

5.17 Mandatory Findings of Significance

5.17.1 SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Section 15126.2(b) of the CEQA Guidelines requires an EIR to describe “any significant impacts, including those which can be mitigated but not reduced to a level of insignificance.” Potential environmental effects of the proposed Project and mitigation measures are discussed in detail throughout in Chapter 5 of this EIR.

Air Quality

As detailed, in Section 5.2, *Air Quality*, implementation of the proposed Project, would result in long-term emissions of criteria air pollutants from vehicular emissions, natural gas consumption, landscaping, applications of architectural coatings, and use of consumer products. The emissions from the proposed Project are primarily from vehicle trips. As described in Section 5.14, *Transportation*, the proposed Project is anticipated to generate 11,546 daily vehicular trips, with 534 a.m. peak hour trips and 604 p.m. peak hour trips.

As shown in Table 5.2-8 in Section 5.2, *Air Quality*, emissions from operation of the proposed Project would exceed the threshold of significance for VOCs. The majority of VOC emissions would be derived from consumer products and vehicular activity. Consumer products include cleaning supplies, kitchen aerosols, cosmetics and toiletries, the use of which cannot be controlled by the City. Likewise, vehicular emissions cannot be controlled by either the Project Applicant or the City. There are no feasible mitigation measures that would reduce VOC emissions to below the SCAQMD threshold. Therefore, Project operational emissions would be significant and unavoidable.

Greenhouse Gases

As detailed, in Section 5.6, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, the Project would result in a net increase in GHG emissions of 9,861.60 MTCO_{2e} per year, which would be 4.10 MTCO_{2e} annually per service population. This would exceed the SCAQMD Tier 3 screening threshold of 3,000 MTCO_{2e} and exceed the SCAQMD Tier 4/City CAP threshold of 3.16 MTCO_{2e} per service population.

Approximately 60 percent of the Project's GHG emissions would be generated by mobile sources (vehicle trips), and there are no feasible Project measures that would reduce vehicular emissions. Thus, neither the Project Applicant nor the Lead Agency (City of Santa Ana) can substantively or materially affect reductions in Project mobile-source emissions.

The Project is consistent with the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) guidance for mitigating or reducing transportation related VMT from land use development projects. The Project is an urban infill redevelopment that would provide mixed residential and commercial (retail/restaurant) uses. The site located near existing off-site employment, commercial, residential, and retail destinations and in proximity to existing public bus stops and freeways, which would result in reduced vehicle trips and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) in comparison to a Project of similar size on land without close access to employment, service, and retail, destinations; in addition to public transit and freeways. Additionally, the Project would be constructed to current Title 24/CalGreen standards and would be consistent with policies that have been adopted for the purpose of mitigating a GHG effect. However, because the net increase in GHG emissions from the Project would exceed SCAQMD Tier 3 screening threshold of 3,000 MTCO_{2e} and exceed the SCAQMD Tier 4/City CAP threshold of 3.16 MTCO_{2e} per service population, impacts related to GHG emissions would be significant and unavoidable.

Transportation

As detailed, in Section 5.14, *Transportation* (Table 5.14-9), with implementation of the proposed Project with the Year 2040 traffic conditions, the Project would result in impacts at five intersections. Improvements for the impacted intersections have been identified, which would reduce impacts to less than significant. However, improvements at the intersections of Red Hill Avenue/ Warner Avenue (#25), Red Hill Avenue/ Barranca Parkway (#30), Red Hill Avenue/Alton Parkway (#32), and Tustin Ranch Road/Warner Avenue North (#47) cannot be guaranteed because they require approval and/or implementation by the City of Tustin or the City of Irvine. The improvement at the Grand Avenue/Warner Avenue (#4) intersection is required as a result of a cumulative impact; the intersection operates with unsatisfactory LOS in the baseline condition. The Project would be responsible for a fair share of the improvement through implementation of mitigation; however, there is no currently planned improvement at the location, and it is unknown if the Grand Avenue/Warner Avenue improvement would be implemented by 2040 (the impact year). Therefore, implementation of the Project would result in a significant and unavoidable impact under the Year 2040 Plus Project condition at these four intersections.

5.17.2 GROWTH INDUCEMENT

This section analyzes the growth inducement potential of the proposed Project and the associated secondary effects of growth the Project might permit. As required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(d), an EIR must:

“Discuss the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Included in this are projects which would remove obstacles to population growth (a major expansion of a recycled water plant might, for example, allow for more construction in service areas). Increases in the population may tax existing community service facilities, requiring construction of new facilities that could cause significant environmental effects. Also discuss the characteristic of some projects which may encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively. It must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.”

Thus, based on CEQA, a project could have a direct effect on population growth, for example, if it would involve construction of substantial new housing. A project could also have indirect growth-inducement potential if it would:

- Establish substantial new permanent employment opportunities (e.g., commercial, industrial, governmental, or other employment-generating enterprises) or otherwise stimulate economic activity such that it would result in the need for additional housing, businesses, and services to support increased economic activities;
- Remove obstacles to growth, e.g., through the construction or extension of major infrastructure facilities that do not presently exist in the project area, or would add substantial capacity that could accommodate additional unplanned growth;
- Remove obstacles to growth through changes in existing regulations pertaining to land development;
- Result in the need to expand one or more public service facilities to maintain desired levels of service; or
- Involve some other action that could encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment.

As CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(d) states that growth-inducing effects are not to be construed as necessarily beneficial, detrimental or of little significance to the environment; the following information is provided as additional information on ways in which the proposed Project could contribute to significant changes in the environment beyond the direct consequences of developing the land use concepts examined in the preceding sections of this EIR.

Establish substantial new permanent employment opportunities or otherwise stimulate economic activity such that it would result in the need for additional housing, businesses, and services to support increased economic activities

The Project site has been used Ricoh Electronics Inc., an imaging and electronics company, for light industrial uses that generate employment opportunities since its development in 1979 and 1981. The site was vacated by Ricoh in 2018 and the buildings are partially re-occupied and used for storage, electronics recycling, and as temporary housing for the homeless.

The proposed Project would redevelop the Project site to provide 1,150 multi-family residential units and 80,000 square feet of commercial retail space. As detailed in Section 5.11, *Population and Housing*, this is anticipated to generate approximately 320 employees at full occupancy, which would be 0.27 percent of the existing jobs within 2-miles of the Project site; and therefore, would not result in induced unplanned employment growth.

In addition, the jobs that would be created by the proposed Project would provide new employment opportunities to employees that are already living in Santa Ana and the surrounding cities. Most of the new jobs that would be created by the proposed Project would be positions that do not require a specialized workforce. Thus, it is anticipated that these jobs would be filled by people who would already be living within Santa Ana, Tustin, Irvine and surrounding communities and would not induce an unanticipated influx of new labor into the region. Thus, impacts related to increased growth through the provision of employment opportunities would be less than significant.

The Economic and Fiscal Analysis prepared for the proposed Project describes that the Project is oriented towards development patterns occurring in adjacent areas in the Cities of Tustin and Irvine that have seen an expansion in mixed-use properties and other uses beyond industrial and office. The Economic and Fiscal Analysis also determined that the demand for retail and restaurant commercial space will be driven by local spending patterns of residents, workers, and hotel guests in the vicinity of the Project site; and that the Project residents and local market would be able to support the proposed 80,000 square feet of retail commercial space.

Overall, the Project site has historically provided employment opportunities and provided for economic activity. The proposed Project would provide for a different variety of employment opportunities and economic activities that are consistent with development occurring and planned for in the Project vicinity. As detailed in Section 5.11, *Population and Housing*, the Project would result in a slight improvement in the jobs-housing balance and the residents and employees of the site would have convenient access to sustainable multimodal transportation that would allow for walking, biking, and the use of existing transit, which could reduce vehicular trips and would reduce the effects of travel (such as traffic, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, and noise impacts), which would be an indirect physical benefit of the proposed Project. In addition, the Project includes development of 1,150 multi-family units. Thus, the Project provides housing and would not result in the need for additional housing. Therefore, the economic effects of the proposed Project would not result in the need for additional development to support the Project and would not result in a substantial impact the environment.

Remove Obstacles to Growth, e.g., Through the Construction Or Extension of Major Infrastructure Facilities that do not Presently Exist in the Project Area or Would Add Substantial Capacity that Could Accommodate Additional Unplanned Growth.

The elimination of a physical obstacle to growth is considered to be a growth inducing impact. A physical obstacle to growth typically involves the lack of public service infrastructure. The proposed Project would induce growth if it would provide public services or infrastructure with excess capacity to serve lands that would otherwise not be developable or to expand the development potential of redevelopment areas.

The proposed Project would redevelop the onsite infrastructure to serve the proposed multi-family residential and commercial uses. New water infrastructure would be installed on the Project site that would connect to the existing 12-inch water pipelines in Warner Avenue. The new onsite water system would convey water supplies to the proposed buildings and landscaping through plumbing/landscaping fixtures that are compliant with the CalGreen Plumbing Code for efficient use of water.

Also, new sewer infrastructure would be installed onsite and approximately 367 feet of the existing 8-inch City sewer line in Warner Avenue, between the Project site and the Orange County Sanitation sewer line in Red Hill Avenue, would be replaced with a 10-inch sewer. As described in Section 5.16, *Utilities and Service Systems*, with operation of the proposed Project the improved sewer line would have a peak flow half full capacity of 0.65 cfs which is the design capacity of the sewer, and does not leave capacity for any additional unplanned growth. In addition, the Project would install new storm water drainage infrastructure on the Project site that would connect to the existing off-site drain system in Red Hill Avenue that currently serves the Project site.

Overall, the proposed Project would redevelop the existing onsite infrastructure systems and provide an off-site sewer line improvement that would connect to the existing off-site systems that currently serve the Project site. The new infrastructure would not provide additional capacity beyond what is needed to serve the proposed Project. In addition, because the Project is within a developed area that is receiving services from existing infrastructure and would connect to the existing infrastructure, development of the proposed Project would not result in an expansion of overall capacity, extension of infrastructure, or provision of services in areas or an unserved area. Therefore, infrastructure improvements would not result in significant growth inducing impacts.

Remove Obstacles to Growth Through Changes in Existing Regulations Pertaining to Land Development

The Project site has a General Plan land use designation of PAO (Professional and Administrative Office) and a zoning designation of M-1 (Light Industrial). A project could directly induce growth if it would remove barriers to population growth such as change to a jurisdiction's general plan and zoning code, which allows new development to occur in underutilized areas. The proposed Project includes amendments to the General Plan and to the zoning code to allow for the redevelopment of the site to provide the proposed mixed-use development as opposed to the existing light industrial building uses. The Project proposes a General Plan land use designation amendment from PAO (Professional and Administrative Office) to District Center, which would allow specific development requirements for the proposed mixed uses. In addition, the Project includes a proposed zoning change from M-1 (Light Industrial) to a Specific Development designation, which would also provide specific development regulations for the mixed-use Project.

The proposed Project is redevelopment of an already developed area that has been used for urban uses since 1979 and is surrounded by urban development or areas planned for urban development. The proposed Project would involve a change to development regulations and would result in onsite residents and additional onsite employees. However, the zoning and land use changes are parcel specific and would not result in growth outside of the Project site, because the areas are either completely developed or within

development land use plans. Changes to the Project site's land use and zoning designations would not result in removing an obstacle to growth within the Project vicinity.

In addition, SCAG policies concerning regional growth-inducement are included as part of Section 5.9, *Land Use and Planning*, and Section 5.11, *Population and Housing*. As described in those sections, the growth anticipated by SCAG's projections are consistent with the increases in population (2,081 residents) and employees (320 employees) anticipated at full capacity of the Project. Therefore, impacts related to growth from changes in existing regulations pertaining to land development would be less than significant.

Result in the Need to Expand One or More Public Service Facilities to Maintain Desired Levels of Service

The proposed Project is expected to incrementally increase the demand for fire protection and emergency response, police protection, and school services. However, as described in Section 5.12, *Public Services*, the proposed Project would not require development of additional facilities or expansion of existing facilities to maintain existing levels of service. Based on service ratios and build out projections, the proposed Project would not create a demand for services beyond the capacity of existing facilities. Therefore, an indirect growth inducing impact as a result of expanded or new public facilities that could support other development in addition to the proposed Project would not occur. The proposed Project would not have significant growth inducing consequences that would require the need to expand public services to maintain desired levels of service.

Involve Some Other Action that Could Encourage and Facilitate Other Activities that Could Significantly Affect the Environment

The proposed Project involves amendments to the City of Santa Ana General Plan and Zoning Ordinance, but those amendments are specific to the allowable land uses on the Project site itself. The proposed Project does not propose changes to any of the City's building safety standards (i.e., building, grading, plumbing, mechanical, electrical, or fire codes). The Project would comply with all applicable City plans, policies, and ordinances. In addition, Project features and mitigation measures have been identified within this EIR to ensure that the Project minimizes environmental impacts. The Project would not involve any precedent-setting action that could encourage and facilitate other activities that significantly affect the environment.

Environmental Impacts of Induced Growth

All physical environmental effects from construction of development of the proposed Project has been analyzed in all technical sections of this EIR. For example, activities such as excavation, grading, and construction as required for the proposed mixed uses were analyzed in the Sections 5.2, *Air Quality*, 5.6, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, 5.10, *Noise*, and 5.15, *Transportation*. Therefore, construction of the proposed Project has been analyzed in this EIR and would be adequately mitigated either through implementation of existing regulations and/or mitigation measures contained within Chapter 5 of this EIR.

5.17.3 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE EFFECTS

State CEQA Guidelines require the EIR to consider whether "uses of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project may be irreversible since a large commitment of such resources makes removal or nonuse thereafter unlikely.... Also, irreversible damage can result from environmental accidents associated with the project. Irretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified." (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(c)). "Nonrenewable resource" refers to the physical features of the natural environment, such as land, waterways, mineral resources, etc. These

irreversible environmental changes may include current or future uses of non-renewable resources, and secondary or growth-inducing impacts that commit future generations to similar uses.

Generally, a project would result in significant irreversible environmental changes if:

- The primary and secondary impacts would generally commit future generations to similar uses;
- The project would involve a large commitment of nonrenewable resources;
- The project would involve uses in which irreversible damage could result from any potential environmental accidents associated with the project; or
- The proposed irretrievable commitments of nonrenewable resources is not justified (e.g., the project involves the wasteful use of energy).

The proposed Project would result in or contribute to the following irreversible environmental changes:

- Lands in the Project area that are currently developed with light industrial uses would be committed to multi-family residential and commercial retail uses once the proposed buildings are constructed. Secondary effects associated with this irreversible commitment of land resources include:
 - Changes in views associated with construction of the new buildings and associated development (see Section 5.1, *Aesthetics*).
 - Increased traffic on area roadways (see Section 5.14, *Transportation*).
 - Emissions of air pollutants associated with Project construction and operation (see Section 5.2, *Air Quality*).
 - Consumption of non-renewable energy associated with construction and operation of the proposed Project due to the use of automobiles, lighting, heating and cooling systems, appliances, and the like (see Section 5.4, *Energy*).
 - Increased ambient noise associated with an increase in activities and traffic from the Project (see Section 5.10, *Noise*).
- Construction of the proposed Project as described in Section 3.0, *Project Description*, would require the use of energy produced from non-renewable resources and construction materials.

In regard to energy usage from the proposed Project, as demonstrated in the analyses contained in Section 5.4, *Energy*, the proposed Project would not involve wasteful or unjustifiable use of non-renewable resources, and conservation efforts would be enforced during construction and operation of proposed development. The proposed development would incorporate energy-generating and conserving project design features, including those required by the California Building Code, California Energy Code Title 24, which specify green building standards for new developments. In addition, as listed in Section 3.0, *Project Description* and Section 5.4, *Energy*, the proposed Project includes project design features that result in additional energy-efficiency. Project specific information related to energy consumption is provided in Section 5.4, *Energy Resources*, of this EIR.

5.17.4 EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(a) states that “[a]n EIR shall identify and focus on the significant effects on the environment”. However, CEQA Guidelines Section 15128 requires that an EIR contain a statement briefly indicating the reasons that various possible effects of a project were determined not to be significant and were therefore not discussed in detail in the EIR. The following environmental issue areas would not be potentially impacted by the proposed Project, as detailed below.

Agriculture and Forestry Resources

The Project site is developed for urban uses and located in an area that is completely developed for urban uses. The Project site is zoned Professional (P), is not in a Williamson Act contract, and vicinity is void of agricultural uses. The California Department of Conservation Important Farmland mapping identifies the Project site as Urban and Built-Up land (CDC 2019). No areas of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance would be affected by the Project or converted to a non-agricultural use. In addition, the Project site and vicinity is void of forest land or timberland. As the Project site and vicinity do not include these resources, no other changes to the existing environment would occur from implementation of the proposed Project that could result in conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use or forest/timberland land to non-forest or non-timberland use. Thus, impacts related to agriculture and forestry resources would not occur.

Biological Resources

The Project site is developed with three large buildings that are surrounded by paved surfaces. Grass turf and ornamental landscaping exists along Warner Avenue and Red Hill Avenue. Limited trees are scattered throughout parking areas. The Project site is located within an urbanized area. No endangered, rare, threatened, or special status plant species (or associated habitats) or wildlife species designated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), or California Native Plant Society (CNPS) are known to occur on or adjacent to the site. Project implementation would also not interfere with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species, with any established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites.

In addition, the Project site does not contain any natural lands that are subject to an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan. Therefore, impacts related to biological resources would not occur from implementation of the proposed Project.

Mineral Resources

No active mining operations exist in the City of Santa Ana. The mapping by the California Geological Survey does not indicate that any significant mineral deposits are present within the City. The Project area is developed with urban uses and has no history of mining. Implementation of the Project would not cause the loss of availability of mineral resources valuable to the region or state, and no impact would occur.

Wildfire

The Project site is located within an urban developed area and is not located within an identified wildland fire hazard area and is not an area where residences or other structures are intermixed with wildlands. In addition, implementation of the proposed Project would be required to adhere to the following chapters of the City's Municipal Code to reduce potential fire hazards: Chapter 8.2 Uniform Building Code, Chapter 8.4 Uniform Mechanical Code, Chapter 8.5 National Electric Code, and Chapter 14 City of Santa Ana Fire Code. Additionally, the Project would be in compliance with any further guidelines from the Orange County Fire Authority related to fire prevention and is subject to approval by the City's Building Division. Therefore, the proposed Project would not result in impacts related to wildfires.

REFERENCES

California Department of Conservation Important Farmland mapping (CDC 2019). Accessed: <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp>

California Geological Survey Mineral Resource mapping (CGS 2019). Accessed: <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/mineralresources/#webmaps>