
4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION, IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

SECTION 4.1
INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

4.1.1 FORMAT OF ISSUE SECTIONS

Sections in this chapter present, for each environmental issue area, 1) a description of the environmental setting as it relates to the specific issue; 2) the regulatory framework for the issue as applicable to the project; 3) significance criteria and the methodology used to assess impacts; 4) an evaluation of project-specific and identification of mitigation measures where appropriate; and 5) a determination of the level of significance after mitigation measures are implemented. Each section is organized into four parts: Introduction, Setting, Regulatory Framework, and Impacts and Mitigation Measures.

The **Introduction** provides a summary of the purpose of the section, itemizes the main areas of analysis, and briefly describes the methodology used to complete the evaluation.

The **Setting** summarizes the existing conditions for the particular environmental issue at the regional, sub-regional and local levels, as appropriate.

The **Regulatory Framework** identifies plans, policies and regulations that are applicable to the particular issue.

The **Impacts and Mitigation Measures** section begins with a description of the significance criteria used to evaluate project impacts and to determine their significance. Next is a description of the methodology used to assess potential impacts. Following this are the individual impact statements, which include an explanatory text and the technical information necessary to reach a conclusion on the significance of the impacts. The impacts presented in this section are divided into project-specific and cumulative, with project-specific impacts listed first. Where necessary, each impact discussion is followed by a description of the proposed mitigation and a statement of the significance of the impact after mitigation.

4.1.2 DETERMINING LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

Determining the severity of project impacts is fundamental to achieving the objectives of CEQA. CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 requires that decision makers make findings that significant impacts identified in the Final EIR have been mitigated as completely as feasible. If the EIR identifies any significant impacts that cannot be mitigated to a level that is less than significant, CEQA Guidelines Section 15093 requires decision makers to adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations, which explains why the benefits of a project outweigh the negative environmental impacts identified in the EIR.

The level of significance for each impact examined in this EIR was determined by comparing the predicted magnitude of an impact to a threshold. Thresholds for each impact were developed using criteria from the CEQA Guidelines, local/regional plans and ordinances, accepted practice, and/or consultation with recognized experts. Thresholds are identified in each section under Significance Criteria.

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Four levels of impact significance are recognized by this EIR:

- **Less than Significant [LS]** impacts would not cause a substantial change in the environment or are not disruptive enough to require mitigation, as determined by comparing the potential impact with the appropriate significance criteria.
- **Significant [SM]** impacts would cause a substantial negative change in the environment, as determined by the appropriate significance criteria. Mitigation measures are identified to reduce a significant impact of the project to a level that is less than significant.
- **Significant and Unavoidable [SU]** impacts are significant negative impacts that cannot be avoided or mitigated to a level that is less than significant.
- In some cases, impacts are classified as **potentially significant [PSM]**. A potentially significant impact may cause a significant change in the environment, but additional information is needed to definitively state that the impact is significant. This designation may also be applied to impacts that in nature are qualitative and cannot be readily quantified. For CEQA purposes, a potentially significant impact is treated as if it were a significant impact. Mitigation measures are identified to reduce a potentially significant impact of the project to a level that is less than significant.

4.1.3 IMPACT AND MITIGATION FORMAT

The standard format used to present the evaluation of impacts is as follows:

Impact 4.1.1 **The impact number identifies the chapter of the report and the sequential order of the impact within that chapter. The impact statement is followed by an abbreviation identifying the level of impact: less than significant [LS], potentially significant but mitigable [PSM], significant but mitigable [SM], or significant and unavoidable [SU].**

The impact is then discussed in more detail. If the impact is considered significant or potentially significant, proposed mitigation measures will follow.

Mitigation Measures

Project-specific mitigation measures, beyond those contained in other documents, are described in the format presented below:

MM 4.1.1a Project-specific mitigation is identified that would reduce the impact to the lowest degree feasible. The mitigation number links the mitigation to the impact; the letter identifies the sequential order of the mitigation for that impact.

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Timing/Implementation: Gives the time when the mitigation measure is to be implemented (for example, prior to issuance of building permit, or upon submission of final map).

Enforcement/Monitoring: Identifies the department or agency with the responsibility for implementing the mitigation measure.

The discussion concludes by describing how the mitigation measures would reduce the impact. It then identifies the resulting level of significance of the impact following mitigation.

In some cases, reference is made to policies contained within existing plans, ordinances and regulations of the County or other agencies that would partially or fully mitigate an impact. These policies shall be considered as part of the recommended mitigation measures for the project.

4.1.4 MITIGATION MEASURES IN THE INITIAL STUDY

The Initial Study for the project identified significant environmental impacts and recommended mitigation measures to reduce these impacts. These mitigation measures have been incorporated in the appropriate technical section in the EIR. However, some mitigation measures were proposed for particular environmental issues that were determined to not require analysis beyond that provided in the Initial Study. Such mitigation measures are to be considered part of those presented in the EIR. These mitigation measures are as follows:

Cultural Resources

MM 4.1.4a If, in the course of development, any archaeological, historical or paleontological resources or human remains are uncovered, discovered or otherwise detected or observed, construction activities in the affected area shall cease and a qualified archaeologist shall be contacted to review the site and advise the Planning Division of the site's significance. If the findings are deemed significant by the Environmental Review Officer, appropriate mitigation shall be required.

Timing/Implementation: During project implementation.

Enforcement/Monitoring: Shasta County Department of Resource Management - Planning Division.

Transportation/Traffic

MM 4.1.4b The project shall require a Caltrans encroachment permit to upgrade the existing driveway road approach to Caltrans "Type C" standards with a typical (R-2) modified deceleration right-turn lane and typical acceleration lane (X-6).

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*Timing/Implementation: At commencement of project implementation.
Enforcement/Monitoring: California Department of Transportation.*

Utilities and Service Systems

MM 4.1.4c Onsite containment of wastewater shall be monitored by the Planning Division, as well as by the Regional Water Quality Control Board as part of its periodic inspection program.

*Timing/Implementation: As part of the annual mine inspection program.
Enforcement/Monitoring: Shasta County Department of Resource Management - Planning Division.*

In all three cases, the mitigation measures would reduce impacts determined to be potentially significant to a level that is less than significant.