

CHAPTER 5 Other CEQA Considerations

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15126 requires that all aspects of a project must be considered when evaluating its impact on the environment, including planning, acquisition, development, and operation. As part of this analysis, the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must also identify (1) significant environmental effects of the proposed project, (2) significant environmental effects that cannot be avoided if the proposed project is implemented, (3) significant irreversible environmental changes that would result from implementation of the proposed project, (4) growth-inducing impacts of the proposed project, (5) mitigation measures proposed to minimize significant effects, and (6) alternatives to the proposed project.

5.1 SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS THAT CANNOT BE AVOIDED IF THE PROPOSED PROJECT IS IMPLEMENTED

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(b) requires that an EIR describe any significant impacts that cannot be avoided, even with the implementation of feasible mitigation measures. In such cases where an impact cannot be mitigated to a level considered less than significant, a Statement of Overriding Considerations must be prepared prior to approval of a project, and in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15091 and 15093. The proposed project would result in no project-level impacts that are significant and unavoidable after implementation of available, feasible mitigation measures and with compliance with existing statutory requirements, as discussed in Chapter 4 of this EIR. However, a significant cumulative impact to aesthetics could occur. As a result, to approve the proposed project, the City of Huntington Beach must adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15043 and 15093.

5.2 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(c) requires a discussion of any significant irreversible environmental changes that the proposed project would cause. Specifically, Section 15126.2(c) states:

Uses of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project may be irreversible since a large commitment of such resources makes removal or nonuse thereafter unlikely. Primary impacts, and particularly, secondary impacts (such as highway improvement which provides access to a previously inaccessible area) generally commit future generations to similar uses. Also, irreversible damage can result from environmental accidents associated with the project. Irrecoverable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified. Section 15126.3(c).

The construction and implementation of the proposed project will entail the commitment of energy, human resources, and building materials. This commitment of energy, personnel, and building materials will be commensurate with that of other projects of similar magnitude, and none of these commodities are in short supply. Manpower would also be committed for the construction of buildings and public facilities necessary to support the new development.

Ongoing maintenance and operation of the project will entail a further commitment of energy resources in the form of natural gas, electricity, and water resources. Long-term impacts would also result from an increase in vehicular traffic, and associated air pollutant and noise emissions. This commitment of energy resources will be a long-term obligation in view of the fact that, practically speaking, it is impossible to return the land to its original condition once it has been developed. However, as established in Section 4.13 (Utilities/Service Systems), the impacts of increased energy usage are not considered significant adverse environmental impacts.

In summary, implementation of the proposed project would involve the following irreversible environmental changes to existing on-site natural resources:

- Commitment of energy and water resources as a result of the operation and maintenance of the proposed development
- Alteration of the existing topographic character of the site

5.3 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(d) requires that this section discuss the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic, population, or housing growth, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Growth-inducing impacts are caused by those characteristics of a project that tend to foster or encourage population and/or economic growth. Inducements to growth include the generation of construction and permanent employment opportunities in the service sector of the economy. A project could also induce growth by lowering or removing barriers to growth or by creating an amenity that attracts new population or economic activity. According to Section 6.0 of the General Plan EIR (City 1995), incorporated herein by reference, implementation of the General Plan would induce growth, particularly in the associated removal of impediments to growth (e.g., provision of new access to an area) and increased potential for economic expansion. The following activities have the potential to result in growth inducement:

- Extension of public facilities, such as roads, electrical lines, gas lines, sewers, and water
- Generation of employment opportunities, including short-term, construction employment opportunities

A project's growth-inducing potential does not automatically result in growth, whether it is a portion of growth or actually exceeds projected levels of growth. Growth at the local level is fundamentally controlled by the land use policies of local municipalities or counties, which are determined by the local politics in each jurisdiction.

5.3.1 Extension of Public Facilities

The proposed project would require expansion of sewer, water, and gas lines on site. These systems would connect to the existing infrastructure located on site or adjacent to the site. No new trunk lines or utility corridors would be established that could serve as connections for future projects. However, the construction of new electrical facilities on site or adjacent to the site would be required to serve the proposed project. Expansion of facilities would not result in the extension of services to undeveloped areas other than the proposed project.

Roadway extensions can induce growth because the provision of vehicular access to a previously inaccessible site can facilitate development. The project includes the extension of an existing public street (Talbert Avenue) for the creation of a previously planned access driveway to the park and project site. Therefore, although the project would provide access to the proposed project, it would not induce or facilitate development on previously undeveloped parcels other than the project site and surrounding undeveloped park area.

5.3.2 Employment Generation

Development of the proposed senior center would generate short-term, construction-related employment opportunities. These opportunities would occur over the approximate 20-month duration of the construction period. Given the supply of construction workers in the local work force, it is likely that these workers would come from within the Orange County area, and no in-migration of workers would be anticipated. Due to the nature of construction activities, the employment opportunities resulting from project construction would not be considered permanent.

In addition, development of the proposed project would generate long-term employment opportunities within the senior center building. The proposed project would be anticipated to provide approximately 21 permanent jobs (12 full-time and 9 part-time positions) plus additional part-time class instructor positions. However, the proposed project is intended as a replacement to the existing senior center within the City and would not be expected to generate large numbers of jobs beyond that of the existing senior center. Any additional long-term employment generated as a result of the proposed project would be small, and would not be considered a substantial growth-inducing impact to the region.

