

4.0. INTRODUCTION TO THE ANALYSIS

4.0.1 INTRODUCTION

The technical chapters of this EIR include the analysis of the potential impacts of buildout of the proposed project on the full range of environmental issue areas. Chapters 4.1 through 4.13 describe the focus of the analysis, references and other data sources for the analysis, the environmental setting related to each specific issue area, project-specific impacts and mitigation measures, and the cumulative impacts for each issue area. The format of each of the technical chapters is described at the end of this chapter.

4.0.2 ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES ADDRESSED IN THIS EIR

This EIR provides the analysis necessary to address all technical environmental topics identified in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. Consistent with Appendix G, the following environmental issues are addressed in separate technical chapters of this EIR:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy;
- Biological Resources;
- Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources;
- Geology, Soils, and Mineral Resources;
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials;
- Hydrology and Water Quality;
- Land Use and Population and Housing;
- Noise and Vibration;
- Public Services and Utilities
- Transportation; and
- Wildfire

Chapter 5.0 of the EIR presents a discussion and comprehensive list of all significant and unavoidable impacts identified in Chapters 4.1 through 4.13.

4.0.3 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

According to the CEQA Guidelines Section 15125(a), “An EIR must include a description of the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project. This environmental setting will normally constitute the baseline physical conditions by which a lead agency determines whether an impact is significant.” Notably, the purpose of this requirement, “...is to give the public and decision makers the most accurate and understandable picture practically possible of the project’s likely near-term and long-term impacts.”

The Brunswick Industrial Site environmental baseline is site conditions that exist at the time of the Notice of Preparation. Existing Brunswick Industrial Site environmental conditions include forested slopes, aquatic features such as South Fork Wolf Creek, disturbance and remnants from previous gold mining and sawmill operations, and operations associated with Gold Country Senior



Services, specifically, the cutting, storing, and distribution of firewood to seniors. Recent activities have also included use of the Brunswick Industrial Site by a contractor performing vegetation trimming for PG&E.

As discussed in Section 1.3, the environmental baseline for the Centennial Industrial Site has been adjusted for the evaluation of several resource topics in this Draft EIR to reflect future conditions at the Centennial Industrial Site because of a separately proposed environmental remediation project that would be complete prior to the use of the Centennial Industrial Site by the project for engineered fill placement. The future post-remediation environmental baseline is limited to the Centennial Industrial Site and the following resources:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture and Forestry
- Biological Resources
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Wildfire

For evaluation of other resource topics, the environmental baseline is existing conditions at the Centennial Industrial Site as those resource evaluations are less dependent on landform/soil disturbance.

4.0.4 DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

Under CEQA, a significant effect is defined as a substantial or potentially substantial adverse change in the environment (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21068). The CEQA Guidelines require that the determination of significance be based on scientific and factual data. The specific criteria for determining the significance of a particular impact are identified within in each technical chapter, and are consistent with significance criteria set forth in the CEQA Guidelines or as based on the professional judgment of the EIR preparers.

Four categories of impacts are used for the project-specific impacts within this EIR: no impact, less than significant, significant, and significant and unavoidable. The description of each determination is as follows:

No Impact. The impact would clearly not cause any physical changes in the existing or projected future environment.

Less than Significant. The impact would not cause significant adverse physical changes in the existing or projected future environment; therefore, mitigation is not required. Or, while some impact may be associated with the project, it is not significant or is acceptable based on the applicable thresholds of significance.

Significant. Under CEQA, a significant impact is defined as a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse physical change in the environment. CEQA Guidelines Section 15064 states that the determination is to be made by the lead agency based on scientific and factual data, to the extent possible.



Significant and Unavoidable. An impact is considered significant and unavoidable when the result is a substantial effect on the environment for which mitigation has not been identified as feasible to reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level, or mitigation is identified but would not fully mitigate the impact to acceptable levels. Mitigation may be required to reduce the impact as much as possible, even if the impact would remain significant and unavoidable.

A cumulative discussion of the impacts of the proposed project in conjunction with other development in the region is included in each technical chapter of this EIR. Cumulative impacts are determined to be less than significant, less than cumulatively considerable, cumulatively considerable, or significant and unavoidable. When a cumulative impact is determined to be less than significant, this signifies that the proposed project's incremental effect, in combination with the effects of other cumulative development, is not significant. The description of the other cumulative determinations is as follows:

Less than Cumulatively Considerable. The project, in combination with other cumulative development, would generate a significant cumulative impact; however, the project's incremental contribution to the significant cumulative impact is less than cumulatively considerable (see CEQA Guidelines Section 15064(h)(5)).

Cumulatively Considerable. The project, in combination with other cumulative development, would generate a significant cumulative impact; and, the project's incremental contribution to the significant cumulative impact is cumulatively considerable (see CEQA Guidelines Section 15064(h)(1)).

Significant and Unavoidable. Significant and unavoidable cumulative impacts are impacts on the environment that result from the incremental impacts of a proposed project when added to other past, current, and future projects and cannot be alleviated to a less than cumulatively considerable level. Such impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions that occur over time.

All mitigation measures pertinent to each individual impact follow directly after the statement of level of significance of the impact (see below). The effectiveness of identified mitigation measures in reducing impacts is also evaluated.

4.0.5 CHAPTER FORMAT

Each technical chapter addressing a specific environmental issue begins with an **introduction** describing the purpose of the chapter. The introduction is followed by a description of the project's baseline **environmental setting** pertaining to that particular environmental issue. The setting description is followed by the **regulatory context** and the **impacts and mitigation measures** discussion. The discussion contains the **standards of significance**, followed by the **method of analysis**. The **impacts and mitigation measures** discussion includes impact statements prefaced by a number in bold-faced type. An explanation of each impact and an analysis of the impact's significance follow each impact statement (see below), followed by all mitigation measures pertinent to each individual impact. The degree of relief provided by identified mitigation measures is also evaluated. An example of the format is shown below. Note that where needed, separate headers are included for the Centennial Industrial Site, Brunswick Industrial Site, and/or East Bennett Road ROW to differentiate the impact discussion based upon the specific conditions of each respective area.



4.x-1 Statement of Impact

Discussion of impact for the proposed project in paragraph format.

Statement of **level of significance** of impact without implementation of mitigation is included at the end of each impact discussion. The following levels of significance without implementation of mitigation will be utilized in the EIR: no impact, less than significant, and significant. If an impact is determined to be significant, mitigation will be included in order to reduce the specific impact to the maximum extent feasible. Impacts that cannot be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of all feasible mitigation would be considered to remain significant and unavoidable.

Mitigation Measure(s)

Statement of *level of significance* of impact with implementation of mitigation is included immediately preceding the mitigation measures.

4.x-1(a) *Required mitigation measure(s) presented in italics and listed in consecutive order.*

4.x-1(b) *etc., etc.*

The cumulative impacts are similarly presented at the end of each technical chapter in a separate section.

