

# CHAPTER IV

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## Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

### Introduction to the Environmental Analysis

This chapter contains a discussion of 1) setting (existing baseline conditions and regulatory background), 2) environmental impacts (direct, indirect or secondary, short-term, and cumulative) that could result from the proposed project, and 3) mitigation measures and standard conditions of approval that would reduce or eliminate the adverse impacts that are identified.

Throughout the EIR, the analysis addresses the potential impacts of all activities that would result from development of the entire project site and during all development phases. The significance criteria used to assess the significance of adverse environmental effects are identified, and the significance of the impact (both prior to and after implementation of mitigation), is reported. Where appropriate and relevant, potential impacts specific to a certain pPhase of development or development site are identified as such, with mitigation measures or standard conditions also identified accordingly.

The analysis considers impacts that would occur during construction and during operation of the project through buildout (Year 2020) and cumulative conditions (Year 2025). A 2010 interim year analysis has been conducted to further assess traffic, air quality, and noise impacts that could result from the project.<sup>1</sup> To further elaborate and simplify the environmental analysis and to allow the applicant to adjust the Phase 2 and Phase 3 massing and phasing (as discussed in Chapter III, Project Description), the 2010 project's includes development proposed through Phase 3. The 2010 interim year analysis differs from the 2025 cumulative year analysis in that only the portion of background growth estimated for 2010 is assumed. Where appropriate and relevant, potential impacts are specifically identified as interim year 2010 impacts for these topics, with mitigation measures or conditions of approval identified accordingly.

The analysis provided in this EIR has been prepared in accordance with CEQA, as amended (Public Resources Code Section 210000, et seq.), and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations).

### Significance Thresholds and Impact Classifications

In accordance with Section 15022(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, the City of Oakland has drafted local CEQA thresholds and criteria of significance guidelines that are consistent with CEQA and the State

CEQA Guidelines (City of Oakland, 2004c). The City's thresholds are intended to supplement provisions in the CEQA Guidelines for determining the significance of environmental effects, including Appendix G of the Guidelines. As appropriate, state and federal regulations supplement the City's local thresholds and guidelines.

The following level of significance classifications are used throughout this EIR:

- **Significant (S)** – The impact of the project is expected to reach or exceed the defined threshold of significance. Feasible mitigation measures or conditions of approval may or may not be identified to reduce the significant impact to a less-than-significant level.
- **Potentially Significant (PS)** – The impact of the project may reach or exceed the defined threshold of significance, however it is not evident that, even in the theoretical worst-case conditions, a significant impact would occur. Feasible mitigation measures or conditions of approval may or may not be identified to reduce the potentially significant impact to a less-than-significant level.
- **Significant and Unavoidable (SU)** – The impact of the project reaches or exceeds the defined threshold of significance. No feasible mitigation measure or condition of approval is available to reduce the significant impact to a less-than-significant level. In these cases, feasible mitigation measures or conditions are identified to reduce the significant impact to the maximum feasible extent, and the significant unavoidable classification is noted.
- **Less than Significant (LTS)** – The impacts of the project either before or after implementation of feasible mitigation measures or conditions of approval do not reach or exceed the defined threshold of significance. Generally, no additional mitigation measures or conditions of approval are required although there are cases where standard conditions are identified even when the impact is LTS.
- **Beneficial Impact (B)** – The impact of the project would improve the environment, regardless of the defined threshold of significance. Generally, no mitigation measures or conditions of approval are required or identified.
- **No Impact (N)** – No noticeable adverse effect on the environment would occur.

## EIR Designation of Impacts and Mitigation Measures and Standard Conditions

All impacts in this EIR are identified using an alphanumeric designation that corresponds to the letter of the EIR section assigned to the environmental topic (as indicated in the Table of Contents). The letter is followed by a number that indicates the sequence in which the impact statement occurs within the section. For example, "Impact G.1" is the first impact (i.e., "1") identified in Section IV.G, Hydrology and Water Quality. All impact statements are in bold text.

Mitigation measures are numbered to correspond with the impact that it addresses. Where there are multiple measures to address the same impact, each is indicated by a lower-case letter. For example

“Mitigation Measure G.1a” is the first component (i.e., “a”) of the first mitigation (i.e., “1”) identified to address hydrology and water quality (i.e., Section “G”). Generally, all mitigation measure and standard conditions statements are in bold text, although in cases where there is extensive detailed discussion that is part of the mitigation measure or standard condition, all text may not be bolded (for example, mitigation measures related to traffic impacts or permitting requirements related to water quality).

In addition, there are a number of recommended conditions of approval that are standard City of Oakland conditions of approval, uniformly applied. Also included are recommendations that the City may consider in its review of the proposal but that are not intended to reduce significant impacts. These are identified throughout the document as “Standard Conditions” and use the same alphanumeric designations as mitigation measures, for example “Standard Condition G.1a.”

## Cumulative Analysis Context

Pursuant to the requirements of CEQA, this EIR evaluates potential cumulative impacts as well as of project-level impacts (see also Chapter VI). To establish a cumulative context for this analysis, the City of Oakland has updated its detailed Oakland Cumulative Growth Scenario and Land Use Database to ensure that updated cumulative impacts are appropriately considered within the context of future citywide and regional growth and development. The City’s updated growth scenario and land use database incorporates recently released 2000 Census data, recent projections series from the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), and considers foreseeable, future development projects in the area, including major hospital development anticipated in the project area. As detailed in **Appendix F**, Hausrath Economics Group (HEG), under direction of the City, has compiled a list of proposed, approved, and reasonably foreseeable development projects that the City expects to be completed in Oakland by 2025, the cumulative analysis year for the EIR. Considering this list, in addition to the projected growth that would occur on the project site as part of the project, HEG developed population, housing, and employment forecasts for year 2025 that are used for the cumulative analysis in this EIR.

The numbers in Oakland’s updated growth scenario are relatively similar to the ABAG projections currently incorporated into the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency’s (CMA) Travel Model. However, Oakland’s updated growth scenario used in this EIR analysis provides more specificity about growth and development. (**Table F.2** in **Appendix F** compares the updated Oakland growth scenario with the ABAG *Projections 2002*<sup>2</sup> for Oakland and the ABAG projections as incorporated into the Alameda County CMA Travel Model for use in transportation analyses.)

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<sup>2</sup> ABAG Projections 2002 series provides the basis for the numbers in the CMA model at the time of the analysis for this EIR.

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