



4.0 DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IMPACT ANALYSIS

This chapter contains an analysis of each potentially significant environmental issue that has been identified for the proposed Sunset Crossroads Project (Development Project). This introduction to the chapter: (1) identifies how a determination of significance is made; (2) identifies the environmental issues addressed in this chapter; (3) describes the context for the evaluation of cumulative effects; (4) lists the format of the topical issue section; and (5) provides an evaluation of each potentially significant issue in **Sections 4.1 through 4.20**. A programmatic analysis of potentially significant impacts related to the MSJC Entitlements component of the Project is provided in **Chapter 5.0**. **Chapter 6.0** of this Environmental Impact Report (EIR) provides an analysis of the cumulative impact of the Project, including the Development Project and the MSJC Entitlements, and the related projects.

DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a significant effect on the environment is defined as a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in the environment.¹ The 2023 *CEQA Guidelines* direct that this determination be based on scientific and factual data.² Each impact evaluation in this chapter is based on criteria of significance, which are the thresholds for determining whether an impact is significant. These criteria of significance are those criteria set forth in Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines*, thresholds specifically adopted by the City of Banning (City) as described in *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.7, or resource agencies, as applicable. In determining whether a project's impacts are significant, an EIR ordinarily compares those impacts with existing environmental conditions, which are referred to as the "baseline" for the impact analysis. This chapter of the EIR compares the Development Project impacts with environmental conditions in existence at the time the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for this EIR was published, except as otherwise noted.

ISSUES ADDRESSED IN THE DRAFT EIR

Sections 4.1 through 4.20 of this chapter describe the environmental setting of the Development Project as evaluated in the EIR and the impacts that are expected to result from implementation of the Development Project. Mitigation measures are proposed to reduce potential impacts where appropriate. The following environmental issues are addressed in this chapter:

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| 4.1. Aesthetics | 4.8. Greenhouse Gas Emissions | 4.15. Public Services |
| 4.2. Agriculture and Forestry Resources | 4.9. Hazards and Hazardous Materials | 4.16. Recreation |
| 4.3. Air Quality | 4.10. Hydrology and Water Quality | 4.17. Transportation |
| 4.4. Biological Resources | 4.11. Land Use and Planning | 4.18. Tribal Cultural Resources |
| 4.5. Cultural Resources | 4.12. Mineral Resources | 4.19. Utilities and Services |
| 4.6. Energy | 4.13. Noise | 4.20. Wildfire |
| 4.7. Geology and Soils | 4.14. Population and Housing | |

¹ *CEQA Guidelines*, 2023 (California Code of Regulations [CCR] Title 14, Chapter 3, Sections 15000–15397); Section 21068.

² *CEQA Guidelines*, 2023. Section 15064(b)(1).



FORMAT OF RESOURCE SECTIONS

Sections 4.1 through 4.20 of this chapter address each environmental resource topic listed in Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines*.

For each environmental impact issue analyzed, the EIR includes a description of the existing conditions, thresholds of significance that will be applied to determine whether the Development Project's impacts are significant or less than significant, analysis of the environmental impacts, and a determination of whether the Development Project would have a significant impact if implemented. A "significant impact" or "significant effect" means "a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the Development Project, including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and object of aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered to be a significant effect on the environment." (*CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15382). Chapter 6.0 includes a discussion of the cumulative effects of the Development Project when considered in combination with other projects, causing related impacts, as required by *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15130.

Each of the environmental topic sections is organized into the following subsections:

- **Introduction** briefly describes the topics and issues covered in the section.
- **Existing Environmental Setting** describes the relevant physical conditions that exist at the time of the issuance of the NOP, unless otherwise noted, that may influence or affect the issue under investigation. This section focuses on physical Development Site characteristics that are relevant to the environmental topic being analyzed.
- **Methodology** describes the approach and methods employed to analyze the environmental impacts, if any, for the topic under investigation.
- **Regulatory Setting** lists and discusses the laws, ordinances, regulations, plans, and policies that relate to the specific environmental topic and how they apply to the Development Project.
- **Thresholds of Significance** sets forth the thresholds against which the impacts of the Development Project are measured and that are the basis of the conclusions regarding significance.
- **Project Impacts** describes the potential environmental changes to the existing physical conditions that may occur if the Development Project and the associated project design features relevant to impacts are implemented. Evidence is presented to show the cause-and-effect relationship between the Development Project and potential changes in the environment. In accordance with *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.2(a), this EIR is required to "identify and focus on the significant environmental effects" of the Development Project. The magnitude, duration, extent, frequency, and range or other parameters of a potential impact are ascertained to the extent feasible to determine whether impacts may be significant. In accordance with CEQA, potential Development Project impacts, if any, are classified as follows for each of the environmental topics discussed in this EIR.



- **Significant and Unavoidable Impact:** If the Development Project is approved with significant and unavoidable impacts, the decision-making body is required to adopt a statement of overriding considerations pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21081 and *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15093 explaining why the Development Project benefits outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects caused by those significant and unavoidable environmental impacts.
 - **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated:** This classification refers to potentially significant environmental impacts that can be feasibly mitigated to less than significant. If the Development Project is approved, the decision-making body is required to make findings pursuant to *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15091 that mitigation measures have been required or incorporated into the Development Project that avoid or substantially lessen significant environmental effects.
 - **Less Than Significant Impact:** Less than significant impacts are environmental impacts that have been identified but are not potentially significant. No mitigation is required for less than significant impacts.
 - **No Impact:** A “no impact” determination is made when the Development Project is found to have no environmental impact.
- **Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation** summarizes the potentially significant impacts of the Development Project, if any, prior to mitigation.
 - **Regulatory Compliance Measures and Mitigation Measures** describes relevant and applicable laws or regulations that must be adhered to with respect to the construction and/or operation of the Development Project and would reduce or lessen potential impacts related to a particular issue area and identifies Development Project-specific measures that avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce, eliminate, or compensate for a potentially significant impact.
 - **Level of Significance After Mitigation** describes the significance of potential impacts after implementation of mitigation measures. Potential significant unavoidable impacts, if any, are clearly stated in this section.



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