

SECTION 4.0
SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE
ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

4.0 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

4.1 PURPOSE

CEQA Guidelines section 15126 requires this EIR to identify any significant irreversible environmental changes associated with the Proposed Project. Such changes include, for example, the use of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the Proposed Project, or irreversible damage from environmental accidents associated with the Proposed Project. The potential for such environmental changes is discussed below. (See CEQA Guidelines, §15126.2, subd. (c).)

4.2 IRREVERSIBLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

4.2.1 Intensification Of Land Uses On Project Site

Under the Proposed Project, the existing land uses on the Project site would be demolished and/or vacated to permit the redevelopment of more intensive land uses, including mixed-use development providing student housing opportunities and university/community-serving retail uses. Redevelopment of the Project site to accommodate these more intensive land uses would result in further urbanization of the College Area and represents a long-term commitment to an increasingly dense environment. However, this conversion would not constitute the commitment of a "nonrenewable resource" within the meaning of CEQA Guidelines section 15126.2, subdivision (c).

4.2.2 Nonrenewable Energy Consumption

Construction of the Proposed Project would result in the use of nonrenewable resources and energy sources, including fossil fuels, electricity and natural gas. Fossil fuels would be used to power construction equipment, as well as delivery and employee vehicles. Construction equipment also would use electricity and natural gas. Use of these energy sources would be considered 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 presently is consumed on site. (See EIR Section 3.11, **Public Services and Utilities**, for further analysis of the Proposed Project's use and effect on energy resources.) Assuming at least a

portion of the energy used would be provided by nonrenewable resources, the Proposed Project would result in the commitment of nonrenewable energy resources during Project operation.

Although nonrenewable resources would be utilized during the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Project, the commitment of these resources is reasonable under the circumstances, particularly as the Proposed Project is designed to accommodate the existing and projected demand for student housing and university/community-serving retail uses in the College Area. Moreover, CSU/SDSU has committed to achieving a LEED Silver rating for the proposed mixed-use development; this commitment ensures that the Proposed Project would be designed and operated in an environmentally-conscious and sustainable manner.

4.2.3 Environmental Accident

The CEQA Guidelines also require a discussion of the potential for irreversible damage caused by an environmental accident associated with the Proposed Project. No unique hazards are found on the Project site, nor does the site contain any uniquely hazardous uses. While the site is located within a seismically active region and would be exposed to ground shaking in the event of a seismic event, conformance with the regulatory provisions of the Uniform Building Code pertaining to construction standards would minimize damage and injuries in the event of such an occurrence. These geotechnical hazards can be mitigated by stabilization, removal, or redesign, and no significant impacts are expected. (See EIR Section 3.4, **Geotechnical/Soils**, for analysis of the Proposed Project's impacts relative to geotechnical conditions.)

The land uses contemplated by the Proposed Project (e.g., student housing; university/community-serving retail uses; pedestrian promenades) would not be expected to use and store hazardous chemicals and/or substances. Given the multitude of federal, state, and local regulations governing the use of such substances, the Proposed Project is not expected to involve activities that would damage the environment or pose a risk to public health. (See EIR Section 3.5, **Hazards and Hazardous Materials**, for analysis of the Proposed Project's impacts relative to hazardous waste and materials.)