

3 Environmental Impacts

3.1 INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Sections 3.1 through 3.13 of Chapter 3 of this Draft EIR contain a discussion of the potential environmental effects of implementation of the Hillcrest Station Area Specific Plan, including information related to existing conditions, analyses of the type and magnitude of individual and/or cumulative environmental impacts. CEQA Guidelines require that this Draft EIR include a description of the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project, with special emphasis placed on environmental resources that are rare or unique to the region and that would be affected by the proposed Specific Plan.

3.2 FORMAT OF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

The technical sections in Chapter 3 are formatted with the same template. Each topic area includes a description of the environmental setting, regulatory setting, significance criteria, and impacts. Impacts are organized by major topic area.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

PHYSICAL SETTING

According to Section 15125 of the CEQA Guidelines, an EIR must include a description of the existing physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project to provide the “baseline condition” against which project-related impacts are compared. Normally, the baseline condition is the physical condition that exists when the Notice of Preparation (NOP) is published. The NOP was prepared and available for public review for a 30-day public comment period commencing on May 22, 2008, and ending on June 22, 2008. The NOP and copies of the comments received during the comment period are provided in Appendix A.

REGULATORY SETTING

This Draft EIR must also discuss the regulatory setting and any inconsistencies that exist between the proposed Specific Plan and applicable general and regional plans or local, State or federal agency regulations. The regulatory settings include only the plans and regulations related to the identified impacts. This EIR does not include a comprehensive list of all the plans and regulations which contain the rules and guidelines for each environmental topic area addressed within the Planning Area. The Regulatory Setting has the following subsections:

- **Definitions (if necessary)**
- **Federal Regulations**
- **State Regulations**
- **Local Regulations**

IMPACT ANALYSIS

The Draft EIR must identify the possible significant environmental impacts of the proposed Specific Plan. Only the issues areas that have been identified as having a potential impact are analyzed. There are no identified mineral resources or agricultural resources in the Hillcrest Station Area, so these issues were not analyzed as potential impacts. The impact analysis section addresses the projected buildout conditions in 2035 as compared to the environmental baseline, unless specified that the analysis is for the cumulative growth condition. The cumulative growth includes the total growth anticipated for the City of Antioch and/or the East Contra Costa County communities. Each Impact Analysis section contains the following subsections:

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

The Draft EIR uses the following terms to describe the level of significance of impacts identified during the course of the environmental analysis:

- **Significant and Unavoidable Impact:** Impact that exceeds the defined threshold(s) of significance and cannot be eliminated or reduced to a less than significant level through the implementation of feasible mitigation measures
- **Less than Significant Impact:** Impact that does not exceed the defined threshold(s) of significance
- **Cumulatively Significant Impact, Project Contribution Less than Considerable:** Impact that exceeds the defined threshold of cumulative based on the projected growth for the region; however, analysis indicates that the project's contribution to the impact is less than considerable

METHODOLOGY & ASSUMPTIONS

This subsection identifies the methodology and major assumptions used to analyze potential environmental impacts.

SUMMARY OF IMPACTS

This subsection summarizes the analysis and finding of significance for each issue area. If the proposed plan will have a beneficial or positive effect relative to the current environmental conditions, it is discussed briefly in the summary of impacts.

IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Each impact includes the numbered impact statement followed the ultimate finding of significance in parentheses. The discussion identifies and assumes compliance with applicable laws and regulations. In many cases, compliance with applicable laws, policies, or regulations would reduce the significance of an impact. If existing laws and regulations are insufficient to reduce the impact to less than significant, the proposed Specific Plan policies which would avoid or reduce the level of significance of that impact are listed. No feasible mitigation measures have been identified to reduce the significant and unavoidable impacts.