

CHAPTER 5 EFFECTS NOT FOUND TO BE SIGNIFICANT

Section 15128 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines requires that an environmental impact report (EIR) briefly describe why various environmental effects were determined not to be significant and therefore were not discussed in detail in the EIR. The environmental issues outlined in the following sections are not considered significant, and the reasons for the conclusion of non-significance are discussed.

5.1 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

The proposed project and project site were analyzed against the significance thresholds found in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR 15000 et seq.) and the City of Oceanside's Initial Study/Environmental Checklist (Environmental Checklist; City of Oceanside 2011). The analysis concluded that the proposed project would result in a less than significant impact to agriculture and forestry resources.

The proposed project site is a currently undeveloped vacant lot. According to the Important Farmland Map prepared by the California Department of Conservation, the proposed project site is not located within an area designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, and so would not convert any of these farmlands to non-agricultural use (CDOC 2006). In addition, the proposed project would not conflict with a Williamson Act contract or with existing zoning for agricultural use, forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production (CDOC 2008; City of Carlsbad 2010; City of Oceanside 2009). The City of Oceanside (City) General Plan Environmental Resource Management Element indicates that there are two primary areas of significant agricultural production in the City (City of Oceanside 2002, Environmental Resource Management Element, p. 37 and ERM-7). The proposed project site is not within either of these agricultural areas, and is not adjacent to either of these areas. Given these factors, the project would not result in the loss or conversion of forest land to non-forest use, and would not involve any changes leading to the conversion of farmland or forest land to non-agricultural or non-forest uses.

5.2 MINERAL RESOURCES

The proposed project was analyzed to determine its effects on mineral resources given the significance criteria outlined in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines and the City of Oceanside's Environmental Checklist. It was found that the proposed project would have a less than significant impact on mineral resources.

As mandated by the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (California Public Resources Code, Section 2710 et seq.), the California State Minerals and Geology Board classifies California mineral resources with the Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ) system. The MRZ classification system categorizes lands based on their suitability as sources of sand, gravel, and stone deposits for construction aggregate. The proposed project is situated on land designated as MRZ-3 by the California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology (CDOC 1983). The MRZ-3 designation identifies “areas containing mineral deposits the significance of which cannot be evaluated from available data” (CDOC 1983). Although the site has been categorized as MRZ-3, the site is not currently being used for mineral resource extraction, and is located in an area surrounded by commercial development.

In addition, the City of Oceanside General Plan identifies two major areas of mineral deposits within the City (City of Oceanside 2002, Environmental Resource Management Element, p. 33 and ERM-5); however, the project site is not located within or adjacent to either of these areas. Similarly, the City’s General Plan Land Use Element does not show the project site as being located in a mineral resource area or adjacent to a mineral resource area (City of Oceanside 2002, Land Use Element, LU-22). The City of Carlsbad General Plan Open Space and Conservation Element states that the City of Carlsbad has no economically significant mineral resources (City of Carlsbad 2006, p. 16). Also, the site is zoned for commercial uses by both the City of Oceanside and the City of Carlsbad, indicating that these cities would not allow future plans to develop the site for mining (City of Carlsbad 2010; City of Oceanside 2009). The southernmost portion of the project site is located within the City of Carlsbad, and is zoned as open space. This open space portion of the site is intended to protect the Buena Vista Creek and its important biological resources, and is not intended for mineral extraction use.

Given these factors, the proposed project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value, nor would it result in the loss of a locally important mineral resource recovery site as delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan. Therefore, no significant impacts to mineral resources would occur.

5.3 POPULATION AND HOUSING

Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines and the City of Oceanside’s thresholds indicate that a significant impact to population and housing would generally occur as a result of inducement of substantial population growth or displacement of existing housing or people.

The proposed project includes the construction of three hotel buildings, a pavilion, a parking structure, and associated amenities within an existing vacant lot. The project would not induce substantial population growth in the area, because no homes are proposed. The project would not induce substantial growth in the area, because many of the surrounding properties are already

developed or planned for development under the City’s General Plan. The proposed project would provide hotel commercial uses, which would result in not only increased jobs, but also increased activity and urbanization of the project area. It is expected that locally unemployed and underemployed persons would fill most of the jobs created by the proposed project. The proposed project would therefore have a positive effect on the community and region by contributing to the economy of the City in terms of jobs, personal income, and tax revenues. Although the project may slightly increase the City’s permanent population through new employment opportunities, the scale of the project would not induce substantial population growth, either directly or indirectly.

Because the proposed project site currently contains no housing or people, the construction of the proposed hotel development on the site would not displace any existing housing or people. Therefore, impacts relating to the displacement of housing and people would be less than significant.

5.4 RECREATION

The proposed project was evaluated with respect to the thresholds of significance for recreation found in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines and the City of Oceanside’s Environmental Checklist. The analysis determined that there would be no significant impacts to recreational resources.

The proposed project consists of a commercial hotel development on a vacant lot adjacent to other existing commercial areas. As part of the project, a trail that coincides with the fire/maintenance access road would be constructed for the enjoyment of hotel guests and the public. The public trail would commence at the end of the on-site sidewalk system in the western portion of the project site. The trail would travel east within the fire/maintenance access road along the southern development boundary (adjacent to the Buena Vista Creek embankment), and would reconnect with the proposed on-site sidewalk system located in the eastern portion of the site (see Figure 3-4, Pedestrian Connection). The trail is proposed as a joint use with the fire-access-only road. The proposed fire/maintenance access road and trail would be stabilized with grasscrete and would be used by the fire department in an emergency, the City of Carlsbad staff in maintaining vegetation in Buena Vista Creek, and utility staff in maintaining existing utility lines in the creek area. The proposed joint-use trail would minimize development impacts due to the project’s adjacency to the riparian buffer along Buena Vista Creek. The adverse physical effects from the proposed trail are addressed in Chapter 4, Environmental Analysis, of this EIR.

The project would provide visitor-serving uses for local and regional clients as well. The proposed project does not include a housing component. Given these factors, the proposed project would not lead to increased use of existing parks or other recreational facilities that would cause or accelerate substantial physical deterioration of these facilities. In addition, the proposed project has no need for additional park services and does not require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities. Therefore, impacts to recreational resources would be less than significant.

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