6.0 LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROJECT

6.1 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

Section 15126.2 (c) of the Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) require that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) consider and discuss significant irreversible changes that would be caused by implementation of the proposed project. The CEQA 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 and 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. Irreversible damage can also result from environmental accidents associated with the project and should be discussed.

Project development is an irreversible commitment of the land. After the 50- to 75-year structural lifespan of the buildings is reached, it is improbable that the site would revert to an undeveloped state. Once developed, the proposed project would have indefinitely altered the characteristics of the project site from vacant land and library uses to one characterized by a civic center and park uses.

Construction of the project would 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 by construction equipment would 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 would 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 and operation of project facilities. As discussed in Section 4.13, Public Services, Utilities, and Service Systems, the project is expected to result in an annual electricity demand of 1,061,000 kilowatt-hours per year (kWh/yr) and a demand for approximately 17,000 therms[1] of natural gas per year. Although this represents an increase in demand for both resources when compared to existing site conditions, the increases are within the existing delivery capacity of service providers. The project would not result in a significant adverse impact related to the provision of natural gas or electricity. In addition, Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations requires conservation practices that will limit the amount of energy consumed by the proposed project and the City has committed to obtaining Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design (LEED)-New Construction (NC) Silver certification for the proposed City Hall administration building, Community Room, and Council Chambers. Compliance with Title 24 is mandated by the State, and participation the LEED

[1] 1 therm is approximately the energy equivalent of burning 100 cubic feet of natural gas.

certification program is voluntary. Nevertheless, the use of such resources will continue to represent a long-term commitment of essentially nonrenewable resources.

Operation of the proposed project also requires an increase in potable water. The total average annual project demand for potable water is estimated to be 8.4 million gallons (MG).[1] 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.

On-site surface water drainage in the developed condition would be substantially different from the existing condition, as described in Section 4.10, Hydrology and Water Quality. Project hydrology would meet drainage system standards, and pollutants of concern will be controlled through implementation of structural and nonstructural best management practices (BMPs).

As discussed in Section 4.5, Biological Resources, implementation of the proposed project would result in impacts to a special-status plants species (Coulter's saltbush), native plant communities, jurisdictional areas, wildlife and wildlife habitat, and nesting birds. In addition, site topography would be modified per the conceptual grading plan for the site, and on-site topography would be substantially different after project implementation.

The commitment of limited, slowly renewable, and nonrenewable resources required for construction and operation of the proposed project would limit the availability of these resources for future generations or for other uses during the life of the project. However, the use of such resources for the project would be consistent with regional and local plans and projected growth in the area.

6.2 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

Sections 15126(d) and 15126.2(d) of the State CEQA Guidelines require that an EIR analyze growth-inducing impacts and state that an EIR should discuss the ways in which the project could foster economic or population growth or construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. This section examines 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. An assessment of other projects that could affect the environment, individually or cumulatively, is also required. To address this issue, potential growth-inducing effects were examined through analysis of the following questions:

- Would the project remove obstacles to growth, e.g., through the construction or extension of major infrastructure facilities that do not presently exist in the project area, or through changes in existing regulations pertaining to land development?
- Would this project result in the need to expand one or more public services to maintain desired levels of service?
- Would this project encourage or facilitate economic effects that could result in other activities that could significantly affect the environment?

[1] ARUP North America Ltd. Newport Beach City Hall and Park Development Plan Drainage Report and Utility Demand Estimation. July 2009.

- Would approval of this project involve some precedent-setting action that could encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment?

It should be noted that growth-inducing effects are not to be construed as necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.2(d)). This issue is presented to provide additional information on ways in which this project could contribute to significant changes in the environment, beyond the direct consequences of developing the proposed land uses as described in earlier sections of this EIR.

6.2.1 Removal of Obstacles to Growth

The proposed project site is currently developed and is surrounded by a variety of urban uses. As discussed earlier in Section 4.13, Public Services, Utilities, and Service Systems, implementation of the project would not require infrastructure improvements except for those necessary to connect to existing surrounding infrastructure. Extensions of existing utility facilities from nearby roads would provide sufficient tie-ins to the existing utility system to serve the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project is not considered to be growth inducing with respect to utilities and service systems.

The proposed project also includes improvements to San Miguel Drive, focusing on the segment between MacArthur Boulevard and Avocado Avenue. Although these intersections operate at acceptable levels of service, this segment of road has experienced operational issues due to the relatively short distance between these intersections and the relatively high number of turning movements. The improvements are proposed to provide additional capacity for the heavy afternoon eastbound left turn onto MacArthur Boulevard, as well as providing additional lanes, where possible, to reduce the amount of signal-cycle time necessary for traffic movements opposing the heavy westbound left turn onto Avocado Avenue. These physical improvements are proposed to supplement the recently implemented traffic signal coordination program to improve the operational efficiency of these intersections. Although the proposed improvements would increase the capacity of this roadway segment, it would not remove an obstacle to growth because (1) the surrounding area (with the exception of the project site) is largely built out; (2) the roadway already exists and the project improvements would not extend roadway facilities to an area not presently served; and (3) the improvements would address an existing operational issue.

6.2.2 Expansion of Public Services

As discussed earlier in Section 4.13, Public Services, Utilities, and Service Systems, the proposed project site is currently served by all public service providers, including police protection services, fire prevention services, public transit, schools, and libraries. Existing and planned facilities are sufficient to accommodate demand for services generated by the proposed project. Expansion of public services beyond what is currently planned for, and encouragement of other new growth, would not result from implementation of the project.

6.2.3 Encourage/Facilitate Economic Effects

During project construction, a limited number of design, engineering, and construction-related jobs would be created, increasing economic activity. This would be a temporary situation, lasting until the

proposed project is completed. The proposed project is also expected to employ approximately 295 people on site after project completion.

Employee/residents generated by the project may seek shopping, entertainment, auto maintenance, and other economic opportunities in the surrounding area, inclusive of nearby areas, the entire City, and probably most of central and southern Orange County. This would represent an increased demand for economic goods and services and could, therefore, encourage the creation of new business and/or the expansion of existing businesses that address these economic needs. It should be noted, however, the proposed project site is near an existing employment and retail center (Fashion Island) that would likely absorb much of this increased demand for economic goods.

6.2.4 Precedent-Setting Action

The proposed project is a City Hall and Park Development Plan. Given that the exiting City Hall was first constructed in 1945, it is unlikely that the City would undertake the design and construction of another new City Hall within the next 50–75 years. Therefore, the proposed project does not propose any precedent-setting actions that, if approved, would specifically allow or encourage other projects and resultant growth to occur.

6.3 SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS THAT CANNOT BE AVOIDED

Section 15126.2(b) of the State CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR describe significant environmental impacts that cannot be avoided, including those effects that can be mitigated but not reduced to a less than significant level. The Executive Summary of this document contains a detailed summary table that identifies the project's environmental impacts, proposed mitigation measures, and the level of significance of those impacts after mitigation. The following is a summary of the impacts that are considered significant adverse and unavoidable after all mitigation is applied. These impacts are also described in detail in Chapter 4.0, Existing Environmental Setting, Environmental Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures.

6.3.1 Inventory of Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

Air Quality. Construction emissions from the project would exceed the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) daily emissions thresholds for nitrous oxide (NO_X) and reactive organic compounds (ROC), and resulting concentrations of particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM_{10}) that would exceed the local significance threshold (LST) threshold. Mitigation measures would be required to reduce NO_X, ROC, and PM_{10} emissions; however, even with implementation of all available mitigation measures, project impacts related to construction emissions would remain significant adverse and unavoidable.

Global Climate Change. The proposed project would strive to reduce GHG emissions by meeting and exceeding Title 24 standards and by achieving LEED-NC Silver Certification. The project would implement mitigation measures to further reduce energy consumption and vehicular emissions. The City will monitor the development of implementation requirements of AB 32, as issued by State

agencies, and any subsequently adopted GHG emissions reduction procedures and technologies relevant to the proposed project.

The proposed project is consistent with and/or furthers the intent of numerous GHG reduction strategies and is consistent with the City's General Plan goals and Climate Action Protection Program strategies, which are designed to reduce energy consumption and GHG emissions. Compliance with the reduction strategies implemented by the City will help to achieve the statewide reduction of GHG to 1990 levels; however, this cannot ensure that the project would not exceed Threshold 4.8.1 because project operations would result in more than 6,000 metric tons of CO_{2e} per year. Therefore, the proposed project would result in a significant unavoidable project impact and result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to an unavoidable cumulative impact related to activities that may impede achievement of the State's goal for reducing GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020.

While the length and intensity of the construction period for this project would result in emissions that contribute to the project's significant impact, even with implementation of mitigation measures, the short-term construction-related emissions from this project would not in themselves be considered to present a cumulatively considerable contribution to the impact of global climate change or may impede achievement of the State's goal for reducing GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020.

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