

2.78 Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes Resultant from Project Implementation

CEQA Guidelines Section 15127 requires irreversible changes be evaluated in EIRs prepared for projects that would involve: (a) the adoption, amendment, or enactment of a plan, policy, or ordinance of a public agency; (b) the adoption by a LAFCO of a resolution making determinations; and (c) the requirement for preparing an environmental impact statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. The Proposed Project would involve a GPA as well as LAFCO determinations regarding annexation to the San Diego County Sanitation District, which could provide wastewater services. The following analysis addresses Project changes that would be considered irreversible and Project commitments/use of resources that would be considered irretrievable.

The construction and implementation of the Project would result in irreversible environmental changes to the Project site. The on-site physical effects of these changes are fully addressed in Chapters 2.0 and 3.0 of this EIR. In general, conversion of currently predominately vacant land, with sensitive habitat, to village uses (paved roadways and graded lots with buildings and landscaping) would represent an irreversible loss of existing biological resources on approximately 77 acres of on-site habitat, including sensitive vegetation communities, special status wildlife species, and jurisdictional wetlands. These impacts are considered permanent and the losses are considered irreversible.

Approximately 34.8 acres of biological open space would be dedicated on site. Some of the biological open space would preserve wetlands and provide wetland buffers. Only the lots that are kept in undisturbed condition would be considered to not constitute an irreversible change to biological resources. Open space areas with manufactured slopes and drainage facilities would add to the irreversibly changed footprint of the Project.

The cut and fill proposed to support the developed footprint of the Project would result in an irreversible change to the existing topography. Also, any potential presently unknown cultural resources that may be buried could be irreversibly changed if they were to be inadvertently disturbed, though data recovery for study would be accomplished. The changes in topography and overall conversion of the Project area from rural to developed uses also would result in irreversible aesthetic changes. Likewise, the placement of residential activities into the existing undeveloped area would irreversibly change the noise and transportation environment, and modification of drainage patterns would irreversibly change on-site hydrology.

As described in Section 3.2.1, *Agriculture*, the Proposed Project would result in a loss of approximately 20 acres of Farmland of Local Importance. However, the site does not contain Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Therefore, implementation of the Project would not result in significant impacts related to the loss of agricultural lands.

The Project site has been classified by the California Department of Conservation – Division of Mines and Geology as an area of “Potential Mineral Resource Significance” (MRZ-3), as described in Section 3.1.2, *Geology/Soils*. The Project site is adjacent to existing and proposed residential areas, however, which would be incompatible with future extraction of mineral

resources on the Project site. In addition, the material that underlies the site has been determined to be not economically viable to extract (Appendix R and Section 3.2.2, *Mineral Resources*, of this EIR. Therefore, implementation of the Project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and residents of the state.

More generally, the Project construction would require the commitment of energy, natural resources, and building materials. Non-renewable fuels would be used by construction equipment, haul trucks, and worker vehicles. Non-renewable energy also would be expended during the harvesting and mining of natural resources such as wood and aggregate and during the subsequent manufacturing of construction materials such as framing and concrete. This commitment of resources and energy would be commensurate with that of other projects of similar size but would be irretrievable.

Post-construction consumption of non-renewable resources would include the use of electricity and natural gas by Project residents, workers, and visitors. This energy use would be a long-term commitment and irretrievable, although energy-saving features of the Project would reduce this commitment.