

4.0 SETTING, IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

This chapter contains an analysis of each potentially significant environmental issue that has been identified for the CCAP Update. The following: 1) identifies how a determination of significance is made; 2) identifies the environmental issues addressed in this chapter; 3) identifies the environmental setting; and 4) identifies the format of the topical issue sections.

DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

Under CEQA, a significant effect is defined as a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in the environment. The CEQA Guidelines direct that this determination be based on scientific and factual data. The impact evaluation in this chapter is prefaced by criteria of significance, which are the thresholds for determining whether an impact is significant. The Notice of Preparation (NOP) and the Initial Study for the CCAP Update were released in May 2017. The NOP and comments on the NOP are contained in Appendix A of this Draft EIR. The Initial Study is contained in Appendix B. The analyses in the Initial Study was based on the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G questions and thresholds in place at that time. Since the release of the NOP/Initial Study, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research transmitted to the California Natural Resources Agency on November 27, 2017 final proposed amendments to the CEQA Guidelines, including Appendix G. The significance criteria used in this document are based on the changes to CEQA, including Appendix G, that were adopted by the California Natural Resources Agency on December 28, 2018.¹ Revisions to the significance criteria since release of the NOP/Initial Study are identified within each topical section.

ISSUES ADDRESSED IN THE DRAFT EIR

Sections 4.1 through 4.11 of this chapter describe the environmental setting of the Project as evaluated in the EIR and the impacts that are expected to result from implementation of the proposed Project. Mitigation measures are proposed to reduce potential impacts, where appropriate.

1. Aesthetics
2. Agricultural and Forestry Resources
3. Air Quality
4. Biological Resources
5. Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources
6. Geology, Soils, Mineral and Paleontological Resources
7. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Energy
8. Hazards and Hazardous Materials
9. Hydrology and Water Quality

¹ <http://resources.ca.gov/ceqa/> accessed January 9, 2019.

10. Noise and Groundborne Vibration

11. Transportation

Preliminary analysis in the Initial Study and by the County has determined that implementation of the proposed CCAP Update would not result in significant impacts to the following topics: Land Use and Planning; Population, Employment, and Housing; Public Services; Recreation; and Utilities and Service Systems, as discussed in Chapter 2.0, Summary. Consequently, these issues are not examined in separate EIR sections., but are discussed briefly in Chapter 2.0.

FORMAT OF ISSUE SECTIONS

The environmental topical sections are comprised of three primary parts: (1) Introduction, (2) Setting, and (3) Impacts and Mitigation Measures. An overview of the general organization and the information provided in the two parts is provided below:

Setting. The Setting section for each environmental topic generally provides a description of the applicable physical setting (e.g., existing land uses, existing traffic conditions) for the CCAP Update area and its surroundings. An overview of regulatory considerations that are applicable to each specific environmental topic is also provided.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15125 states: “An EIR must include a description of the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project, as they exist at the time the notice of preparation is published, or if no notice of preparation is published, at the time environmental analysis is commenced, from both a local and regional perspective. The environmental setting will normally constitute the baseline physical conditions by which a Lead Agency determines whether an impact is significant. The description of the environmental setting shall be no longer than is necessary to an understanding of the physical effects of the proposed project and its alternatives.” The NOP for the proposed Project was published on May 26, 2017. Unless otherwise stated, each of the environmental topical sections in this chapter includes a discussion of physical conditions in the vicinity of the CCAP Update area on or around May 2017.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures. The Impacts and Mitigation Measures section for each topic presents a discussion of the impacts that could result from implementation of the proposed Project. The section begins with the significance criteria, which establish the thresholds to determine whether an impact is significant. It also contains a discussion of impacts found less than significant in the Initial Study, and an approach to the analysis of significant impacts.

The latter part of each section presents the impacts analysis for the proposed CCAP Update and identifies mitigation measures, as appropriate. The proposed project is comprised of a series of specific text changes to eight policy and regulatory County plans and ordinances that govern the County’s activities along Lower Cache Creek. Of these plans and ordinances, two of them: Title 10, Chapter 11, Gravel Mining Fee Ordinance; and Title 8 Land Development, Chapter 4: Flood Protection ordinance did not include any changes that would result in environmental impacts and are not discussed further.

Impacts are numbered and shown in bold type, and the corresponding mitigation measures are numbered and indented. Impacts and mitigation measures are numbered consecutively. For example, the first potentially significant impact in the Cultural and Tribal Resources section would be defined as Impact CUL-1 and any associated mitigation measures would be numbered Mitigation Measure CUL-1.

Impacts are also categorized by level of significance before and after mitigation, as follows: Less-Than-Significant (LTS), Significant (S), and Significant and Unavoidable (SU). In some cases, mitigation measures (in the form of edits to proposed CCAP update language) are needed to reduce significant impacts to a less-than-significant level. In these cases, the text shown in the mitigation measure is the proposed CCAP Update text (with no strikeout/underline text) and the mitigation revisions are shown in strikeout/underline text.