

4 ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

This chapter consists of 14 sections that evaluate the environmental impacts of the proposed Draft 2030 General Plan. In accordance with Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the potential environmental effects of the Draft 2030 General Plan and the Climate Action Plan are analyzed for the following environmental issue areas:

- ◆ Aesthetics
- ◆ Air Quality
- ◆ Biological Resources
- ◆ Cultural Resources
- ◆ Geology, Soils, and Seismicity
- ◆ Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- ◆ Hydrology and Water Quality
- ◆ Land Use
- ◆ Noise
- ◆ Population and Housing
- ◆ Public Services and Recreation
- ◆ Transportation and Circulation
- ◆ Utilities and Infrastructure
- ◆ Greenhouse Gas Emissions

A. *Format of the Environmental Evaluation*

Each section in Chapter 4 generally follows the same format and consists of the following subsections:

- ◆ The *Regulatory Framework* subsection contains an overview of the federal and State laws and regulations applicable to each environmental review topic; the Land Use chapter (Section 4.8) will include a comprehensive overview of local laws and regulations as well.
- ◆ The *Existing Conditions* subsection describes current conditions with regard to the environmental factor reviewed.

- ◆ The *Standards of Significance* subsection tells how an impact is judged to be significant in this EIR. These standards are based on the CEQA Guidelines and other regulatory criteria where noted.
- ◆ The *Impact Discussion* gives an overview of potential impacts of the Draft 2030 General Plan and explains why impacts were found to be significant or less than significant. This section includes a discussion of cumulative impacts of the proposed project.
- ◆ The *Impacts and Mitigation Measures* section numbers and lists identified impacts and suggested measures that would mitigate each impact, where such measures are available.

In Sections 4.1 through 4.14, each numbered impact is considered significant prior to mitigation. Mitigation measures have been suggested that would reduce significant impacts to less-than-significant levels. Following an identified mitigation measure, there is a statement whether the mitigation would reduce the impact to less than significant, or whether it would remain significant and unavoidable.

B. Cumulative Impact Analysis

Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines requires an EIR to discuss cumulative impacts of a project when the project's incremental effect is cumulatively considerable. A cumulative impact consists of an impact created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the EIR together with other reasonably foreseeable projects causing related impacts.

In the case of an area-wide planning document such as a General Plan, cumulative effects occur from development under the General Plan within the city combined with effects of development on lands around the city and region. By definition, development within the General Plan area would be considered part of the cumulative impacts as would projected growth in other cities in the region.

Where the incremental effect of a project is not "cumulatively considerable," a lead agency need not consider that effect significant, but must briefly describe its basis for concluding that the incremental effect is not cumulatively considerable.

The cumulative impacts analyses in Sections 4.1 to 4.14 are included in the Impact Discussion in each section.

1. Geographic Area for Cumulative Analysis

Individual cumulative impacts may occur over different geographic areas. The cumulative discussions in Sections 4.1 through 4.14 explain the geographic scope of the area affected by each cumulative effect (e.g. watershed or air basin). The geographic area considered for each cumulative impact depends upon the impact that is being analyzed. For example, in assessing air quality impacts, all development within the air basin contributes to regional emissions of criteria pollutants, and basin-wide projections of emissions are the best tool for determining the cumulative effect. For most resource issues, the cumulative context evaluated in this EIR includes projected growth for other cities in San Mateo County.

2. Cumulative Projects Considered

The CEQA Guidelines provide two approaches to analyzing cumulative impacts. The first is the "list approach," which requires a listing of past, present and reasonably anticipated future projects producing related or cumulative impacts. The second is the summary approach, wherein the relevant projections contained in an adopted general plan or related planning document that is designed to evaluate regional or area wide conditions are summarized. A reasonable combination of the two approaches may also be used.

In each of the following 14 sections, the cumulative impacts of the Draft 2030 General Plan take into account growth projected by the Draft 2030 General Plan for the city limit and SOI, in combination with impacts from projected growth in the rest of San Mateo County and the surrounding region. In each

section of Chapter 4, the cumulative impacts discussion is based on the cumulative development described in Chapter 6.