

8.0 IRRETRIEVABLE AND IRREVERSIBLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

Section 15126.2(c) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines requires that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) discuss significant irreversible environmental changes that would be caused by implementation of the proposed project. In addition, irretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated. Implementation of the proposed East Area 1 Specific Plan would result in both short and long term commitments of natural resources.

8.1 IMPACT ANALYSIS

Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would result in extensive urban development of the project site. Future development within the Specific Plan site would result in the construction of a variety of new structures and facilities; new infrastructure systems; and public facilities to serve future development in the area. New structures built as part of the proposed Specific Plan would represent a long-term commitment to residential, commercial, business, and public facility uses proposed on the Specific Plan site. Thus, irreversible and long-term effects associated with future development projects within the proposed Specific Plan include new development on the Specific Plan site, new roadways, storm drain facilities, water system, sewer system, and other facilities that would support planned development.

Because the proposed Specific Plan would be constructed over a period of 10 years, certain environmental impacts associated with future development projects would be incremental and cumulative over the long-term.

Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would result in an irreversible commitment of non-renewable and renewable resources, including land, construction materials, aggregate materials, water, and energy resources.

As part of the proposed Specific Plan, 405-acres of farmland would be converted permanently to non-agricultural land uses. A total of 366.6-acres of the Specific Plan site would be developed to accommodate non-open space uses under the proposed Specific Plan. These areas would contain commercial uses, office uses, and public facilities that provide amenities and services for future residents. Aside from agricultural land, the Specific Plan site is not located within an area identified for mineral extraction, currently undergoing mineral extraction, or within a petroleum resource area, that would be adversely affected by future development under the proposed Specific Plan (see Section 4.3 (Mineral Resources) of this EIR). However, approximately 40 percent (201.2-acres) of the Specific Plan site would be dedicated to open space that would be preserved to retain scenic resources and for habitat preservation. Of these 201.2-acres, 55-acres would be dedicated to an agricultural preserve where current farming of existing avocado orchards would continue.

Construction activities related to future development within the proposed Specific Plan would require a wide variety of construction materials, including non-renewable resources such as sand, gravel, and steel, and renewable resources such as lumber. Resources committed during construction are unlikely to be recovered. The amount of resources that would be committed is not considered significant relative to available resources in the region and considering the incremental phasing of development within the proposed 10-year time frame. Furthermore, this use of resources is not considered wasteful nor would it be substantial relative to other urban development at a similar scale in the region.

Water and energy resources would also be irretrievably committed during construction of various future development projects on the Specific Plan site. Once constructed, on-going maintenance and operation of

future structures built on the Specific Plan site, would result in further commitment of water (despite the implementation of conservation measures) and energy resources in the form of fuel, natural gas, and electricity. These commitments represent long-term obligations that would accompany future development activities. However, with the implementation of mitigation measures U-1 through U-5 (see Section 4.15 (Utilities & Services) of this EIR), available resources and facilities would be adequate for utility providers to serve future development under the proposed Specific Plan.

Future development projects that are constructed under the proposed Specific Plan represent a commitment to the improvements and land uses planned in the Specific Plan site. Infrastructure and roadways, would be provided on-site. This would entail financial, personnel, and facility resources from service providers.

The proposed Specific Plan is intended to develop the site with a variety of land uses that are desired by the City to: implement urban development within a planned Expansion Area (i.e., East Area 1) as identified within the City's General Plan; provide a wide variety of housing types and lifestyle choices in a compact and cohesive community; and to preserve visible hillside portions of the site and enhance Haun Creek in order to maintain rural edges/buffers and serve as a distinct gateway to the City.

In summary, implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would involve the following irreversible environmental changes:

- Future development under the proposed Specific Plan would lead to the irretrievable loss of agricultural land on-site. The proposed Specific Plan would allow for development that would result in the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use. The current agricultural uses would be replaced by urban development consistent with the City's General Plan and as outlined by the Specific Plan; although implementation of mitigation measures (see Section 4.2 (Agricultural Resources) of this EIR) would help to reduce impacts to the loss of agricultural resources, impacts would remain adverse and significant.
- New vehicle trips on proposed and surrounding roadways would be generated by future development under the proposed Specific Plan. Planned roadways on-site would provide access into the site and allow changes in traffic patterns on- and off-site.
- The proposed Specific Plan would require the commitment of energy, water, and other natural resources for the construction and operation of new development. However, existing resources are available to meet the projected demand and with the implementation of mitigation measures U-1 through U-5 (see Section 4.15 (Utilities & Services) of this EIR), utility providers would be able to serve future development under the proposed Specific Plan without adverse impacts.
- Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would result in an increase in the demand for utilities and would require the extension of existing infrastructure to individual lots on the Specific Plan site. An increase in demand for public services and facilities operated by the affected service agencies would also occur. This demand would be met with the implementation of mitigation measures U-1 through U-5 for utility providers and mitigation measures PS-1 through PS-5 (see Section 4.13 (Public Services) of this EIR) for public service agencies.
- The proposed Specific Plan would result in the construction of new structures and changes in the visual quality of the site. Changes related to visual quality would result in significant adverse impacts including the loss or alteration of scenic vistas and scenic resources.