

## 5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

The next subsections of this EIR discuss each of the potentially significant effects of implementing the Project, which means development in accordance with the objectives, policies and standards of the proposed General Plan, revised Zoning Code, revised Subdivision Code, amended Noise Ordinance, Citywide Design and Sign Guidelines, and Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan. The subsections identify feasible mitigation measures, where feasible, to substantially lessen impacts found to be potentially significant in the EIR analysis. This EIR analyzes those environmental issue areas as stated in the Notice of Preparation (NOP) (Appendix A, *NOP*, of this EIR) where significant impacts have the potential to occur. No Initial Study was prepared for the Project as the City has determined that a comprehensive EIR is clearly required for the Project, (permissible under *CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15063[a]), and that the Project has the potential to result in significant environmental effects. The EIR will examine all environmental factors outlined as follows:

- 5.1 Aesthetics
- 5.2 Agricultural Resources
- 5.3 Air Quality
- 5.4 Biological Resources
- 5.5 Cultural Resources
- 5.6 Geology and Soils
- 5.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- 5.8 Hydrology and Water Quality
- 5.9 Land Use and Planning
- 5.10 Mineral Resources
- 5.11 Noise
- 5.12 Population and Housing
- 5.13 Public Services
- 5.14 Recreation
- 5.15 Transportation/Traffic
- 5.16 Utilities and Service Systems

Each environmental issue is addressed in a separate section of this EIR. Each chapter is organized in the following manner:

**Setting** describes the existing conditions in the environment in the vicinity of the Project before the commencement of the Project to provide a baseline for comparing “before the project” and “after the project” environmental conditions.

**Thresholds of Significance** defines and lists specific criteria used to determine whether an impact is or is not considered to be potentially significant. The City of Riverside has not established local CEQA significance thresholds as described in Section 15064.7 of the State CEQA Guidelines. Therefore, significance determinations utilized in these sections rely primarily upon Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines and, in some cases, the City of Riverside’s latest version of their Initial Study Checklist. “...An ironclad definition of significant effect is

not always possible because the significance of an activity may vary with the setting. . . .” (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064 [b]). Principally, “. . . a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within an area affected by the project, including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance” constitutes a significant impact (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15382).

**Related Regulations** identifies relevant, existing regulations, policies, and plans from both within the City and from other regulatory agencies.

**Related General Plan Policies** lists the regulations established within the scope of the Project documents most relevant to the particular issue area. As appropriate, policies, standards, and implementation tools from the General Plan, General Plan Implementation Plan, Subdivision Code, Noise Ordinance, Citywide Design and Sign Guidelines, and Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan are identified. Implementation of such policies, tools, and standards reduce impacts in addition to mitigation measures.

**Environmental Impacts Before Mitigation** presents evidence, based on factual and scientific data, for the cause and effect relationship between the proposed Project and the potential changes in the environment as they relate to each threshold of significance. The exact magnitude, duration, extent, frequency, range, or other parameters of a potential impact are ascertained to the extent reasonable, to determine whether impacts may be significant; all of the potential effects, including direct effects, reasonably foreseeable indirect effects, and considerable contributions to cumulative effects, are considered. Cumulative effects are discussed in Section 6.0, Long-Term Effects.

**Proposed Mitigation Measures** identify the means by which potentially significant impacts could be reduced or avoided in cases where the EIR analysis determines such impacts to be potentially significant. Standard existing regulations, requirements, programs, and procedures that are applied to all similar projects, as well as relevant Project components such as General Plan Policies, are taken into account in identifying additional feasible Project-specific mitigation that may be needed to reduce potentially significant impacts. Mitigation, in addition to measures that the lead agency will implement, can also include measures that are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15091 [a] [2]).

**Summary of Environmental Effects After Mitigation Measures are Implemented** identifies the impacts that will remain after application of mitigation measures, if any feasible mitigation measures exist, and whether the remaining impacts are or are not considered significant. When these impacts, even with the inclusion of mitigation measures, cannot be mitigated to a level considered less than significant, they are identified as unavoidable potentially significant impacts. To approve a project with significant unavoidable impacts, the lead agency must adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations. In adopting such a statement, the City Council is required to balance the benefits of a project against its unavoidable environmental impacts in determining whether to approve the project. If the benefits of a project are found to outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects, the adverse effects may be considered “acceptable” and the project approved (CEQA Guidelines Section 15093 [a]).

As mentioned previously, potential cumulative impacts of the Project are addressed in Section 6.0; analyses of growth inducing impacts, significant irreversible environmental changes, and unavoidable significant environmental impacts follow in subsequent subsections. Alternatives to the proposed Project that have the potential to reduce environmental impacts and generally meet project objectives are presented in Section 7.0.

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