

4.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

This section analyzes the impacts from hazards and hazardous materials anticipated by the proposed DTSP Update. The Hazardous Materials Element of the City's General Plan was evaluated in the preparation of this section. The geo-tracker website of the Regional Water Quality Control Boards⁷ was utilized to search for hazardous materials sites within the DTSP area. All of the document sources are identified in the Section 7, References of this EIR.

4.5.1 Environmental Setting

The City of Huntington Beach is located in Orange County's northern coastal area with approximately 8.5 miles of shoreline along the Pacific Ocean. This area is characterized by broad sandy beaches, low bluffs and mesas, and lowland areas. Elevations range from approximately 50 to 60 feet above mean sea level (msl) in the eastern portion of the City, rising farther inland. Elevations in the remainder of the City rise at the shoreline, from sea level to approximately 100 feet above msl at the Huntington Beach Mesa.

The DTSP project area covers 336 acres in the traditional and historic heart of the City. Generally, the DTSP area extends from the intersection of Goldenwest Street with Pacific Coast Highway and curves along the coastline, including the Huntington Beach Pier, to Beach Boulevard. The inland boundary of the DTSP area follows the prolongation of Sunrise Drive from Beach Boulevard to Pacific View Avenue where the boundary curves along Huntington Street and Atlanta Avenue. From Atlanta Avenue, the boundary flows along Orange Avenue and continues up Lake Street to Palm Avenue where it connects to Main Street and along Pecan Avenue to 6th Street. From 6th Street and Walnut Avenue to Goldenwest Street and Walnut Avenue, parcels within the first block adjacent to Pacific Coast Highway are included in the DTSP area. All boundary lines follow the centerline of the affected street. Exhibits showing the regional location (Exhibit 3.1-1, page 3-2) and the project vicinity (Exhibit 3.1-3, page 3-4) of the project site and surrounding area are previously presented in this EIR.

The project consists of revisions to the existing 11 DTSP districts, consolidating them into 7 districts, modified development and design standards, street improvements and public amenities requirements (or plans), modified circulation and mobility improvement requirements, and infrastructure and public facilities improvements as well as amended design guidelines.

4.5.2 Significance Criteria

Impacts resulting from the implementation of the project would be considered significant if the project would:

⁷ <http://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/map/>

- Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through routine transport, use or disposal of hazardous materials;
- Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment;
- Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school;
- Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites which complied pursuant to *Government Code* §65962.5 and, as a result, would create a significant hazard to the public or the environment;
- Result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area for a project within an airport land use plan, or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport;
- Result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area for a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip;
- Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan;
- Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands;

4.5.3 Impacts

The following discussion addresses potential impacts of the project.

- *Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through routine transport, use or disposal of hazardous materials?*

The proposed project (adoption of the DTSP Update) will not itself create any hazards related to the transport, use or disposal of hazardous materials. Specific developments proposed in the future based upon the DTSP Update may generate the disposal of hazardous materials due to routine operations associated with construction activities or operation of restaurant, retail, or office uses. Asbestos, lead, or other hazardous materials encountered during demolition or construction activities would be disposed of in compliance with all applicable regulations for the handling of such waste, reducing potential impacts of disposal of site-generated hazardous waste to a less than significant level. Uses within the DTSP area would include the use and storage of common hazardous materials such as paints, solvents, and cleaning products. Additionally, grounds and landscape maintenance could use a variety of products formulated with hazardous materials, including fuels, cleaners, lubricants, adhesives, sealers,

and pesticides/herbicides. The properties and health effects of different chemicals are unique to each chemical and depend on the extent to which an individual is exposed. The extent and exposure of individuals to hazardous materials would be limited by the relatively small quantities of these materials that would be stored and used on the project site. As common maintenance products and chemicals would be consumed by use and with adherence to warning labels and storage recommendations from the individual manufacturers, these hazardous materials would not pose any greater risk than at any other similar development that would occur.

Through development of a proposed project within the DTSP area, hazardous materials could be stored within the project site, but the materials would generally be in the form of routinely used common chemicals. Therefore, the probability of a major hazardous materials incident would be remote. Minor incidents would be more likely, but the consequences of such accidents would likely not be severe due to the types of common chemicals anticipated to be used at the site and the impact would be less than significant.

The General Plan Hazardous Materials Element does not identify any hazardous materials operations within the DTSP area⁸. Additionally, the State Water Quality Control Board's website identifies 10 sites within the DTSP area that have been assessed for hazardous materials. Eight of the 10 sites have been assessed and cleared. Only a service station site at 120 Pacific Coast Highway and the Pacific City Development excavation are still being analyzed.

Oil-producing operations continue in some areas of the DTSP project area. A mitigation measure is proposed below to require a Phase One assessment of any sites with oil production operations to test for the presence of hazardous materials and require remediation in accordance with standard City specifications if any hazards are present. With implementation of the recommended mitigation measure presented below in Section 4.5.4 (page 4-87), potential impacts relative to hazards and hazardous materials will be reduced to a less than significant level.

- *Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?*

See response to the section above. No significant hazardous materials would be stored or handled on site associated with the adoption of the DTSP update. Individual project proposals that would come forward in the DTSP area after adoption of the update should be assessed for any significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonable foreseeable upset and accident conditions from construction activities or operations. A mitigation measure is proposed that would require construction activities on properties within the DTSP

⁸ City of HB General Plan, Hazardous Materials Element page V-HM-3

Update area to cease if hazardous materials or contamination is discovered at the site. The measure would require the preparation of a Risk Management Plan to be used to protect workers and the public from exposure to hazards during construction and post-development uses and activities.

- *Would the project emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?*

Ethel Dwyer Middle School is located at 1502 Palm Avenue, and Agnes L. Smith Elementary School is located at 770 17th Street, both within one-quarter mile of the DTSP Update project area. However, Mitigation Measure MM 4.5-1 will reduce to less than significant any potential impact from removal of hazardous materials during development of adjacent sites in the future.

- *Would the project be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites which complied pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?*

As mentioned above, only two active sites are under assessment in the DTSP area. Since the areas within the DTSP have been utilized in the past and continue to be utilized for oil production operations, a mitigation measure is proposed in Section 4.5.4 below to require future development or redevelopment proposals within the DTSP area to conduct a Phase One assessment of the property to identify and remediate any hazardous materials that might occur as a result of the proposed project.

- *Would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area for a project within an airport land use plan, or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport?*

The project site is not located within an airport land use plan. The City's General Plan (Noise Element) notes that although there are no operating airports located within Huntington Beach, and no airplane flight patterns for either the Long Beach Municipal Airport or the John Wayne Airport over the City, it is not uncommon for airplanes to fly over the City during their approach to either of the two airports. This can be attributed to variations in airplane approach patterns due to weather and delays created by the large number of commercial and private flights accommodated by these airports. Five heliports are located within the City at the following locations: McDonnell Douglas Corporation (Bolsa Chica Street at Bolsa Avenue), Guardian Center (Beach Boulevard at Warner Avenue), Police Station at Goldenwest Street and Talbert Avenue, Cal Resources at Pacific Coast Highway (between Seapoint Street and Warner Avenue), and the Civic Center (Main Street at Yorktown Avenue). These heliports experience relatively low frequency and short duration air operations. The proposed DTSP Update is not anticipated to have any safety impacts associated with the operations of an airport.

- *Would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area for a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip?*

There are no private airstrips in the vicinity of the project area. Therefore, the project will not result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area from airport operations.

- *Would the project impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?*

The City of Huntington Beach has prepared emergency response plans for a broad range of disasters ranging from earthquakes and floods to airplane crashes and industrial accidents. The Police Department and the Fire Department review all development proposals that come through the City to determine their compatibility with Police and Fire requirements and emergency response plans. None of the uses contemplated in the DTSP in and of themselves would impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response or evacuation plan.

- *Would the project expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?*

The project area is not located adjacent to wildland areas. The project area is an urban environment with no potential fire hazards from wildland fires. Therefore, the project would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires.

4.5.4 Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measure will reduce impacts associated with the proposed project to a less than significant level:

MM 4.5-1 The City of Huntington Beach shall require a Phase One assessment on properties within the Downtown Specific Plan area, including properties utilized for oil production activities, proposed for development to assure that any hazardous materials/contaminated soils present on the property are identified and remediated in accordance with City specifications 422, 429 and 431-92. All native and imported soils associated with a project shall meet the standards outlined in City Specification No. 431-92 prior to approval of grading and building plans by the Huntington Beach Fire Department. Additionally, all work at a project site shall comply with the City's Public Works Department requirements (e.g., haul route permits).

MM 4.5-2 In the event that previously unknown or unidentified soil and/or groundwater contamination that could present a threat to human health or the environment is

encountered during construction in the project area, construction activities in the immediate vicinity of the contamination shall cease immediately. If contamination is encountered, a Risk Management Plan shall be prepared and implemented that 1) identifies the contaminants of concern and the potential risk each contaminant would pose to human health and the environment during construction and post-development and 2) describes measures to be taken to protect workers and the public from exposure to potential site hazards. Such measures could include a range of options, including, but not limited to, physical site controls during construction, remediation, long-term monitoring, post-development maintenance or access limitations, or some combination thereof. Depending on the nature of contamination, if any, appropriate agencies shall be notified (e.g., Huntington Beach Fire Department). If needed, a Site Health and Safety Plan that meets Occupational Safety and Health Administration requirements shall be prepared and in place prior to commencement of work in any contaminated area.

4.5.5 Level of Significance after Mitigation

With implementation of the recommended mitigation measures, potentially significant, adverse impacts from hazards and hazardous materials will be reduced to a level of insignificance.

4.5.6 Significant and Unavoidable Impacts

Implementation of the proposed project will either result in less than significant impacts or will require mitigation measures to ensure that impacts from future development can be reduced to less than significant levels for all impact criteria. Therefore, no unavoidable significant impacts are associated with hazards and hazardous materials in the DTSP Update.

4.5.7 Cumulative Impacts

The cumulative impacts analysis in the area of hazards and hazardous materials associated with the DTSP Update focused on projects within the area of downtown Huntington Beach. Hazardous materials are largely site specific and limited to the project site. Site specific investigations are typically conducted where contaminated soils or groundwater could occur to minimize the exposure of workers to hazardous substances. As such, the potential for cumulative impacts to occur is reduced significantly.

Related development projects in the City include similar use to the DTSP – hotel, retail and residential. That development could result in development on land previously used for oil production activities, or the demolition of existing structures that may contain hazardous materials. Adherence to applicable regulations and guidelines pertaining to abatement of and protection from oil, asbestos, lead, and other hazardous materials would ensure that impacts from those activities would not be cumulatively considerable. Therefore, cumulative impacts from hazardous materials would not be significant with adherence to regulations and guidelines for safe handling.