

4.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE ANALYSIS

4.0.1 INTRODUCTION

The technical chapters of this EIR include the analysis of the potential impacts of buildout of the Village Farms Davis Project (Proposed Project) and Biological Resources Preservation Alternative (BRPA) on a range of environmental issue areas. Chapters 4.1 through 4.15 of the EIR describe the environmental setting related to each specific issue area, methods of analysis, project-specific and BRPA impacts and mitigation measures, and a cumulative impact analysis for each issue area. The format of each of the technical chapters is described at the end of this chapter. It should be noted that technical reports are either attached to this EIR, available by request from the City of Davis, or available on the City's website at: <https://www.cityofdavis.org/city-hall/community-development-and-sustainability>

According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15125(d), the EIR shall discuss any inconsistencies between the Proposed Project and applicable general plans, specific plans, and regional plans. An "applicable" plan is a plan that has already been adopted, and thus, legally applies to a project; draft plans need not be evaluated.¹ During the circulation of the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for public review, the City of Davis updated its General Plan, by adoption of the 2021-2029 Housing Element of the General Plan on December 5, 2023. This EIR relies on the City of Davis General Plan when determining whether any inconsistencies would occur between the Proposed Project and BRPA and the applicable General Plan.

4.0.2 DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

Under CEQA, a significant effect is defined as a substantial or potentially substantial adverse change in the environment (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21068). The CEQA Guidelines require that the determination of significance be based on scientific and factual data. The specific criteria for determining the significance of a particular impact are identified within in each technical chapter and are consistent with significance criteria set forth in the CEQA Guidelines or as based on the professional judgment of the EIR preparers.

Significance Criteria

The CEQA Guidelines define a significant effect on the environment as "a substantial, or potentially substantial adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project, including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic and aesthetic significance." In addition, the Guidelines state, "An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment. A social or economic change related to a physical change may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant." (CEQA Guidelines Section 15382).

As presented in Section 4.0.4 below, the level of significance of an impact prior to mitigation is included at the end of each impact discussion throughout the technical chapters of this EIR.

¹ Stephen L. Kostka and Michael H. Zischke. *Practice Under the California Environmental Quality Act, Volume 1*. Continuing Education of the Bar: March 2022, Section 12.27.



The following levels of significance prior to mitigation are used in this EIR:

- 1) Less than Significant: Impacts that may be adverse, but that do not exceed the specified thresholds of significance;
- 2) Significant: Impacts that exceed the defined standards of significance and require mitigation;
- 3) Less than Cumulatively Considerable: Where cumulative impacts have been identified, but the project's incremental contribution towards the cumulative impacts would not be considered significant; and
- 4) Cumulatively Considerable: Where cumulative impacts have been identified and the project's incremental contribution towards the cumulative impacts would be considered significant.

If an impact is determined to be significant or cumulatively considerable, mitigation is included, if available, in order to reduce the specific impact to the maximum extent feasible. A statement of the level of significance of an impact after mitigation is also included in each impact discussion throughout the technical chapters of this EIR. The following levels of significance after implementation of mitigation are used in the EIR:

- 1) Less than Significant: Impacts that exceed the defined standards of significance but can be eliminated or reduced to a less-than-significant level through the implementation of feasible mitigation measures;
- 2) Less than Cumulatively Considerable: Where the project's incremental contribution towards cumulative impacts would be eliminated or reduced to a less than cumulatively considerable level through the implementation of feasible mitigation measures; and
- 3) Significant and Unavoidable Impact: An impact (project-level or cumulative) that cannot be eliminated or reduced to a less-than-significant or less than cumulatively considerable level through the implementation of feasible mitigations measures.

Each environmental area of analysis uses a distinct set of significance criteria. The significance criteria are identified at the beginning of the Impacts and Mitigation Measures section in each of the technical chapters of this EIR. Although significance criteria are necessarily different for each resource considered, the provided significance levels ensure consistent evaluation of impacts for all resource areas evaluated.

4.0.3 ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES ADDRESSED IN THIS EIR

The EIR provides the analysis necessary to address the technical environmental impacts of the Proposed Project and BRPA. The following environmental issues are addressed in the separate technical chapters of this EIR:

- Aesthetics;
- Agricultural Resources;
- Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy;
- Biological Resources;
- Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources;
- Geology and Soils;
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials;
- Hydrology and Water Quality;
- Land Use and Planning;



- Noise;
- Population and Housing;
- Public Services and Recreation;
- Transportation;
- Utilities and Service Systems; and
- Wildfire.

Chapter 5, Effects Not Found to be Significant, will address the project's effects that were determined not to be significant, and thus, were not discussed in detail in a technical chapter of the EIR. See Section 6.3, Cumulative Impacts, of Chapter 6, Statutorily Required Sections, for additional information on the scope of the cumulative impact analysis for each environmental issue area addressed in the EIR.

4.0.4 TECHNICAL CHAPTER FORMAT

Each technical chapter addressing a specific environmental issue begins with an **introduction** describing the purpose of the section. The introduction is followed by a description of the project's **existing environmental setting** as the setting pertains to that particular issue. The setting description is followed by the **regulatory context** and the **impacts and mitigation measures** discussion, which contains the **standards of significance**, followed by the **method of analysis**. The standards of significance section includes references to the specific checklist questions consistent with Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. The **impacts and mitigation measures** discussion includes impact statements prefaced by a number in bold-faced type and an analysis of potential impacts for both the Proposed Project and BRPA, as well as cumulative analyses. An explanation of each impact and an analysis of the impact's significance follow each impact statement, followed by all mitigation measures pertinent to each individual impact (see below). The degree of relief provided by identified mitigation measures is also evaluated. An example of the format is shown below.

Project-Specific Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The following discussion of impacts is based on the implementation of the Proposed Project and BRPA in comparison with the standards of significance.

4.x-1 Statement of Project-Specific and Biological Resources Preservation Alternative Impact

Brief introduction and explanation of the nature of the impact.

Proposed Project

Discussion of impact for the Proposed Project in paragraph format.

Biological Resources Preservation Alternative

Discussion of impact for the BRPA in paragraph format.

Conclusion

Statement of **level of significance** of impact prior to mitigation is included at the end of each impact discussion. The following levels of significance are used in the EIR: less than significant, significant, or significant and unavoidable. If an impact is determined to be significant, mitigation will be included in order to reduce the specific impact to the maximum extent feasible. Impacts that cannot be reduced to a less-than-



significant level with implementation of all feasible mitigation would be considered to remain significant and unavoidable.

Mitigation Measure(s)

Statement of *level of significance* after the mitigation is included immediately preceding mitigation measures.

4.x-1(a) *Required mitigation measure(s) presented in italics and listed in consecutive order.*

4.x-1(b) *Required additional mitigation measure, if necessary.*

Cumulative Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The following discussion of cumulative impacts is based on implementation of the Proposed Project and BRPA in combination with cumulative development within the applicable area or region.

4.x-2 Statement of Cumulative Impact

Based on the nature of cumulative impacts, the EIR is anticipated to discuss the cumulative impacts of both the Proposed Project and BRPA together in most cases.

Proposed Project, Biological Resources Preservation Alternative

Discussion of cumulative impacts for the Proposed Project and BRPA in paragraph format.

As discussed in detail in Chapter 6, Statutorily Required Sections, of the EIR, the cumulative setting for the Proposed Project and BRPA is generally considered to be development anticipated to occur through buildout of the Davis General Plan (i.e., City of Davis), as well as a list of past, present, and probable future projects.

Statement of ***level of significance*** of cumulative impact prior to mitigation is included at the end of each impact discussion. The following levels of significance are used in the EIR for cumulative impacts: less than significant, less than cumulatively considerable, cumulatively considerable, or significant and unavoidable. If an impact is determined to be cumulatively considerable, mitigation will be included in order to reduce the specific impact to the maximum extent feasible. Impacts that cannot be reduced to less-than-significant or less than cumulatively considerable levels with the implementation of all feasible mitigation would be considered to remain significant and unavoidable.

Mitigation Measure(s)

Statement of *level of significance* after the mitigation is included immediately preceding mitigation measures.

4.x-2(a) *Required mitigation measure(s) presented in italics and listed in consecutive order.*

4.x-2(b) *Required additional mitigation measure, if necessary.*

