

6.0 LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

The State of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Section 15126.2 (c), require that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) consider and discuss significant irreversible changes that would be caused by implementation of the proposed project to ensure that such changes are justified. The Guidelines specify that the use of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project should be discussed because a large commitment of such resources makes removal or nonuse thereafter unlikely. Primary impacts and, particularly, secondary impacts (such as a highway improvement that provides access to a previously inaccessible area) should also be discussed because such changes generally commit future generations to similar uses. Finally, irreversible damage can also result from environmental accidents associated with the project and should be discussed.

Construction of the proposed project will result in a commitment of limited, slowly renewable, and nonrenewable resources. Such resources may include certain types of lumber and other forest products; raw materials such as steel; aggregate materials used in concrete and asphalt such as sand and stone; water; petrochemical construction materials such as plastic; and petroleum-based construction materials. In addition, fossil fuels used during construction will also be consumed. Project construction will also result in an increased commitment of public maintenance services such as waste disposal and treatment.

Similarly, operation of the proposed project will result in the commitment of limited, nonrenewable resources and slowly renewable resources such as natural gas, electricity, petroleum-based fuels, fossil fuels, and water. Natural gas and electricity will be used for lighting, heating, and cooling of buildings; heating and refrigeration for food preparation and storage; and operation of project facilities. As stated in Section 4.12, Public Services and Utilities, and 4.16, Greenhouse Gases and Energy, the project is expected to result in an annual electricity demand of 8,400 megawatt hours (MWh) per year and demand for 20 million standard cubic feet (mscf) per year. Although this represents an increase in demand for both resources when compared to existing project site conditions, the increases are within the existing delivery capacity of service providers.

The CEQA Guidelines, Appendix F, Energy Conservation, state that EIRs are required to include a discussion of the potential energy impacts of proposed projects, with particular emphasis on avoiding or reducing inefficient, wasteful, and unnecessary consumption of energy. Implementation of Project Design Feature (PDF) greenhouse gas (GHG)-1 will reduce the level of new emissions from energy use by requiring that new structures be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED-NC Silver) certified, consistent with provisions of Executive Order (EO) S-20-04, whereby the State commits to design, construct, and operate all new and renovated State-owned facilities paid by State funds as "LEED-NC Silver" or higher certified building and purchase and operate ENERGY STAR electrical equipment when feasible. In addition, implementation of the Sustainability Component of the Master Plan, as described in Section 3.5.3 of this EIR, will support continued reductions in energy consumption and waste generation at the Fairgrounds. The incorporation of solar panels in the proposed Maintenance Building Complex B will generate approximately 50,000 kilowatt hours

(KWh) per year (or 50 MWh) that offset some of project energy emissions by contributing energy to the power grid. Furthermore, Mitigation Measures 4.16.4 through 4.16.18 further reduce GHG emissions from operation of the project by requiring that energy savings and efficiency measures be applied to the Master Plan projects. The project will not result in a significant impact related to either the provision of natural gas or electricity. In addition, the proposed project will exceed the requirements of Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) that requires conservation practices that will limit the amount of energy consumed by the proposed project. Nevertheless, the use of such resources will continue to represent a long-term commitment of essentially nonrenewable resources.

The project site also requires an increase in potable and reclaimed water. The total average daily project demand for potable water is estimated to be approximately 25 million gallons per year (mg/y). Sufficient water supplies are available to service the project, and project impacts are less than significant. However, the increase in water use will continue to represent a long-term commitment of this essentially nonrenewable resource.

Once developed, the proposed project will have indefinitely altered the characteristics of portions of the project site from one characterized by urbanized Fairgrounds uses in lower scale buildings and land use intensities to one characterized by more intense uses such as the hotel and Health Club/Sports Training Facility.

On-site surface water drainage in the developed condition will be similar to the existing condition, as described in Section 4.11, Hydrology and Water Quality. Mitigation measures are required to ensure that project hydrology will meet drainage system standards and that pollutants of concern will be controlled through implementation of Structural and Nonstructural best management practices (BMPs). Modifications to site topography are minimal given the overall flat condition of most of the site, including the areas to be redeveloped.

Views of the Pacific Ocean from the surrounding areas will continue to be available after project implementation, although views from the site and of the site will be permanently changed. The visual change from existing conditions to project conditions is not significant given that the Fairgrounds site is an already developed and intensely used site surrounded by existing, established development, including Interstate 5 (I-5), streets, and residential and commercial uses.

The proposed project will result in the loss of several existing structures; however, these have been determined to not meet eligibility requirements for the National Register of Historical Places (National Register) or California Register of Historic Places (California Register) criteria and therefore do not constitute a historical resource under CEQA. The proposed project would also result in irreversible change to the availability of suitable habitat for the Belding's Savannah sparrow; however, impacts to this and other biological resources are reduced to a level below significance with implementation of mitigation measures and strategies (Section 4.6, Biological Resources).

Operation of the proposed project would result in an increase in traffic to and from the project site. As discussed in the traffic analysis in Section 4.2, Traffic and Circulation, most of the significant traffic impacts of the proposed project can be mitigated to below a level through implementation of recommended mitigation. However, implementation of traffic mitigation is within the control of jurisdictional agencies other than the 22nd District Agricultural Association (DAA), and since

implementation of the mitigation cannot be ensured by the CEQA Lead Agency, all potentially significant traffic impacts are presumed to remain significant. The proposed project would also generate air emissions from both mobile and stationary sources during construction and operation. Although project-related traffic would not significantly affect local carbon monoxide (CO) levels, short-term construction emissions are expected to exceed the criteria pollutant thresholds for ROG. While the implementation of mitigation will further reduce emissions of ROG, they remain above the threshold level and are significant even after mitigation. Long-term operational emissions associated with the proposed project are also projected to exceed the criteria pollutant thresholds for PM₁₀ during the Interim Season. Mitigation does not reduce these impacts to below a level of significance, and the impacts remain significant after mitigation.

The commitment of limited, slowly renewable and nonrenewable resources required for the construction and operation of the proposed project will limit the availability of these resources for future generations or for other uses during the life of the project. However, continued use of such resources is consistent with regional and local plans and projected growth in the area. No other significant irreversible changes are expected to occur as a result of project implementation.

GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

Section 15126 (d) of the State CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR analyze growth-inducing impacts and states that an EIR should discuss the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Impacts associated with the removal of obstacles to growth as well as the development of facilities that encourage and facilitate growth are considered to be growth inducing. However, the CEQA Guidelines also state that it is not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.

The proposed project will result in the redevelopment of portions of an approximately 300-acre (ac) site that has been used for a Fairgrounds and Racetrack for many decades. All utilities and public services currently serve the project site; the project will not remove obstacles to growth in a previously undeveloped area. The potential for the proposed project to generate additional growth in the Cities of Del Mar and San Diego is unlikely because the proposed project does not include the extension or capacity expansion of existing off-site infrastructure, such as utilities or roads, that could induce population growth. Traffic mitigation measures identified in Section 4.2 of this EIR are intended to address impacts associated with the proposed projects and are not capacity-enhancing projects that would induce substantial population growth. Therefore, the proposed near-term project would not result in a significant impact by inducing substantial population growth from the extension of infrastructure.

This increase in permanent on-site employment is consistent with and well within the employment projections for the Cities of Del Mar and San Diego (see Table 4.10.A). Therefore, the proposed project will not result in a significant impact by inducing substantial population growth from increased employment. The employment potential of the proposed project is not of a magnitude that would cause significant numbers of people to relocate to the area solely for the purposes of being close to the proposed project site. The project may support the growth of tourism, including business convention and trade show business in the San Diego region, with the provision of the on-site hotel; however, it is not anticipated that the project will result in economic growth that exceeds levels

anticipated in regional forecasts (see Section 4.10, Population and Housing) and plans adopted by the Cities and the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG). Based on these considerations, the proposed project would not induce population growth in the community.