

### **3.0.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes: the structure and format of the analysis provided for each of 14 environmental issues addressed herein; defines the terminology used in characterizing the level of significance for each potential impact and, where appropriate, associated mitigation; and, describes the methodology related to the cumulative analysis.

The Initial Study (Appendix A of this Draft EIR) determined that agricultural/forest resources, mineral resources, and population and housing, as well as some specific issues related to aesthetics and visual resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, noise, public services, and transportation and traffic would be less than significant and not addressed further within this Draft EIR. Additional details on these analyses are provided in the NOP/IS, included as Appendix A of this Draft EIR. The 14 environmental issues addressed in this section were determined by the City to be potentially significant or, in the case of land use and planning, likely less than significant but needing further evaluation pursuant to the Initial Study, input from neighbors and the community, and responses to the NOP and the scoping meeting, and include the following:

- Aesthetics and Visual Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Traffic and Transportation
- Utilities

The analysis of each environmental issue includes the following components:

- *Section Summary* - identifies the key points and findings of the analysis of the environmental issue being addressed;
- *Introduction* - provides an introduction to the environmental issue analysis and notes other related issues, if applicable;

- *Environmental Setting* - describes current conditions with regard to the environmental resource area reviewed. CEQA Guidelines Section 15125 states that “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 the 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 significant effects of the proposed project and its alternatives.” The CEQA Guidelines and case law recognize that the date for establishing an environmental baseline cannot be rigid (see CEQA Guidelines Sections 15146, 15151, 15204). In some instances, information is presented in the environmental setting which differs from the precise time of the NOP (June 2014). This information is considered representative of baseline conditions. Furthermore, environmental conditions may vary from year to year, and in some cases it is necessary to consider conditions over a range of time periods;
- *Regulatory Framework* - contains an overview of the federal, state, regional, and local laws and regulations, which may potentially apply to each environmental review topic. Development within the City must comply with other federal, state, and local regulations, which helps shape the way development occurs on the project site;
- *Impacts Assessment Methodology* - identifies how potential impacts on an environmental issue were determined;
- *Thresholds of Significance* – presents the criteria against which the significance of impacts is judged for the environmental issue;
- *Impact Determination* – presents the determination made for each threshold of significance (using terms detailed below, under Section 3.2), and prior to mitigation, if applicable;
- *Mitigation Measures* – presents proposed mitigation to reduce any potential impacts, if applicable;
- *Residual Impacts*, - presents the level of impact remaining, based on analysis, after the implementation of mitigation measures, if applicable;
- *Cumulative Impacts* - addresses the potential for an impact to be created as a result of the combination of the proposed project evaluated in the Draft EIR together with other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable probable future projects causing related impacts (refer to detailed discussion below, Section 3.3, regarding the cumulative analysis in this Draft EIR);
- *Summary of Impact Determinations* - summarizes the conclusions of the impacts analysis associated with each threshold of significance;
- *Summary of Mitigation Measures* - summarizes the mitigation measures, if applicable, that would be implemented to reduce an impact; and
- *Significant Unavoidable Impacts* – identifies significant unavoidable or residual impacts, if any, to the environmental issue that would cause a substantial adverse effect on the environment that could not be reduced to a less than significant level through any feasible mitigation measure(s).

The possible environmental effects of the alternatives identified by the City that would avoid or substantially lessen significant impacts associated with the proposed project are discussed in Chapter 4 Analysis of Alternatives.

## 3.0.2 Terminology Used in This Environmental Analysis

In evaluating the potential impacts of the proposed project and the project alternatives, the level of significance is determined by applying the threshold of significance (significance criteria) presented for each resource evaluation area. The following terms are used to describe each impact and, where significant impacts are determined, how mitigation measures are addressed:

- *No Impact*: A designation of no impact is given when a project does not apply to the impact category, or would not create an impact. In addition, a no impact is identified if no adverse or beneficial changes in the environment are expected.
- *Less Than Significant Impact*: A less than significant impact is identified when the proposed project would cause no substantial adverse change in the environment (i.e., the impact would not reach the threshold of significance), or where impacts have been reduced to less than significant after application of mitigation.
- *Significant Impact*: A significant impact would create a substantial or potentially substantial adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the proposed project. Such an impact would exceed the applicable significance threshold established by CEQA prior to application of mitigation.
- *Significant Unavoidable Impact*: As required by Section 15126.2(b) of the CEQA Guidelines, a significant unavoidable impact is identified when a residual impact that would cause a substantial adverse effect on the environment could not be reduced to a less than significant level through any feasible mitigation measure(s).
- *Mitigation*: Mitigation refers to measures that would be implemented to avoid or lessen potentially significant impacts. Mitigation includes:
  - avoiding the impact completely by not taking a certain action or parts of an action;
  - minimizing the impact by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation;
  - rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment;
  - reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action; and/or
  - compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

The mitigation measures would be proposed as a condition of project approval and would be monitored to ensure compliance and implementation.

- *Residual Impacts*: This is the level of impact after the implementation of mitigation measures.

## 3.0.3 Cumulative Impacts

### 3.0.3.1 Overview of CEQA Requirements for Cumulative Impacts Analysis

CEQA requires that EIRs discuss cumulative impacts, in addition to project-specific impacts. Pursuant to Section 15130(b) of the CEQA Guidelines, 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 proposed project alone. As indicated in 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.*

*The individual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects.*

*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) of the CEQA Guidelines indicates that a cumulative impact consists of an impact, which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in an EIR together with other projects causing related impacts. That section of the CEQA Guidelines also requires that EIRs discuss the cumulative impacts of a project when the proposed project's incremental effect is “cumulatively considerable,” which, under Section 15065(a)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines, means that “the incremental effects of an individual project are significant 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 EIR analysis determines that an incremental effect is not cumulatively considerable, it need not consider the effect significant but must briefly describe the basis for its conclusion. If the combined cumulative impact associated with a 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 a cumulative impact is not significant and why it 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 (Guidelines Section 15130(b)). The discussion of cumulative impacts in this Draft EIR focuses on whether the impacts of the proposed project are cumulatively considerable.

The fact that a cumulative impact is significant does not necessarily mean that a project-related contribution to the cumulative impact analysis is 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, this Draft EIR provides a cumulative impact analysis; and where project-specific impacts have

been identified that, together with the effects of other related projects, could result in cumulatively significant impacts, these potential impacts are documented.

### 3.0.3.2 Approach to Identifying Cumulative Projects

Section 15130(b) of the CEQA Guidelines provides two potential methodologies for analyzing cumulative impacts: “(A) a list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency, or (B) a summary of projections contained in an adopted local, regional, or statewide plan, or related planning document, that describes or evaluates conditions contributing to the cumulative effect.” The cumulative impacts analysis completed for the proposed project is based primarily on the adopted growth projections approach.

#### 3.0.3.2.1 Adopted Growth Projections Approach

In support of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), and other regional planning efforts, Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) developed a series of growth projections utilizing a comprehensive analysis of fertility, mortality, migration, labor force, housing units, and local policies such as land use plans (SCAG, 2012a; 2012b). Population, housing and employment forecasts for the City, neighboring communities, and the county. The majority of the cumulative analyses utilize a population growth rate of 0.36 percent per year, which was obtained from the SCAG Integrated Growth Forecast for the City of Redondo Beach.<sup>1</sup> To obtain an annual growth rate, the total forecast growth from 2008 to 2035 (approximately 9.8 percent increase between 2008 and 2035) was divided by the number of years from 2008, which resulted in an average annual growth of approximately 0.36 percent per year for the City. For the traffic analysis in this Draft EIR (Section 3.13 Traffic and Transportation and Appendix L1), the SCAG travel demand model was run and compared to the model-assigned traffic assigned on roadways in the City (City-wide) between the base year (2008) and the forecast year (2035). The net change in volumes was a decline of two percent due to the transportation infrastructure improvements, land use changes, and policy strategies associated with the RTP and the SCS. Therefore, the use of the population growth rate is considered a worst-case analysis of what traffic conditions could be like in the City rather than a forecast of expected future conditions.

The cumulative impact analysis completed for the proposed project considers the growth projected to occur in the vicinity of the project site and the region and analyzes whether the proposed project would contribute to any cumulative impacts. Additional details on resource-specific cumulative methodology are provided in the individual resource chapters.

#### 3.0.3.2.2 AES Power Plant Site

One potential area of future redevelopment within the City not captured in the SCAG RTP, just northeast of the project site, is the AES Redondo Beach Generating Plant (also referred to as the AES power plant), a 50-acre electrical power plant site located on land zoned Public – Generating Plant (P-GP). When the first three power units at the plant became operational in 1948, Southern California Edison (SCE) owned/operated the power plant. Unit 4 was completed in 1949, Units 5 and 6 were completed in 1956, and Units 7 and 8 were completed in 1968. On December 16, 1997, the California Public Utilities Commission approved SCE’s

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<sup>1</sup> SCAG Integrated Growth Forecast available online at:  
[http://rtpscsc.scag.ca.gov/Documents/2012/final/SR/2012fRTP\\_GrowthForecast.pdf](http://rtpscsc.scag.ca.gov/Documents/2012/final/SR/2012fRTP_GrowthForecast.pdf)

sale of the power plant to AES Corporation (AES California, 2013). The transfer of ownership was completed in May 1998. On August 27, 2013 (several months after release of the NOP for this project), AES filed a complete application for construction of a “natural-gas fired, combined-cycle, air-cooled electrical generating facility with a net generating capacity of 496 megawatt (MW), which will replace, and be constructed on the site of the AES Redondo Beach Generating Station.” Subsequently, in 2014, the owner of the AES facility/site proposed an Initiative measure to close the power plant at some point in the future and redevelop the site with a mix of retail, visitor-serving, residential, commercial, and hotel uses. The Initiative Measure, referred to as “Harbor Village Plan,” proposed up to 600 residential dwelling units of various types, up to 85,000 square feet of new commercial development, of which restaurant uses could not exceed 25,000 square feet, up to 250 hotel rooms and approximately 10 acres total be devoted to public open space. The initiative (Measure B) was placed on the March 2015 ballot. On March 3, 2015, the residents of the City voted against Measure B, thereby rejecting the Harbor Village Plan (5,614 NO votes and 5,213 YES votes) (City of Redondo Beach, 2015). Any future redevelopment on this site is considered speculative at the time of release of the Draft EIR (State Water Resources Control Board [SWRCB], 2010). Furthermore, any such development is unlikely to occur until after the horizon year of the cumulative analysis (2019). The existing Power Plant can continue operating with once through ocean cooling until December 31, 2020 (SWRCB Resolution No. 2010-0020 [amended by Resolution No. 2013-0018] and Policy on Once Through Cooling)(SWRCB, 2010; 2013a; 2013b). Any subsequent proposals for the power plant site would undergo separate environmental review.

### **3.0.3.3 Cumulative Impacts Study Area**

Cumulative study areas are defined based on an analysis of the geographical scope relevant to each particular environmental issue. Therefore, the cumulative study area for each individual environmental impact issue may vary. For example, a cumulative land use impact generally may only affect the compatibility of uses within the vicinity of the project site, while a cumulative air quality impact may affect the entire South Coast Air Basin. The specific boundaries and the projected growth within those boundaries for the cumulative study area of each environmental issue are identified in the applicable environmental issue sections (Section 3.1 through Section 3.14).