

CHAPTER 4 Environmental Analysis

4.0 INTRODUCTION TO ANALYSIS

This section provides an overview of the analysis that is provided in Chapter 4.

■ Existing Conditions

This subsection describes existing conditions that may be subject to change as a result of implementation of the proposed General Plan Update. This subsection provides the context for assessing potential environmental impacts resulting from implementation of the General Plan Update.

■ Thresholds of Significance

Before potential impacts are evaluated for significance, the threshold that will serve as the basis for judging impact significance is presented. Thresholds of Significance used for the evaluation of impacts include those thresholds presented in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. The City of Newport Beach relies on these thresholds as those that are appropriate for evaluating the significance of impacts in the City.

■ Regulatory Framework

Regional and statewide regulations that govern development activities that are designed to ensure protection of resources, public and private property, and the local population are described. Examples of these regulations include the 2003 Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP), Uniform Building Code, and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit system, among others.

■ Impacts

The project impacts discussion describes potential consequences to each resource that would result from implementation of the General Plan Update.

Potential environmental impacts have been classified in the following categories:

- **Less Than Significant**—Results in no substantial adverse change to existing environmental conditions
- **Potentially Significant**—Constitutes a substantial adverse change to existing environmental conditions that can be mitigated to less-than-significant levels by implementation of feasible mitigation measures or by the selection of an environmentally superior project alternative

- **Significant and Unavoidable**—Constitutes a substantial adverse change to existing environmental conditions that cannot be fully mitigated by implementation of all feasible mitigation measures, or by the selection of an environmentally superior project alternative

■ Cumulative Impacts

This discussion (contained within each environmental resource section of Chapter 4) describes potential impacts from the proposed General Plan Update which, in combination with development in the area, surrounding the Planning Area. In many cases, development under the General Plan Update serves as the context for cumulative analysis, as it includes all development within the Planning Area over the next 25 years. For some environmental resource areas, however, the cumulative context extends beyond the borders of the Planning Area and may be the boundaries of a particular service provider (such as the Irvine Ranch Water District) or the entire County.

■ Mitigation Measures and Residual Impacts

If potential impacts are considered potentially significant and it is determined that implementation of General Plan policies would not reduce impacts, mitigation measures are proposed to reduce or avoid these impacts. This section also describes the level of significance of impacts following the implementation of mitigation measures. Impacts are defined as either significant but mitigable or significant and unavoidable. Significant but mitigable impacts are those impacts that could be reduced to a less-than-significant level with the incorporation of mitigation measures. Significant and unavoidable impacts are those impacts that would remain significant either due to the unavailability of feasible mitigation measures to reduce impacts or inability for mitigation measures to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level.