

SECTION 3: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

Introduction and Organization of the Analysis

Organization of Issue Areas

This Draft EIR provides an analysis of impacts for those environmental topics where it was determined in the Notices of Preparation (NOP) included in Appendix A, or through subsequent analysis, that the project would result in potentially significant impacts. Sections 3.1 through 3.10 discuss the environmental impacts that may result upon approval and implementation of the project.

Environmental topics evaluated include air quality, biological resources, hazards, hydrology and water quality, land use, noise, population and housing, public services and utilities, transportation, and environmental justice. Each environmental issue area in Sections 3.1 through 3.10 contains the following components:

1. The environmental setting as it relates to the specific issue.
2. The regulatory framework governing that issue.
3. The methodology used in identifying the issues.
4. The significance criteria.
5. An evaluation of the project-specific impacts and identification of mitigation measures.
6. A determination of the level of significance after mitigation measures are implemented.

Determination of Impact Significance

Pursuant to CEQA (Guidelines Section 15125(a)), an EIR must include a description of the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project, as they exist at the time the Notice of Preparation (NOP) is published (in this case, 2007). This environmental setting will normally constitute the baseline physical conditions by which a lead agency determines whether an impact is significant. The setting is presented from site, local, sub-regional and/or regional perspectives, as appropriate to each environmental topic. The environmental effects of the project are defined as changes to the environmental setting that are attributable to the project. The environmental setting is normally the baseline physical condition by which the lead agency determines whether an impact is significant.

According to the CEQA Guidelines Section 15382, a significant effect on the environment means a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project.” For each category of physical condition evaluated in this EIR, thresholds of significance have been developed using criteria discussed in the CEQA Guidelines; criteria based on factual or scientific information; criteria based on regulatory standards of local, state, and federal agencies; and criteria based on goals, objectives, and policies identified in the Sacramento County General Plans and Arden Arcade Community Plan.

Mitigation measures identified in this report are characterized by one of three categories: (1) measures necessary to reduce the identified impact below a level of significance; (2) measures recommended to reduce the magnitude of a significant impact, but not below a level of significance; and (3) measures recommended to reduce the magnitude of a less than significant impact. Where implementation of more than one mitigation measure is needed to reduce an impact below a level of significance, this is noted.

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act Sections 56885.5 and 56886 provide the Sacramento County LAFCo with broad authority to condition incorporation projects that promote effective and orderly organization changes. However, Section 56886 does prohibit LAFCo from directly regulating (or mitigating) land use and property development (including the subdivision of land).

Format of Impact Analysis and Mitigation Measures

The format adopted in this EIR to present the evaluation of impacts is described and illustrated below.

Summary Heading of Impact

Impact 3.1-1: **An impact summary heading appears immediately preceding the impact description (Summary Heading of Impact in this example). The impact abbreviation identifies the section of the report (3.1 for Air Quality in this example) and the sequential order of the impact (1 in this example) within that section. To the right of the impact number is the impact statement, which identifies the potential impact.**

Approach to the Impact Analysis

A narrative analysis follows the impact statement by discussing the extent, intensity, and/or severity of the impact in the context of each resource topic. For the purposes of this analysis, the act of incorporation is analyzed at a programmatic level, as discussed in Section 3. Consistent with LAFCo requirements for implementing CEQA for incorporation proposals, the programmatic analysis contained in this EIR assumes the adoption of the County General Plan and all ordinances following incorporation.

More specifically, Section 57376 of the Government Code requires the City Council of a newly incorporated city to immediately adopt all county ordinances (such as the County Zoning Ordinance) for a period of 120 days after incorporation or until such time as the City Council has enacted ordinances superseding county ordinances. LAFCo indicates that this process also transfers the policies and land use designations of the adopted county General Plan to the new city, as Section 65360 of the Government Code provides that the city council of a newly incorporated city has 30 months following incorporation to adopt its own General Plan. As a result, the act of incorporation will not alter either the existing county zoning designations or proposed land uses or development within the Arden Arcade community. Though LAFCo may not exercise direct land use authority during its consideration of the proposed incorporation of Arden Arcade, judicial guidance provided during the incorporation of Citrus Heights suggested that the CEQA process for that particular proposal should include

an analysis of more or less intensive development than was currently planned in the county zoning ordinance and county General Plan. (*Sacramento County Board of Supervisors v. Sacramento LAFCo* [October 1, 1991, No. C006792 (nonpub.opn.)]).

In this context, the programmatic analysis acknowledges an inherent range of development intensities allowed within the land use designations contained in the currently adopted County General Plan (e.g., Commercial). In an attempt to account for this range in intensities and the new discretionary authority of the new governing body, e. g. the City Council, which could presumably approve the most or least intense levels development for individual land use designations, this analysis evaluates potential impacts that might result by increasing or reducing the intensity of development permitted under applicable County General Plan land use designations for vacant parcels by 20 percent.

Significance Determination Before Mitigation

This section identifies the level of significance of the impact before any mitigation is proposed.

Mitigation Measures

In some cases, following the impact discussion, reference is made to state and federal regulations and agency policies that would fully or partially mitigate the impact. In addition, policies and programs from applicable local land use plans that partially or fully mitigate the impact may be cited.

Project-specific mitigation measures, beyond those contained in other documents, are set off with a summary heading and described using the format presented below.

MM 3.1-1a Project-specific mitigation is identified that would reduce the impact to the lowest degree feasible. The mitigation number links the particular mitigation to the impact it is associated with (**3.1-1** in this example); the letter identifies the sequential order of that mitigation for that impact (**a** in this example).

Significance Determination After Mitigation and Supporting Rationale

This section identifies the resulting level of significance of the impact following mitigation and explains how the mitigation measure reduces the significance of the impact.

