

CHAPTER 5 Other CEQA Considerations

Section 15126 of the *California Environmental Quality Act* (CEQA) Guidelines 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 OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Table 2-2 (Summary of Environmental Effects and Project Requirements/Mitigation Measures), which is contained in Chapter 2 (Executive Summary) of this EIR, and Sections 4.1 through 4.14 of this EIR provide a comprehensive identification of the proposed project's environmental effects, including the level of significance both before and after mitigation.

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

Section 15126.2(b) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR describe any significant impacts that cannot be avoided, even with the implementation of feasible mitigation measures. Development of the proposed project would result in the following significant and unavoidable project-related and/or cumulative impacts:

■ Population and Housing

- > **Cumulative**—Because all cumulative residential development would ultimately contribute to the substantial exceedance of SCAG population projections for the City for the 2015 timeframe, The Ripcurl project would have a considerable contribution to the cumulative impact. Therefore, the cumulative impact is considered significant and unavoidable.

■ Traffic

- > **Project Specific**—In the Year 2014, the I-405 northbound loop ramp from Beach Boulevard is deficient in both the AM and PM peak hours. The project has a significant contribution to this deficiency (more than 0.01). Since traffic would be added to an existing deficiency (LOS E), this impact is considered significant and unavoidable.
- > **Project Specific**—Implementation of The Ripcurl project would result in an increase in project-related traffic that could be substantial in relation to the forecasted traffic load and

capacity of the street system in 2030. Specifically, the proposed project has a long-range significant impact at the intersection of the I-405 southbound ramps at Center Avenue during the PM peak hour. Although mitigation measure MM4.13-1 would reduce long-term impacts to a less-than-significant level, the impacted intersections are owned by Caltrans, and implementation of the proposed mitigation measures at these locations would be dependent on factors outside the control of both the City of Huntington Beach and the project Applicant. A General Plan Amendment (GPA) is currently being processed for The Village at Bella Terra Project, which would reduce the PM peak hour trip generation such that the impacted intersection would no longer be impacted by the proposed project. However, approval of that project cannot be guaranteed. In addition, the project contributes traffic to 2030 deficiencies on I-405.

- > **Cumulative**—Because implementation of mitigation measure MM4.13-1 cannot be guaranteed, a cumulatively significant impact would also occur at the intersection of the I-405 Southbound ramps and Center Avenue under the current General Plan in 2030.

5.3 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Section 15126.2(c) of the CEQA Guidelines 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. Irretrievable 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 4.14 (Utilities and 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

5.4 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

Section 15126.2(d) of the State CEQA Guidelines 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 1996), 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:

- Development of additional housing supply
- 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.

5.4.1 Additional Housing Supply

The residential component of the proposed project consists of 440 residential units. Therefore, the proposed project would introduce new residential uses which would likely induce growth. Implementation of the proposed project would require a General Plan Amendment (GPA) to allow for a mix of uses on the site and establish the allowable residential density and FAR. Currently, the General Plan has a Mixed Use-Vertical Integration category but it limits maximum density to 30 units per acre with a 3.0 FAR. The Applicant is proposing up to 130 units per acre and requests the creation of a new land use designation, "Transit Center District." The GPA would be subject to approval by the Planning Commission and City Council and would likely result in growth. Due to the number of housing units that would be created, the project would be considered growth-inducing with respect to housing.

5.4.2 Employment Generation

Development of the proposed project would generate short-term, construction-related employment opportunities. These opportunities would occur over the approximate 24-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 associated with commercial uses on the project site. Based on current operations on the project site, the commercial component would generate a minimum of 36 new full-time employment positions. The existing retail uses at the College Country Center employ approximately 63 persons. Therefore, long-term employment opportunities at the project site would reduce employment opportunities in the region and would not be considered a growth-inducing impact to the region.