

## **2.9 Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes Resulting from Project Implementation**

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines require that an environmental impact report (EIR) address any significant irreversible environmental changes that would be involved in a project should it be implemented (Sections 15126(c) and 15126.2(c)). CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(c) indicates that “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 likely. Primary impacts and, particularly, secondary impacts (such as highway improvement which provides access to a previously inaccessible area) generally commit future generations to similar uses. Also, irreversible damage can result from environmental accidents associated with the project. Irrecoverable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified.”

### **2.9.1 Irreversible Environmental Changes**

The project proposes an amendment to the existing Zoning Ordinance governing the development of equine uses. The Zoning Ordinance Amendment consists of clarifications, deletions, and revisions to provide an updated set of definitions, procedures, and standards for review and permitting of equine uses. The amendment would implement a new tiered system of permitting for commercial horse stables with both ministerial and discretionary tiers of permitting. Irreversible long-term environmental changes associated with the proposed project would include those potential significant impacts described in Chapters 2.1 through 2.9 of this EIR.

Thus, implementation of the proposed project would involve the following irreversible environmental changes:

- Where equine uses are constructed and operational, there would be a potential for destruction of sensitive biological resources.
- Cultural and paleontological resources are nonrenewable. Impacts to these resources would constitute an irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources.

### **2.9.2 Potential Environmental Damage from Accidents**

Implementation of the proposed project would not involve any uniquely hazardous uses, and its operation would not be expected to cause environmental accidents that would affect other areas.

The use and storage of hazardous materials is discussed in Chapter 2.6 (Hazards and Hazardous Materials) and is not anticipated to be a significant impact. While fire risks can be minimized through use of fire protection techniques as described in Section 1.4.1.1 in Chapter 1.0, Project

Description, it cannot be assured that fire hazards could be completely avoided upon development and operation of equine uses.

### **2.9.3 Irreversible Commitment of Resources**

As described in Chapter 1.0, the objectives of the proposed project include streamlining the permitting process for equine facilities in order to better facilitate the development of such uses within the County of San Diego (County). Therefore, implementation of the Zoning Ordinance Amendment may result in an incremental increase of equine uses.

As a result, long-term impacts may result from an increase in vehicular traffic and the associated air pollutant and noise emissions. This commitment of resources would be a long-term obligation because, practically speaking, it is difficult to return the land to its original condition once it has been developed.

The proposed project is not expected to result in environmental accidents that would cause irreversible damage. Compliance with required plans, such as a stormwater pollution prevention plan, erosion and grading plan, and hazardous materials management plan, would minimize the potential for accidents resulting in environmental damage. Compliance with all applicable building codes, as well as County policies and the mitigation measures identified in this EIR, would ensure that all natural resources are conserved to the maximum extent possible.