CHAPTER 4 Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

4.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Sections 4.1 through 4.13 of Chapter 4 of this EIR contain a discussion of the potential environmental effects of implementation of the Transit Zoning Code (SD 84A and SD 84B), including information related to existing conditions, analyses of the type and magnitude of individual and cumulative environmental impacts, and feasible mitigation measures that could reduce or avoid environmental impacts.

4.0.1 Scope of the Environmental Impact Analysis

The Transit Zoning Code (SD 84A and SD 84B) EIR is both a program-level environmental assessment that evaluates the effects of implementation of the entire Transit Zoning Code (SD 84A and SD 84B), as well as a project-specific EIR for the demolition of structures on Redevelopment Agency–owned parcels and construction of 220 new residential units, a 10,000 community center, and 1.5 acres of open space. Other future development projects within the Transit Zoning Code (SD 84A and SD 84B) area would undergo their own project-level review, while using this EIR as a basis for determining project-specific impacts.

In accordance with Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the potential environmental effects of the proposed Transit Zoning Code (SD 84A and SD 84B) are analyzed for the following environmental issue areas:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise and Vibration
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Transportation/Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Global Climate Change

- Mandatory Findings of Significance[2]

It should be noted that biological resources was previously scoped out during the preparation of the IS/NOP. However, due to public concern regarding, primarily, migratory birds, an assessment of the proposed project's impacts to biological resources has been included as part of the EIR.

Based upon the analysis provided in the Initial Study for the proposed project, which is provided in Appendix A of this document, impacts to agricultural resources, geology and soils, and mineral resources were determined to be "Effects Not Found to Be Significant" according to Section 15128 of the CEQA Guidelines.

With respect to agricultural resources, the Initial Study concluded that the soils within the Transit Zoning Code (SD 84A and SD 84B)area are not candidates for listing as prime farmland, unique farmland, or farmland of statewide importance. In addition, no farmland or agricultural activity exists on or in the vicinity of the Transit Zoning Code (SD 84A and SD 84B) , and no portion is under a Williamson Act contract. Therefore, no impact would occur with respect to agricultural uses, and no additional analysis is required in this EIR.

With respect to geology and soils, the Transit Zoning Code (SD 84A and SD 84B)area is located in an area of minimal geologic hazards. Any development within the project area would be designed in accordance with applicable building code requirements, which account for seismic groundshaking. Therefore, no potentially significant impacts would occur with respect to geology and soils, and no additional analysis is required in this EIR.

With respect to mineral resources, the Initial Study determined that implementation of the Transit Zoning Code (SD 84A and SD 84B) would not result in the loss of availability of either a known mineral resource of value to the state or region, or a locally important mineral resource recovery site, because no such sites exist within the project area. Therefore, the Initial Study concluded that implementation of the Transit Zoning Code (SD 84A and SD 84B) would not result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan, and no additional analysis is required in this EIR.

4.0.2 Format of the Environmental Analysis

Environmental Setting/Definition of the Baseline

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 Initial Study/Notice of Preparation (IS/NOP) is published. The IS/NOP

[2] Mandatory Findings of Significance are defined in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, and include specific impacts to biological resources, cumulative impacts, and environmental impacts that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly. Therefore, Mandatory Findings of Significance are addressed throughout the environmental analysis, which is provided in Sections 4.1 through 4.12 of this EIR.

for the Transit Zoning Code (SD 84A and SD 84B) EIR was originally published in July 2006 and under the project name "Renaissance Specific Plan EIR." The IS/NOP and copies of the comments received during the comment period are provided in Appendix A.

Regulatory Framework

The Regulatory Framework provides a summary of regulations, plans, policies, and laws that are relevant to each issue area.

Project Impacts and Mitigation

This section is further divided into the following subsections, as described below.

Analytic Method

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

Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds of significance are criteria used to determine whether potential environmental effects are significant. The thresholds of significance used in this analysis were primarily based upon Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines; however, in some cases, standards were developed specifically for this analysis or reflect those used by the City in other environmental analyses. This subsection defines the type, amount, and/or extent of impact that would be considered a significant adverse change in the environment. Some thresholds (such as air quality, traffic, and noise) are quantitative, while others, such as visual quality, are qualitative. The thresholds are intended to assist the reader in understanding how and why the EIR reaches a conclusion that an impact is significant or less than significant.

The thresholds of significance are provided both in the "Thresholds of Significance" section and immediately before the relevant impact analysis for ease of correlation.

Effects Found to Have No Impact

Certain environmental impacts were determined to be "Effects Not Found to be Significant" based upon the analysis provided in the Initial Study for the proposed project and upon further analysis subsequent to the issuance of the IS/NOP. These impacts are summarized in this subsection based upon the analysis provided in the IS/NOP for the proposed project, which is included as Appendix A to this EIR.

Effects Found to Be Less Than Significant and Effects Found to Be Significant

This subsection describes the potential environmental impacts of the Transit Zoning Code (SD 84A and SD 84B) and, based upon the thresholds of significance, concludes whether the environmental impacts would be considered significant, potentially significant, or less than significant. Each impact is summarized in an "impact statement," followed by a more detailed discussion of the potential impacts and the significance of each impact before mitigation. This subsection also includes feasible mitigation

measures that could reduce the severity of the impact. In addition to feasible mitigation measures (MMs), the Transit Zoning Code (SD 84A and SD 84B) will also continue to comply with all applicable local, State, and federal laws and regulations, and these laws and regulations are considered to be part of the project description. Following the description of MMs, the subsection concludes with a statement regarding whether the impact, following implementation of the mitigation measure(s) or continuation of existing City programs, practices, or procedures, would remain significant, and thus be significant and unavoidable, or would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

The analysis of environmental impacts considers both the construction and operational phases associated with implementation of the Transit Zoning Code (SD 84A and SD 84B) . As required by Section 15126.2(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, direct, indirect, short-term, and/or long-term impacts are addressed, as appropriate, for the environmental issue area being analyzed.

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 (SU)—**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
- **Potentially Significant Impact (PS)—**Impact that exceeds the defined threshold(s) of significance and can be eliminated or reduced to a less-than-significant level through the implementation of feasible mitigation measures
- **Less-Than-Significant Impact (LS)—**Impact that does not exceed the defined threshold(s) of significance

Each impact discussion is separately numbered and includes a brief impact statement that summarizes the subject of the analysis. This format is designed to assist the reader in quickly identifying the subject of the impact analyses and for use in Table 1-1 (Summary of Environmental Effects and Mitigation Measures), which forms the basis of the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program. Impact numbers and statements are not provided for Effects Found to Have No Impact. Accordingly, they are not monitored as part of the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, and no impact numbers or statements are necessary.

Cumulative Impacts

CEQA requires that EIRs discuss cumulative impacts, in addition to project-specific impacts. In accordance with CEQA, the discussion of cumulative impacts must reflect the severity of the impacts and the likelihood of their occurrence; however, the discussion need not be as detailed as the discussion of environmental impacts attributable to the project alone. Further, the discussion is guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness. According to Section 15355 of the CEQA Guidelines:

> "Cumulative impacts" refer to two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.
>
> (a) The individual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects.

> (b) The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment, which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time.

Section 15130(a)(1) of the CEQA Guidelines further states that a "cumulative impact consists of an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing related impacts."

Section 15130(a) of the CEQA Guidelines also requires that EIRs discuss the cumulative impacts of a project when the project's incremental effect is cumulatively considerable. Where a lead agency is examining a project with an incremental effect that is not cumulatively considerable, it need not consider the effect significant but shall briefly describe the basis for its conclusion. As further clarified by Section 15065 of the CEQA Guidelines, "cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of an individual project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects. If the combined cumulative impact associated with the project's incremental effect and the effects of other projects is not significant, Section 15130(a)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines requires a brief discussion in the EIR of why the cumulative impact is not significant and is not discussed in further detail. Section 15130(a)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines requires supporting analysis in the EIR if a determination is made that a project's contribution to a significant cumulative impact is rendered less than cumulatively considerable and, therefore, is not significant. CEQA recognizes that the analysis of cumulative impacts need not be as detailed as the analysis of project-related impacts, but instead should "be guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15130[b]). The discussion of cumulative impacts in the EIR focuses on whether the impacts of the Specific Plan are cumulatively considerable.

The fact that a cumulative impact is significant on the whole does not necessarily mean that the project-related contribution to that impact would be significant as well. Instead, under CEQA, a project-related contribution to a significant cumulative impact is only significant if the contribution is cumulatively considerable. To support each significance conclusion, the EIR provides a detailed cumulative impact analysis, and where project-specific impacts have been identified that, together with the effects of other pending projects, could result in cumulatively significant impacts, these potential impacts are documented

The geographic scope of the cumulative impact analysis varies depending upon the specific environmental issue area being analyzed. In addition to describing the geographic scope of analysis, where appropriate, each section also designates the cumulative context within the designated geographic area, which relates to the amount and type of growth that is anticipated to occur within the geographic area. Finally, and where appropriate to the analysis in question, cumulative impacts are assessed with reference to a list of off-site "related projects," as described by CEQA Guidelines §15130(b).

References

This section identifies sources relied upon for each environmental topic area analyzed in this document (Sections 4.1 through 4.13).