

## 4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING, IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

This chapter contains an analysis of the significant environmental impacts that have been identified for the proposed project. The following: (1) identifies how a determination of impact 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 environmental topic sections; and (5) provides an evaluation of the project’s environmental impacts in **Sections 4.1: Aesthetics** through **4.14: Wildfire**.

### DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

Under CEQA, a significant effect is defined as a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in the environment. The “environment” means the physical conditions which exist in the area including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself is not considered to be a significant effect on the environment (14 California Code of Regulations [CCR] Section 15382). Each impact evaluation in this chapter is prefaced by significance criteria, which are the thresholds for determining whether an impact is significant. These significance criteria are based on the *Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (State CEQA Guidelines)* and applicable City of Fairfield (City) policies. In determining whether a project’s impacts are significant, an EIR ordinarily compares the environmental conditions with the proposed project with existing environmental conditions, which are referred as the “baseline” for the impact analysis. This EIR compares the potential environmental conditions following the implementation of the proposed project with the baseline environmental conditions in existence at the time that the Notice of Preparation (NOP) was published, in March 2022.

### ISSUES ADDRESSED IN THIS EIR

**Sections 4.1 through 4.14** of this chapter describe the environmental setting of the project as evaluated in the EIR and the impacts that are expected to result from implementation of the proposed project. Mitigation measures are proposed to reduce significant impacts, where appropriate. Evaluation of each environmental topic is based on the guidance found in Appendix G of *State CEQA Guidelines* (CCR Title 14, Chapter 3, Sections 15000–15387). The following environmental topics are addressed in this chapter:

- 4.1 Aesthetics
- 4.2 Air Quality
- 4.3 Biological Resources
- 4.4 Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources
- 4.5 Energy
- 4.6 Geology and Soils
- 4.7 Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- 4.8 Hydrology and Water Quality
- 4.9 Land Use and Planning
- 4.10 Noise
- 4.11 Public Services and Recreation

- 4.12 Transportation
- 4.13 Utilities and Service Systems
- 4.14 Wildfire

Preliminary analysis conducted during the scoping process, which extended for a 30-day period between March 17, 2022, and April 18, 2022, determined that development of the proposed project would not result in significant impacts to the following environmental topics: Agriculture and Forest Resources, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Mineral Resources, and Population and Housing. Consequently, these issues are not examined in this chapter of the EIR and are instead addressed in **Chapter 5.0: Other CEQA Considerations**.

## CUMULATIVE ANALYSIS CONTEXT

CEQA defines cumulative as “two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable, or which can compound to increase other environmental impacts.” Section 15130 of the *State CEQA Guidelines* requires that an EIR evaluate potential environmental impacts when the project’s incremental effect is cumulatively considerable. “Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of an individual project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects. These impacts can result from a combination of the proposed project together with other projects causing related impacts. The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects.

The methodology used for assessing cumulative impacts typically varies depending on the specific environmental topic being analyzed. CEQA requires that cumulative impacts be discussed using either a list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, or a summary of projections contained in an adopted local, regional, or Statewide plan, or related planning document, that describes or evaluates conditions contributing to the cumulative effect. This EIR employs both the list-based and projection-based approaches, depending on which approach best suits the environmental topic being analyzed.

The cumulative context for land use development project effects is typically localized within the immediate vicinity of the project site or at the neighborhood level. Cumulative development in the project vicinity (within an approximately 1.5-mile radius of the project site) includes the projects listed in **Table 4.A: Cumulative Projects in the Vicinity of the Project Site**, below. **Figure 4-1: Location of Cumulative Projects** shows the location of the cumulative projects within a 1.5-mile radius of the project site. This radius was determined to be adequate as it encompasses the Cordelia and Green Valley areas of western Fairfield. As western Fairfield is separated from the main city by a large swath of undeveloped land, an extension of the radius would not serve to encompass additional cumulative projects that would be relevant to the cumulative analysis. The projects included in **Table 4.A** and **Figure 4-1** are either projects for which the City has a project application on file or projects that have been entitled but were not yet operational at the time that the EIR analysis was commenced (March 2022). Refer to the appropriate discussion in each topical section for further discussion of the cumulative assumptions relevant to each environmental topic.



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**Table 4.A: Cumulative Projects in the Vicinity of the Project Site**

Project/Location	Project Description	Project Status
Green Valley II Apartments 4501 Business Center Drive	281 multifamily residential units	Under construction
Residence Inn (APNs: 0148-540-140; -130; -120)	Hotel with 104 rooms	Under construction (anticipated completion in May 2023)
PDC Industrial Warehouses (APNs: 0148-540-080; -250; -260; and -300)	Three industrial buildings: 201,000 square feet, 115,000 square feet, 104,000 square feet	Under construction
New Fire Station (APN: 0148-540-360)	Fire station with three bays	Not under construction yet
The Enclave (APN: 01800-540-360)	Subdivision with 143 single-family residential units	Under construction
Cordelia Industrial Buildings (APNs: 0180-150-130; 140; 180; 200; and 220; and 180-160-160; and -170)	Three industrial buildings totaling 337,000 square feet	Not under construction yet
Storage Pro 475 Lopes Road	Self-Storage Facility: 136,000 square feet	Operational
Pittman Road Self Storage 555 Pittman Road	Self-Storage Facility: 101,000 square feet	Operational
Estaire (APN: 0044-130-300)	25 multi-family residential units	Under construction

Source: City of Fairfield Community Development Department, Jonathan Atkinson, Senior Planner, email correspondence with Kristin Nurmela, LSA, Associate/Natural Resources Planner (March 3, 2022).

APN = Assessor's Parcel Number

## FORMAT OF ENVIRONMENTAL TOPIC SECTIONS

Each environmental topic considered in **Chapter 4.0** is addressed under the following primary subsections: Introduction, Environmental Setting, Regulatory Setting, Significance Criteria, Methodology, Project Impacts, and Cumulative Impacts, as further described below.

- **Introduction** briefly describes the environmental topics and issues covered in the section.
- **Environmental Setting** describes the relevant physical conditions that exist at the time that the environmental review of the project is commenced. This section focuses on physical site characteristics that are relevant to the environmental topic analyzed.
- **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 proposed project. This section also provides an overview of Conditions of Approval (COAs), that are applicable to each specific environmental topic.
  - **City of Fairfield Standard COAs** for major development projects are incorporated into the project as COAs regardless of the project's environmental determination. As applicable, the Standard COAs are adopted as requirements for the project when it is approved by the City of Fairfield and are designed to, and will, substantially mitigate environmental effects. All relevant COAs would be incorporated as part of the proposed project. Because Standard COAs are mandatory City requirements, the impact analysis assumes that these would be

imposed and implemented by the project. If a Standard COA would reduce a potentially significant impact to less than significant, the impact is determined to be less than significant, and no mitigation is imposed. Standard COAs are not listed as mitigation measures. The Standard COAs incorporate development policies and standards from various adopted plans, policies, and ordinances, which have been found to substantially mitigate environmental effects. Where there are peculiar circumstances associated with the project or project site that would result in significant environmental impacts despite implementation of the Standard COAs, the analysis will determine whether there are feasible mitigations measures to reduce the impacts to less than significant levels.

- **Significance Criteria** sets forth the thresholds that are used in this EIR as the basis of the conclusions regarding the significance of the project’s impacts. The significance criteria are the criteria listed in Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*.
- **Methodology** describes the approach and methods employed to complete the environmental impact analysis for the issue under evaluation.
- **Project Impacts** describes the potential environmental changes to the existing physical conditions that may occur if the proposed project is implemented. Evidence is presented to show the cause-and-effect relationship between the proposed project and potential changes in the environment. In accordance with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.2(a), this EIR is required to “identify and focus on the significant effects of the proposed project on the environment.” 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 project impacts, if any, are classified as follows for each of the environmental topics discussed in this EIR.
  - **Significant and Unavoidable Impact:** This classification refers to impacts that are significant, cannot be mitigated with implementation of feasible mitigation measures, and that cannot be avoided with implementation of the project as proposed. If the proposed project is approved with significant and unavoidable impacts, the decision-making body is required to adopt a statement of overriding considerations pursuant to *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15093 explaining why the project benefits outweigh those significant and unavoidable environmental impacts.
  - **Less than Significant Impact after Mitigation:** This classification refers to potentially significant environmental impacts that can be feasibly mitigated to a level of insignificance. If the proposed project is approved, the decision-making body is required to make findings pursuant to *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15091 that significant impacts have been mitigated to the extent feasible through implementation of mitigation measures.
  - **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 proposed project is found to have no environmental impact on a particular environmental resource.
- o **Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation** summarizes the potentially significant impacts of the project, if any, prior to mitigation.
- o **Mitigation Measures** are project-specific measures that avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce, or compensate for a potentially significant impact.
- o **Level of Significance after Mitigation** describes the significance of potential impacts after implementation of mitigation measures. Potential significant unavoidable impacts are clearly identified in this section.
- **Cumulative Impacts** analysis focuses on the change in the environment that would result from the incremental impact of the proposed project when added to the impacts of other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant impacts taking place over a period.

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