

9. Significant Irreversible Changes Due to the Proposed Project

Section 15126.2(c) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) describe any significant irreversible environmental changes that would be caused by the proposed project should it be implemented.

In the case of the proposed project, implementation will result in the phased development of a master planned community of residential neighborhoods, parks, recreational amenities, and open spaces, linked together by an extensive trail network. At buildout, the proposed project would provide up to 450 low-density units and 650 medium-density units—a total of 1,100 units with an overall average density of 4.2 dwelling units per acre. The proposed project also provides up to 15.1 acres of parks/recreations uses, 47.5 acres of open space, and 2.0 acres of rights-of-way. The development of such uses, in accordance with federal, state and local regulations, will include the removal of an extensive network of oilfield pipelines and facilities, and the remediation of oil-impacted soils. Existing agricultural uses would also be removed.

Implementation of the project would allow construction activities that would entail the commitment of nonrenewable and/or slowly renewable energy resources, human resources, and natural resources such as lumber and other forest products, sand and gravel, asphalt, steel, copper, lead, other metals, and water. An increased commitment of social services and public maintenance services (e.g., police, fire, schools, libraries, sewer, water, solid waste, electrical power, and natural gas services) would also be required.

The energy and social service commitments would be long-term obligations in view of low likelihood of returning the land to its original condition once it has been developed. Project development is a long-term irreversible commitment of the land. After the 50- to 75-year structural lifespan of the buildings is reached, it is improbable that the site would revert to its current oil production and agricultural uses due to the large capital investment that would already have been committed.

An increase in project related vehicle trips would accompany project related population growth. Over the long term, emissions associated with such vehicle trips and energy use associated with proposed development would generate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and VOC emissions exceeding the South Coast Air Quality Management District's significance thresholds and continue to contribute in the South Coast Air Basin's nonattainment designation for ozone. Furthermore, project related grading and construction would result in a permanent change in landform and scenic resources. Given the low likelihood that the land would revert to oil and agricultural production, the project would generally commit future generations to these environmental changes.

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