Sections 4.1 through 4.14 as part of the proposed project. Rather, because the project would contribute to the need for the improvements, and the project would provide proportional fair share funding for the improvement as mitigation for its traffic impacts, the environmental impacts of that mitigation are discussed in Section 4.12, *Transportation/Traffic*.

As described in CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4(D), “If a mitigation measure would cause one or more significant effects in addition to those that would be caused by the project as proposed, the effects of the mitigation measure shall be discussed but in less detail than the significant effects of the project as proposed.” The final design for the improvements has not been selected or approved by the City or Caltrans. As a result, the EIR provides a reasonable worst-case evaluation of the improvements from a physical disturbance perspective, based on the level of detail regarding the improvements that is available at the time of preparation of this EIR. The U.S. 101/Prado Road improvements will require detailed project-level environmental review pursuant to CEQA once designs for the improvement come into greater focus, and that CEQA review will be independent of the EIR for the San Luis Ranch project.



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