

8.1 INTRODUCTION

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(c) requires that an EIR identify any significant irreversible environmental changes associated with a proposed project. Such changes include, for example, the intensification of land use, significant irreversible changes to the environment, the use of non-renewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project, or irreversible damage from environmental accidents associated with the project. The potential for such environmental changes is discussed below.

8.2 IRREVERSIBLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

8.2.1 INTENSIFICATION OF LAND USES

Under the proposed project, the existing land uses on the proposed project site would be redeveloped to permit the expansion of on-campus student housing facilities located adjacent to the existing Chapultepec Hall. Redevelopment of the proposed project site to accommodate more-intensive land uses with the addition of student housing to the area would result in a long-term increase in on-campus student housing. Development of land that has not previously been developed also would occur during construction, which would result in the removal of potential habitat (i.e., riparian habitat, foraging habitat, and migration corridors) for sensitive wildlife and plant species. However, despite converting some of the existing land use into a more intense land use, the proposed project would improve the integration of existing uses with a functional use of space within and on the campus; as a result, the commitment of these nonrenewable resources is reasonable and justified under the circumstances and, with appropriate mitigation, impacts associated with intensification of land uses would be less than significant.

8.2.2 NONRENEWABLE ENERGY CONSUMPTION

Construction of the proposed project would result in the use of nonrenewable resources and energy sources. In particular, project construction would require fossil fuels, a non-renewable resource, to power construction vehicles, delivery, and employee vehicles. Construction equipment also would use electricity and natural gas. Use of these energy sources would be a permanent commitment of resources. In addition, a variety of resource materials would be used during the construction process, including steel, wood, concrete, and fabricated materials. The commitment of such materials and fuels would be irreversible.

Once operational, the proposed project would consume more energy on a daily basis than what is presently consumed on site. Assuming at least a portion of the energy used during operations would be provided by nonrenewable resources, the proposed project would result in the commitment of nonrenewable energy resources during operation (See EIR Section 4.5, Energy, for analysis of the proposed project's impacts relative to proposed project energy consumption).

Although nonrenewable resources would be utilized during the construction and operational phases of the proposed project, the commitment of these resources is reasonable and justified under the circumstances, particularly as the proposed project is designed to accommodate the existing and projected demand for student housing. Further, the project would obtain LEED Silver rating by implementing a variety of water and energy efficiency features that would offset some of the impacts related to these resource areas. CSU/SDSU's commitment to achieving LEED Silver rating for the proposed project ensures that it would be designed and operated in an environmentally-conscious and sustainable manner.

Project impacts related to consumption of nonrenewable resources are considered to be less than significant because the project would not use unusual amounts of energy or construction materials. Because the proposed project would not consume an unusual amount of energy or materials, and would implement design features to operate in a sustainable manner, potential impacts associated with non-renewable energy consumption would be less than significant.

8.2.3 ACCIDENTAL HAZARDOUS RELEASE

The CEQA Guidelines also require a discussion of the potential for irreversible damage caused by an accidental release of hazards associated with the proposed project into the environment. No unique hazards are found on the project site, nor does the site contain any uniquely hazardous uses. Construction activities on the project site would involve the use and storage of commonly used hazardous materials such as lubricating oil, grease, solvents, and other janitorial supplies. These materials would be transported and handled in accordance with all federal, state, local, and SDSU guidelines and regulations applicable to the management and use of hazardous materials.

Further, although the proposed project may result in the increase in routine transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials and/or wastes generated by the additional campus building and facility square footage, all hazardous wastes would continue to be managed and handled in full compliance with SDSU Environmental Health and Safety procedures, and state and federal law (See EIR Section 4.8, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, for analysis of the proposed

project's impacts relative to hazardous waste and materials). Although accidental spills or unauthorized releases of hazardous materials during construction, including ground clearing and foundation excavation, potentially could result in soil contamination, as discussed in EIR Section 4.8, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, these potential significant impacts would be mitigated to less than significant.

In light of the multitude of federal, state, and local regulations governing the use of hazardous substances, the proposed project is not expected to involve activities that would damage the environment or pose a risk to public health and, therefore, impacts associated with irreversible damage from environmental impacts associated with the project would be less than significant.

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