

## CHAPTER 3: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

This Chapter sets forth the physical and regulatory environmental setting and addresses the environmental impacts of the project with respect to 18 environmental resource areas. The discussions of the environmental setting describe the present physical conditions, or baseline conditions, in the project area. The baseline used for the analysis of environmental impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) reflects the conditions present at the time the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for this Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was published. The potential impacts of the project are compared against the existing baseline conditions for each environmental resource.

### Environmental Topics Addressed in this EIR

The project is analyzed in this EIR from the perspective of the following 18 environmental resource areas:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire

### Format of the Environmental Analysis

Each resource area analyzed in this Chapter includes the subsections summarized below.

#### Introduction

This subsection summarizes what will be discussed in the respective environmental topic section, states what informational documents are used as the basis for the section, and indicates what related comments, if any, were received during the EIR public scoping period.

#### Environmental Setting

This subsection describes the existing, baseline physical conditions of the project site and surroundings (e.g., existing land uses, transportation conditions, noise environment) with respect to each resource topic at the time the NOP was issued. Conditions are described in sufficient detail and breadth to allow a general understanding of the environmental impacts of the project.

#### Regulatory Framework

This subsection describes the relevant federal, State, and local regulatory requirements that are directly applicable to the environmental topic being analyzed.

## Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This subsection evaluates the potential for the project to result in direct and indirect adverse impacts on the existing physical environment, with consideration of both short-term and long-term impacts. The analysis covers all phases of the project, including construction and operation. The significance thresholds for environmental impacts are defined at the beginning of this subsection, and the discussion of the approach to the analysis explains how the significance thresholds have been applied to evaluate the impacts of the project.

Indirect impacts are discussed only for those resources for which they have the potential to occur (e.g., population and housing, cultural resources, air quality, and biological resources). Both project-level and cumulative impacts are analyzed. Project-level impacts could result from actions related to implementation of the project. Cumulative impacts could result from implementation of the project in combination with other cumulative projects in the study area. As discussed in “Cumulative Impacts,” below, the projects listed in Table 3-1, in conjunction with the project, are considered the cumulative scenario for the analysis of cumulative impacts.

Impacts are analyzed and the respective assessment and findings are included in this Draft EIR, applying the following levels of significance:

- **No Impact.** A conclusion of No Impact is reached if no potential exists for impacts or if the environmental resource does not occur in the project area or the area of potential impacts.
- **Less Than Significant Impact.** This determination applies if the impact does not exceed the defined significance criteria or would be eliminated or reduced to a less than significant level through compliance with existing local, State, and federal laws and regulations. No mitigation is required for impacts determined to be less than significant.
- **Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation.** This determination applies if the project would result in a significant impact, exceeding the established significance criteria, but feasible mitigation is available that would reduce the impact to a less than significant level.
- **Significant and Unavoidable Impact.** This determination applies if the project would result in an adverse impact that exceeds the established significance criteria, and no feasible mitigation is available to reduce the impact to a less than significant level. Therefore, the residual impact would be significant and unavoidable.
- **Significant and Unavoidable Impact with Mitigation.** This determination applies if the project would result in an adverse impact that exceeds the established significance criteria, and although feasible mitigation might lessen the impact, the residual impact would be significant, and, therefore, the impact would be unavoidable.

Impacts are defined in terms of their context and intensity. Context is related to the uniqueness of a resource; intensity refers to the severity of the impact. Where applicable, best management practices or project improvement measures, or both, are incorporated into the project to limit the potential for a significant impact. Where necessary, mitigation measures are identified for significant impacts to limit the degree or lower the magnitude of the impact; rectify the impact by repairing,

rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment; or compensate for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments. These impacts conclude with a finding of Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation. Where no mitigation measures are necessary, relevant impacts are concluded to be Less than Significant or to have No Impact.

As part of the impact analysis, mitigation measures are identified, where feasible, for impacts considered significant or potentially significant consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4, which states that an EIR “shall describe feasible measures which could minimize significant adverse impacts.” CEQA requires that mitigation measures have an essential nexus and be roughly proportional to the significant impact identified in the EIR. The project sponsor is required to implement all identified mitigation measures identified in this chapter, and the lead agency (in this case, Contra Costa County) is responsible for overseeing the project sponsor’s implementation of such mitigation measures. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4, mitigation measures are not required for environmental impacts that are found not to be significant.

Impacts are numbered and shown in bold type. The corresponding mitigation measures, where identified, are numbered and indented, and follow the impact statements. Impacts and mitigation measures are numbered consecutively within each topic and include an abbreviated reference to the impact section (e.g., “LAND” for Land Use and Planning). The following abbreviations are used for individual topics:

- Aesthetics (AES)
- Air Quality (AIR)
- Biological Resources (BIO)
- Cultural Resources (CUL)
- Geology and Soils (GEO)
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG)
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials (HAZ)
- Hydrology and Water Quality (HYD)
- Noise (NOI)
- Transportation (TRANS)
- Utilities and Service Systems (UTIL)

## Cumulative Impacts

The discussion of cumulative impacts in this subsection analyzes the cumulative impacts of the project, taken together with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects producing related impacts. The goal of this analysis is to determine whether the overall long-term impacts of all such projects would be cumulatively significant, and to determine whether the project itself would cause a “cumulatively considerable” incremental contribution to any such cumulatively significant impacts. To determine whether the overall long-term impacts of all such projects would be cumulatively significant, the analysis generally considers the following:

- The area in which impacts of the project would be experienced;
- The impacts of the project that are expected in the area;

- Other past, proposed, and reasonably foreseeable projects that have had or are expected to have impacts in the same area;
- The impacts or expected impacts of these other projects; and
- The overall impact that can be expected if the individual impacts from each project are allowed to accumulate.

“Cumulative impacts” refers to two or more individual impacts that, when considered together, are considerable, or that compound or increase other environmental impacts (CEQA Guidelines § 15355). Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant impacts taking place over time (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1508.7). If the analysis determines that the potential exists for the project, taken together with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, to result in a significant or adverse cumulative impact, the analysis then determines whether the project’s incremental contribution to any significant cumulative impact is itself significant (i.e., “cumulatively considerable”). The cumulative impact analysis for each individual resource topic is presented in each resource section of this Chapter immediately after the description of the direct project impacts and identified mitigation measures.

Table 3-1 lists the relevant cumulative projects considered for the environmental analysis, and Exhibit 3-1 shows the locations of the cumulative projects (projects 1 through 10).

**Table 3-1: Cumulative Projects**

No.	Project	Characteristics	Project Development			
			Units	Square Footage	Location	Status
<b>Contra Costa County</b>						
1	Avalon Walnut Creek Village (Pleasant Hill BART Specific Plan, Block C)	Residential units and retail space	200 residential	70,194	1001 Harvey Drive, No. 156	Approved
2	Avalon Walnut Creek (Pleasant Hill BART Specific Plan, Block A)	Office building	—	290,000	Block bound by Wayne Drive, Oak Road, and BART tracks	Approved
<b>City of Pleasant Hill</b>						
3	Cambria Hotel	Hotel	155 guest rooms	—	3131 North Main Street (intersection of Oak Park Boulevard and Main Street)	Pending
4	Pleasant Hill Day Care Center	Daycare facility	72 students	5,117	409 Boyd Road (Boyd Road at Kahrs Avenue)	Approved

**Table 3-1 (cont.): Cumulative Projects**

No.	Project	Characteristics	Project Development			
			Units	Square Footage	Location	Status
5	Fountainhead Montessori Day Care	Daycare facility	72 students	—	1715-1725 Oak Park Boulevard (northeast corner of Oak Park Boulevard and Monticello Avenue)	Approved
6	Development of Housing Element Opportunity Site	Multi-family residential development	200 multi-family homes	—	Between Cleaveland Road and Beatrice Road	Pending
7	Oak Park/Monticello Mixed-Use Project	Library relocation, development of single-family homes and accessory units and public park with two sports fields	34 single-family, 7 accessory dwelling	—	Northeast intersection of Oak Park Boulevard and Monticello Avenue	Pending
8	Griggs Multi-Family Development	General Plan Amendment and Related Entitlements for a 220 multi-family project	220 multi-family homes	—	85 Cleaveland Road	Pending
<b>City of Walnut Creek</b>						
9	Habitat for Humanity Townhomes—Las Juntas	Multi-family residential development	42 multi-family homes	89,298	1250 Las Juntas Way	Pending
10	Volvo Cars Walnut Creek	Auto dealership and carwash/detail building	—	30,360	2791 North Main Street	Pending
<b>Caltrans</b>						
11	Interstate 680 (I-680) Southbound High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lane Gap Closure Project	Improvements to I-680 HOV Lane to close gap on the southbound lane	—	—	I-680 between North Main Street and Rudgear Road	Approved
12	I-680 Northbound HOV Lane Gap Closure Project	Improvements to I-680 HOV Lane to close gap on the northbound lane	—	—	Between North Main Street and Marina Vista	Approved
Sources: Contra Costa County 2019; City of Walnut Creek 2019; City of Pleasant Hill 2019; Caltrans 2019; compiled by FirstCarbon Solutions (FCS) 2019						

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Source: ESRI Aerial Imagery.



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