

## **IV. SETTING, IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

This chapter contains an analysis of each environmental topic that has been identified as posing potentially significant impacts. As such, this chapter constitutes the major portion of this Draft EIR. Sections A through N of this chapter describe the environmental setting of the City of Albany as it relates to each specific environmental topic. The impacts resulting from implementation of the Draft General Plan and mitigation measures that would reduce impacts of the project, as appropriate, are also presented in each of the sections.

### **DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Under CEQA, a significant effect is defined as a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in the environment.<sup>1</sup> The CEQA Guidelines direct that this determination be based on scientific and factual data. Each impact and mitigation measure section of this chapter is prefaced by a summary of criteria of significance. Staff from the City of Albany and the consulting firm of LSA Associates, Inc., have developed these criteria in a cooperative process using the CEQA Guidelines.

### **ISSUES ADDRESSED IN THE DRAFT EIR**

The following environmental issues are addressed in this chapter:

- A. Land Use, Planning Policy, and Agricultural Resources
- B. Population and Housing
- C. Transportation and Circulation
- D. Air Quality
- E. Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- F. Noise and Vibration
- G. Geology, Seismicity, and Mineral Resources
- H. Hydrology and Water Quality
- I. Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- J. Biological Resources
- K. Cultural Resources
- L. Public Services and Recreation
- M. Utilities and Infrastructure
- N. Visual Resources

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<sup>1</sup> CEQA Section 21068

## FORMAT OF ENVIRONMENTAL TOPIC SECTIONS

Each environmental topical section comprises two primary parts: (1) Setting, and (2) Impacts and Mitigation Measures. An overview of information included in these two parts is provided below:

- *Setting.* The setting section for each environmental topic generally provides a description of the applicable physical setting (e.g., existing land uses, existing soil conditions, existing traffic conditions) for the City of Albany at the beginning of the environmental review process. An overview of regulatory considerations applicable to each specific environmental topic is also provided.
- *Impacts and Mitigation Measures.* The impacts and mitigation measures section for each environmental topic presents a discussion of the impacts that could result from implementation of the Draft General Plan. The section begins with the criteria of significance, which establish the thresholds to determine whether an impact is significant. With thresholds established, this section then presents the impacts from the proposed project and mitigation measures, as appropriate. The potential impacts of the proposed project are identified as either less-than-significant impacts (which do not require mitigation measures) or significant impacts (which do require mitigation measures).

Impacts are numbered and shown in bold type, and the corresponding mitigation measures are numbered and indented. Impacts and mitigation measures are numbered consecutively within each topical analysis and begin with an acronym or abbreviated reference to the impact section (e.g., LAND). The following symbols are used for individual topics:

LAND	Land Use, Planning Policy, and Agricultural Resources
POP	Population and Housing
TRANS	Transportation and Circulation
AIR	Air Quality
GHG	Greenhouse Gas Emissions
NOI	Noise and Vibration
GEO	Geology, Seismicity, and Mineral Resources
HYD	Hydrology and Water Quality
HAZ	Hazards and Hazardous Materials
BIO	Biological Resources
CULT	Cultural Resources
PS	Public Services and Recreation
UTL	Utilities and Infrastructure
VIS	Visual Resources

## CUMULATIVE IMPACT ANALYSES

CEQA defines cumulative impacts as “two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable, or which can compound or increase other environmental impacts.” Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR evaluate potential environmental impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively significant. These impacts can result from the proposed project alone or together with other projects. For the evaluation of cumulative impacts, CEQA allows the use of either a list of past, present, or reasonably anticipated relevant projects, including projects outside

the control of the lead agency, a summary of the projections in an adopted planning document or a thoughtful combination of the two. The cumulative impacts analysis is included in each environmental topical section. For this Draft EIR, the cumulative analysis is based on Draft 2035 General Plan land use for Albany and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) land use projections for adjacent jurisdictions. In the case of transportation (and the air quality, greenhouse gas, and noise analyses, which rely on forecasts of Vehicle Miles Traveled and traffic volumes), the projections reflect a more conservative (i.e., higher) impact that incorporates ABAG's 2040 projections for communities outside Albany. This approach was necessary to align EIR traffic modeling with the Alameda County Transportation Commission model (which uses Year 2040 as its horizon).

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