

19.0 Significant Unavoidable Impacts

19.1 CEQA Requirements

A significant adverse unavoidable environmental impact is a significant adverse impact that cannot be reduced to a less-than-significant level through the implementation of mitigation measures. CEQA Guidelines section 15093 requires that a lead agency make findings of overriding considerations for unavoidable significant adverse environmental impacts before approving a project.

CEQA Guidelines section 15093(a) requires the decision-making agency to balance, as applicable, the economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits of a project against its unavoidable environmental risks when determining whether to approve the project. If the specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits of a project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects, the adverse environmental effects may be considered “acceptable.” CEQA Guidelines section 15093(b) states that when the lead agency approves a project which will result in the occurrence of significant effects which are identified in the final EIR but are not avoided or substantially lessened, the agency shall state in writing the specific reasons to support its action based on the final EIR and/or other information in the record. The statement of overriding considerations shall be supported by substantial evidence in the record.

19.2 Impact Analysis

Based on the environmental analysis provided in this EIR, most of the significant impacts of the proposed project can be reduced to less than significant through required conformance of future individual projects within the site to uniformly applied policies, regulations and/or mitigation measures included in this EIR. However, the project would result in two significant unavoidable impacts as summarized below.

Noise

The proposed project will substantially increase traffic volumes on local roadways. Traffic generated noise along the roadways will increase as a result. As described in Section 11.0, Noise, the change in traffic noise levels along the segment of Railroad Drive between McKinleyville Avenue and Central Avenue, and along the segment of Railroad Drive east of

Central Avenue would exceed the threshold criteria for noise exposure at noise sensitive residential uses along these road segments. Mitigation measures to reduce traffic noise exposure at these receptors were determined by the County to be infeasible. Consequently, this impact was determined to be significant and unavoidable. The Board of Supervisors will be required to adopt a statement of overriding considerations when approving the proposed project.