

Environmental Analysis





Chapter 4 | Environmental Analysis

4.1.1 INTRODUCTION AND APPROACH

As discussed in detail in Chapter 1.0, *Introduction*, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) does not apply to any discretionary actions necessary to bring the Housing Element and relevant mandatory General Plan elements into compliance with State law. Therefore, CEQA does not apply to the proposed discretionary actions detailed in Chapter 3.0, *Project Description* (i.e., the Project). However, preparation of an “environmental assessment” that substantially conforms to the required content for a draft environmental impact report (DEIR) is required (GOV § 65759(a)). Therefore, this document constitutes the required “environmental assessment” and conforms to the required content for a DEIR found in State CEQA Guidelines Article 9 (§ 15120 et seq.).

Final Environmental Assessment/Program Environmental Impact Report for At Home in Encinitas, the City of Encinitas Housing Element Update (SCH #2015041044) (2016 PEIR) analyzed the potentially significant environmental effects associated with three housing strategies, including the Modified Mixed-Use Places (MMUP) strategy (i.e., strategy with the greatest development yield). Table 4-1, *Comparison of Maximum Realistic Yields*, compares the Project’s MRY to the MMUP strategy’s MRY, as well as the adopted Encinitas General Plan (General Plan) MRY.¹ As compared to the MMUP strategy’s MRY, the Project’s MRY represents a net decrease of 767 DU (-24% DU) and a net decrease of 1,610,066 SF of non-residential uses (-100% SF). As also indicated in Table 4-1, as compared to the adopted General Plan MRY, the Project’s MRY represents a net increase of as many as 2,303 DU (+1,206%) and no change in non-residential uses.

Description	MRY Residential (DU)	MRY Non-Residential (SF)
Proposed Project (HEU)	2,494	0
Existing On-the-Ground (OTG) ¹	7	793,757
Proposed HEU:Existing OTG Change	2,487	-793,757
Adopted General Plan (GP) ²	191	831,016
Proposed HEU:Adopted GP Change	+2,303	0
Housing Strategy 3 (MMUP) ³	3,261	1,610,066
Proposed HEU:MMUP Change	-767	-1,610,066
Proposed HEU:MMUP % Change	-24%	-100%
Sources: 1. Appendix B, <i>Candidate Sites Table</i> . 2. 2016 PEIR Table 3-4c. 3. 2016 PEIR Table 9-1.		

¹ The candidate sites’ existing land use designations and zoning are detailed in Appendix B, *Candidate Sites Table*.

Because additions or changes are necessary to make the 2016 PEIR adequately apply to the proposed Project, this EA substantially conforms to the content for a Supplemental EIR pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines § 15163, *Supplement to an EIR*. A Supplemental EIR need contain only the information necessary to make the previous EIR adequate for the project, as revised.

4.1.2 ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT

The environmental issues where a potentially significant impact could occur are analyzed in this section, based on the 2016 PEIR baseline data and findings, as well as the 2016 PEIR Notice of Preparation and response letters (see 2016 PEIR Appendix A-2). This EA addresses in detail the “Potentially significant impacts” concerning the following environmental issues:

4.1 Aesthetics	4.8 Hydrology and Water Quality
4.2 Air Quality	4.9 Land Use and Planning
4.3 Biological Resources	4.10 Noise
4.4 Cultural Resources	4.11 Population and Housing
4.5 Geology and Soils	4.12 Public Services and Recreation
4.6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions	4.13 Transportation and Traffic
4.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials	4.14 Utilities and Service Systems

The environmental issues determined through the scoping process as clearly insignificant and unlikely to occur are: Agricultural and Forestry Resources; and Mineral Resources. Therefore, these issue areas are addressed in Section 8.0, *Effects Found Not to be Significant*.

Sections 4.1 through 4.14 contain a detailed environmental analysis of the existing environmental setting (baseline conditions), existing regulatory setting, Project impacts (i.e., direct and indirect, short-term construction and long-term operational), relevant General Plan Policies, recommended mitigation measures, and significant unavoidable impacts. Refer to Section 7.0, *Cumulative Analysis*, for the Project’s cumulative impacts. Each detailed environmental analysis subsection is structured, as follows:

- **2016 PEIR** specifies the 2016 PEIR Section and page number where the corresponding discussion is provided. Summaries of the 2016 PEIR analyses and conclusions are included, as needed to support the revised Project.
- **Additions/Changes Since 2016 PEIR** includes the supplemental information necessary to make the 2016 PEIR adequate for the Project, as revised. The supplemental information involves: 1) changes in the Project or circumstances under which the Project is undertaken, or new information of substantial importance (State CEQA Guidelines § 16152); or 2) additions or changes necessary to make the 2016 PEIR adequately apply to the Project, as revised. Where no supplemental information is necessary, a brief discussion supporting the finding that the impact was adequately addressed in the 2016 PEIR is provided.

Each potentially significant environmental issue area is organized into the following subsections:

1. **Existing Environmental Setting** describes the physical environmental conditions in the Project vicinity that could influence or affect the issue under investigation, as they exist at the time environmental analysis was commenced (March 2018), from both a local and regional perspective.

2. **Existing Regulatory Setting** outlines and discusses the laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards applicable to the Project.
3. **Significance Determination Thresholds** provides the thresholds that are the basis of conclusions of significance. The primary sources of these thresholds include:
 - State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G criteria (California Code of Regulations §§ 15000 – 15387);
 - Local, State, Federal, and other standards applicable to an impact threshold; and
 - Officially established significance thresholds.

State CEQA Guidelines § 15064[b] specifies that “...An ironclad definition of significant effect is not possible because the significance of any activity may vary with the setting.” Principally, “...a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within an area affected by the project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic and aesthetic significance” constitutes a significant impact (State CEQA Guidelines § 15382).

For each threshold, an “Issue” number is identified, indicating where the analysis is provided in the “Impacts and Mitigation Measures” subsection that follows; see below.

4. **Impacts and Mitigation Measures** includes an “Impacts” analysis for each threshold that describes potential environmental changes to the existing physical conditions that could occur, if the proposed Project is implemented. Evidence, based on factual and scientific data, is presented to show the cause and effect relationship between the proposed project and the potential changes in the environment. The exact magnitude, duration, extent, frequency, range or other parameters of a potential impact are ascertained, to the extent possible, to determine whether impacts could be significant. All potential direct and reasonably foreseeable indirect, construction-related (short-term), and operational (long-term) effects are considered. Additionally, potential impacts are assessed on either a “plan-to-ground” or “plan-to-plan” basis, as needed:
 - **Plan-to-Ground:** These analyses evaluate the Project’s potential impacts, as compared to existing on-the-ground conditions.
 - **Plan-to-Plan:** These analyses evaluate the Project’s potential impacts, as compared to existing adopted plans, including among others the Encinitas General plan and Encinitas Zoning Ordinance. These analyses are presented in Section 4.9, *Land Use and Planning*, and Section 6.0, *Growth-Inducement*, among others.

Generally, impacts are classified as no impact, less than significant impact, or potentially significant impact. This EA uses the following terminology to describe the Project’s environmental effects:

- **No Impact.** The proposed Project would not have any measurable environmental impact.
- **Less Than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project could impact the environment, although this impact would be below established thresholds of significance.

- **Less Than Significant With Mitigation.** The proposed Project would have the potential to generate an impact, which may be considered as a significant effect on the environment, although mitigation measures or changes to the Project’s physical or operational characteristics would reduce this impact to a level that is less than significant.
- **Significant Unavoidable Impact.** When an impact, despite the inclusion of mitigation measures, cannot be mitigated to a level that is less than significant, it is identified as “significant unavoidable impact.”

The analysis also includes relevant General Plan Policies and “Mitigation Measures” that would be required of the Project to: avoid a significant adverse impact; minimize a significant adverse impact; rectify a significant adverse impact by restoration; reduce or eliminate a significant adverse impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations; or compensate for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environment.

5. **Significant Unavoidable Impacts** describes impacts that would be significant and cannot be feasibly mitigated to a level that is less than significant, and thus would be unavoidable. To approve a project with unavoidable significant impacts, the Lead Agency must adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations. In adopting such a statement, the Lead Agency is required to balance a project’s benefits against its unavoidable environmental impacts in determining whether to approve the project. If a project’s benefits are found to outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects, the adverse effects may be considered “acceptable” (CEQA Guidelines § 15093[a]).
6. **Sources Cited** identifies the sources of information used in the section.