

SECTION 9 EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT

9.1 PURPOSE

Section 15128 of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR briefly describe any potential environmental effects that were determined not to be significant during the Initial Study scoping process or through analysis in the EIR process.

9.2 INTRODUCTION

This section contains a brief discussion on the rationale for the determination that certain environmental effects identified at the Initial Study/Notice of Preparation phase of the Proposed Project would not be significant.

Section 4 of the DEIR discusses those issues that had possible significant environmental effects and were subject to further consideration. Many were found not to be significant.

The Proposed Project would not result in significant impacts in the following environmental categories and, therefore, are not subject to further consideration in the DEIR.

9.3 EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT AS PART OF THE INITIAL STUDY

9.3.1 Aesthetics

The Proposed Project design includes landscaping techniques, prudent lighting angles, and use of appropriate building materials that would limit adverse affects to views in the area. The building design would consist of integral colored split-face masonry, synthetic stucco pilasters, entry facades for each tenant, and a wood trellis theme throughout the development, which would be consistent with the surrounding commercial development. The project color scheme would be representative of typical Californian themes. To eliminate views of the loading and trash areas, the site would include masonry walls as screening, with landscaping and trellis features. At least 10 percent of the total Proposed Project site would be landscaped. Eighty percent of the landscaping would be located in the frontage area or visible from the public street. Therefore, the Proposed Project would have a less than significant impact on day and nighttime views on site and in the vicinity.

9.3.2 Geology and Soils

The Proposed Project site is not located on an unstable geologic unit, nor would it induce geologic or soil instability on or offsite. Earthquakes in the Imperial Valley are unavoidable; however, building plans would conform to the City's Seismic Safety Emergency Plan to prevent bodily injury and property damage. Some soils in the Imperial Valley have high expansion or shrink-swell potential; thus special considerations would be required during construction. Construction would also comply with the current seismic design provisions for Seismic Zones of the Uniform Building Code. Therefore, the Proposed Project would have a less-than-significant impact on people and structures due to unstable geology or soils.

9.3.3 Hydrology and Water Quality

Development of a large-scale sealed surface for the Proposed Project and other changes associated with the conversion of the land to commercial use would substantially increase runoff rates. However, the Proposed Project would include almost 3 acres for detention ponds that would accommodate storm water from a 100-year storm event. The Dogwood Canal is located on the western border of the Proposed Project, and would need to be buried and piped for public safety. Modifications to the canals would satisfy the regulations of the IID. Therefore, the impact will be less than significant.

9.3.4 Mineral Resources

No mineral resources that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state have been identified in the vicinity of the project site. In addition, there are no locally important mineral resource recovery sites delineated on a local plan, specific plan or general plan in the vicinity and therefore, no impact is anticipated.

9.3.5 Noise

Construction of the Proposed Project would temporarily increase the noise level at the Proposed Project site. Proposed Project operations would result in increased noise from visitors and associated traffic. Generation of and exposure levels to noise would be in compliance with the City of El Centro Zoning Ordinances, California Noise Insulation Standards, and the City GP. There are no noise-sensitive receptors (e.g., schools or homes) located in the project vicinity. The proposed commercial development would be consistent with other commercial and industrial development located in the Proposed Project vicinity. Therefore, the Proposed Project would have a less-than-significant noise impact.

9.3.6 Population and Housing

The Proposed Project would provide approximately 1,000 new jobs, which could indirectly increase the demand for housing in the area. However, the unemployment rate in Imperial County is approximately 19.4 percent, which is substantially higher than the State rate of 6.7 percent (CIC Research 2006). Therefore it is likely that the Proposed Project would provide jobs for local residents and would help reduce the unemployment rate instead of induce new growth. Additionally, the Proposed Project is located in an area that has been zoned and designated for development by the City GP and the Zoning Ordinance. The Proposed Project would be consistent with the UDP, and would be located in a Tier I growth area (an area where growth is anticipated and most feasible). The Proposed Project would not require any displacements of existing homes or businesses. Therefore, the Proposed Project would have a less-than-significant impact on population and housing.

9.3.7 Recreation

There are no parks in the immediate area of the Proposed Project; thus it is not expected to increase the use of any parks in the City.

9.4 EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT AS PART OF THE EIR PROCESS

9.4.1 Agricultural Resources

Although the Proposed Project site has agricultural capabilities, it has not been actively cultivated in more than 45 years and therefore has been designated “Farmland of Local Importance” according to the FMMP. Conversion of Farmland of Local Importance to non-agricultural uses would not result in significant impacts. The Proposed Project is also consistent with the City GP regarding conversion of agricultural land. In addition, the Proposed Project would not interfere with agricultural operations because there is no agricultural land actively being cultivated in the Proposed Project vicinity.

9.4.2 Hazardous Materials

A Waste Pile Closure Report (WPCR) was completed for the Proposed Project site by Geomatrix in January 2004. The WPCR indicated that the northeast corner of the Proposed Project site was used for the delivery, disposal, and burning of solid waste since before 1954. The site was cleaned up in 2004 and a “No Further Action Required” letter was issued for the site. The nearest listed site of potential contamination is the JR Simplot Company. This site is located approximately 500 feet west of the site. The JR Simplot site is listed as a small quantity generator of hazardous waste material. Due to the distance from JR Simplot and the limited quantity of hazardous materials stored on the site it is unlikely that this site would adversely affect the Proposed Project site and hazardous materials impacts would be less than significant. All potentially hazardous substances used, sold, transported, and stored as part of the Proposed Project’s operations would be accomplished in accordance with federal, state, and local health and safety regulations. Therefore, operation of the Proposed Project would not have a significant hazardous materials impact.

9.4.2 Land Use

The Proposed Project would not conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or City regulation. The Proposed Project would not physically divide an established community nor will it conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan. The Proposed Project would not result in significant impacts to land use.

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