

2.9 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 Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) of a resolution making determinations; and (c) the requirement for preparing an environmental impact statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. The project would involve an amendment to the General Plan Amendment. 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 cut and fill proposed to create the developed footprint of the project would result in an irreversible change to the existing topography. A total of 504.4 acres of the 608-acre site would be graded and developed, resulting in the permanent removal of on-site habitat as detailed in subchapter 2.5, Biological Resources. Impacts to all biological resources would be sufficiently mitigated, as discussed in the subchapter 2.5.5, Mitigation.

The project would be constructed over a period of approximately 10 years with Phases 1, 2, 4, and 5 taking approximately two years each and Phase 3 requiring up to four years to complete, all depending on market forces. Construction of the project would require the commitment of energy, natural resources, and building materials (e.g., wood, concrete). Fuels would be used by equipment during the grading and construction period, by trucks transporting construction materials to the site, and by construction workers during their travel to and from the project site. Energy also would be used in the harvesting, mining, and/or manufacturing materials for structure and roadway construction. This commitment would be commensurate with that of other projects of similar size.

Post-construction operational energy uses of the facilities associated with the project would include the use of electricity, natural gas, and water by project residents. This energy use would be a long-term commitment and the use of energy would be irretrievable, although any energy-saving features of the project would reduce this commitment. The project site does not contain any significant mineral, oil, or other energy sources that would be adversely affected by project implementation. No potentially significant loss of availability of a known mineral resource of value to the region and the residents of the state would occur as a result of the project, as discussed in Section 3.2.5, Mineral Resources.

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