

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This section of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) addresses the potentially significant environmental impacts of the proposed Fountain Valley Crossings Specific Plan (FVCSP) Project (Project). Each environmental resource area is discussed under the following subsections: Environmental Setting, Regulatory Setting, Impact Assessment Methodology, Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures, Residual Impacts, and Cumulative Impacts. For resource areas where unique or supplementary information is available, additional subsections are provided per section. The EIR addresses potential impacts that could result from the construction and operation of future land uses anticipated to occur under the Project. The Project would guide future development by establishing development standards, goals, policies, and design guidelines for future land uses. As part of the Partial Recirculated Draft EIR, the analysis of cumulative impacts within this section was updated to clarify the approach to cumulative impact assessment under CEQA Guidelines §15130 and to ensure that the analysis accounts for the impacts of all reasonably foreseeable projects, including the Southpark Specific Plan.

3.0.1 Impact Significance Guidelines and Impact Classification

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires an EIR analysis to “identify and focus on the significant environmental effects of a proposed project” (CEQA Guidelines, §15126.2(a) and Public Resources Code Section 21000(a). The emphasis of the EIR should be placed on the potential “physical” adverse effects of a proposed project.

CEQA Guidelines §15360 defines “environment” as the physical conditions that exist within the area that will be affected by a proposed project including, but not limited to, land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historical or aesthetic significance. The guidelines further define the area involved as the area in which significant effects would occur either directly or indirectly as a result of the project. The “environment” includes both natural and human-made conditions.

CEQA Guidelines §15382 further clarifies the definition of “significant effect on the environment” as a substantial, or potential substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project. An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment. However, that economic or social change that may have a physical impact (such as urban decay) should be considered in an EIR (Bakersfield Citizens for Local Control v. City of Bakersfield (2004) 124 Cal.App.4th 1184).

For each impact section, thresholds for determining impact significance are identified along with descriptions of methodologies used to conduct the impact analysis. Determinations of impact significance levels in the EIR are made based on City impact significance guidelines and criteria

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for each impact topic, including Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. For some resource areas, such as air quality, transportation, and noise, the analysis of impacts are more quantitative in nature and involve the comparison of effects against a numerical threshold. For other resource areas, such as aesthetics and visual resources and land use, the analyses of impacts are inherently more qualitative, involving the consideration of a variety of factors, such as City policies.

The EIR impact discussions classify impact significance levels as:

1. **Significant and Unavoidable** - a significant impact to the environment that remains significant even after mitigation measures are applied;
2. **Less Than Significant with Mitigation** - a significant impact that can be avoided or reduced to a less than significant level with mitigation;
3. **Less Than Significant** - a potential impact that would not meet or exceed the identified thresholds of significance for the resource area;
4. **No Impact** – no impact would occur for the resource area; and
5. **Beneficial** – a potential impact that would improve the resource area.

3.0.2 Mitigation Measures and Monitoring

Per CEQA Guidelines §15126.4, where potentially significant environmental impacts have been identified in the EIR, feasible mitigation measures that could avoid or minimize the severity of those impacts are also identified. The mitigation measures are identified for each resource analyzed in Sections 3.1 through 3.13.

Pursuant to CEQA, feasible mitigation measures must be implemented for all significant impacts. Feasible means “capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environment, legal, social, and technological factors.” (CEQA Guidelines §15364.) A lead agency must impose mitigation measures to reduce significant impacts ~~unless findings can be made it finds~~ that the mitigation measures are infeasible or within the exclusive jurisdiction of another agency (CEQA Guidelines §15091(a); City of Marina v. Board of Trustees of the California State University (2006) 39 Cal.4th 341.)

Mitigation measures may involve various means of implementation, such as:

- Measures incorporated directly into the adopted FVCSP as new or revised policies or development standards, or in implementing ordinances.
- Measures implemented in multi-year City operational programs, such as a capital improvements program or development impact fee program.
- Measures incorporated as standard departmental conditions of approval for individual development projects.

CEQA requires that implementation of adopted mitigation measures or any revisions made to the FVCSP by the Lead Agency to mitigate or avoid significant environmental effects be monitored for compliance. Accordingly, CEQA Guidelines §15097 requires that a public agency adopt a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) for those adopted mitigation measures and project revisions. With respect to approval of a program-level document, CEQA provides that “[w]here the project at issue is the adoption of a ...specific plan...the monitoring plan shall apply to policies and any other portion of the plan that is a mitigation measure or adopted alternative”. That is, the monitoring plan may consist of policies included in plan-level documents (CEQA Guidelines §15097(b)). A draft MMRP is provided in Appendix F of this EIR.

3.0.3 Cumulative Impacts Analyses

CEQA Guidelines §15130(a) states that an EIR shall “discuss the cumulative impacts of a project when the project’s incremental effect is cumulatively considerable”. “Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of an individual project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects (as defined by Section 15130). CEQA Guidelines §15355 defines cumulative impacts as “two or more individual effects that, when considered together, are considerable, or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.” The CEQA Guidelines allow for the use of two different methods to determine cumulative impacts:

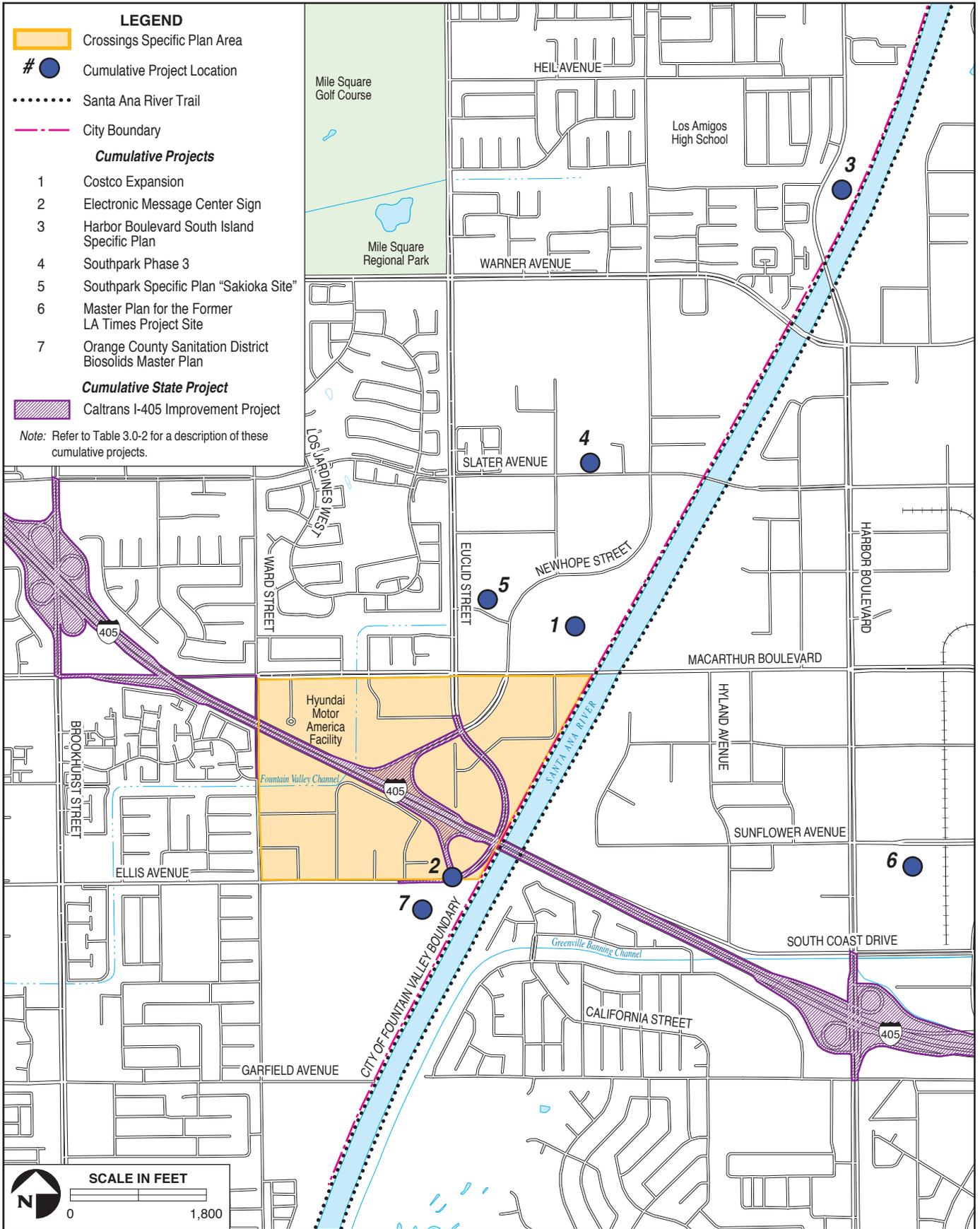
1. **General Plan Projection Method** - A summary of projections contained in an adopted General Plan or related planning document, or in a prior environmental document which has been adopted or certified, which described or evaluated regional or area-wide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact (CEQA Guidelines §15130).
2. **List Method** - A list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency (CEQA Guidelines §15130).

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b)(2) further states that the EIR should define the geographic scope of the area affected by the cumulative effects and provide a reasonable explanation for the geographic limitation used. The geographic scope for the analysis of cumulative impacts in this EIR varies by each environmental impact topic (e.g., air basin, jurisdiction, service area, viewshed, watershed, etc.). For most of the impact topics analyzed in this EIR, the geographic scope was determined to be limited to the City. However, impact topics such as air quality, greenhouse gases and climate change, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, population/housing, and transportation/traffic have a more regional geographic scope, as identified below in Table 3.0-1.

Table 3.0-1. Geographic Context for Cumulative Analysis of Environmental Issues

Environmental Topic Area	Geographic Contexts of Analysis
Aesthetics	City of Fountain Valley
Air Quality	South Coast Air Basin
Biological Resources	City of Fountain Valley
Cultural Resources	City of Fountain Valley
Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change	Global
Geology and Soils	City of Fountain Valley
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	City of Fountain Valley
Hydrology and Water Quality	City of Fountain Valley, County of Orange
Land Use and Planning	City of Fountain Valley, County of Orange, and Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) planning region
Noise	Fountain Valley Crossings Specific Plan Area and adjacent areas in the City of Fountain Valley
Population, Housing, and Employment	City of Fountain Valley, County of Orange, and SCAG planning region
Public Services (e.g., Fire, Police, Parks, Schools, Libraries)	City of Fountain Valley
Transportation and Circulation	City of Fountain Valley, County of Orange, and SCAG planning region
Utilities	City of Fountain Valley, County of Orange, service district of Rainbow Environmental Services, service district of Southern California Edison (SCE), and service district of Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas)
Tribal Cultural Resources	City of Fountain Valley, County of Orange

The Project is a legislative planning document that addresses potential land use changes in the Project area over roughly the next 20 years. In order to assess cumulative impacts, this EIR uses a combination of the two approaches described above that includes specific projects that are reasonably foreseeable, such as the Southpark Specific Plan-Sakioka Site (Sakioka Site), and the General Plan projection method that considers full build out of land uses as allowed under the City’s General Plan. Table 3.0-2 provides an updated citywide list of cumulative past, present, and probable future projects, including projects that have occurred recently or are anticipated to occur in the Project area. Figure 3.0-1 depicts the location of the cumulative projects relative to the Project area. Cumulative impacts for sections that address regional resources such as Air Quality, Greenhouse Gases, Population and Housing, Public Services, and Energy have been assessed in regards to General Plan build-out projections for the City. A list of planned, pending, and future projects is used to assess cumulative project impacts for all other resource areas (Table 3.0-2).



Cumulative Project Locations

FIGURE 3.0-1

Table 3.0-2. Cumulative and Concurrent Project List – September 2017

Project	Description	Location	Status
Costco Expansion	7,356 square feet (sf) building addition to the existing 152,000 sf Costco Wholesale warehouse in the Southpark Specific Plan area.	17900 Newhope Street	Pending
Electronic Message Center (EMC) Sign	Construction and operation of a new EMC commercial advertisement sign on the I-405.	10955 Ellis Avenue	Pending
Harbor Boulevard South Island Specific Plan	Specific Plan for a 6.5-acre area along Harbor Boulevard allowing a variety of Manufacturing Zone (M1) uses.	16790, 16800, 16830, and 16842 Harbor Boulevard	Pending
Southpark Specific Plan Phase 3	Construction of 38,619 sf and 130,035 sf concrete industrial buildings in the Southpark Specific Plan area for office, manufacturing, and warehouse use.	11438 Slater Avenue	Complete
<u>Southpark Specific Plan 'Sakioka Site' ¹</u>	<u>Buildout of an additional 1,017,000 sf for commercial, office, industrial, and warehouse use that is approved and vested at the approximately 35-acre undeveloped Southpark Specific Plan, known as the 'Sakioka Site'.</u>	<u>11049 Southpark Avenue</u>	<u>Development Agreement Recorded in 1989, amended in 2004; no applications for development permits currently pending</u>
I-405 Improvement Project	Widening of the I-405 as well as improvements to freeway entrances, exits, bridges, adjacent arterial roadways, and intersections.	I-405 from SR-73 to I-605.	Approved and anticipated for completion in 2022
<u>Master Plan for the Former LA Times Project Site</u>	<u>Reuse of the 339,063 sf building and surface parking lot and construction of 315,000 sf office space and 3 parking structures</u>	<u>1375 Sunflower Avenue, Costa Mesa</u>	<u>Pending</u>
<u>Orange County Sanitation District Biosolids Master Plan</u>	<u>Upgrades to and construction of new biosolids handling facilities to be implemented over a 20-year planning period, involving nine individual projects located within OCSD Plant No. 1 (City of Fountain Valley) and Plant No. 2 (City of Huntington Beach).</u>	<u>OCSD Treatment Plant No. 1 – 10844 Ellis Avenue, Fountain Valley OCSD Treatment Plant No. 2 – 22212 Brookhurst Street, Huntington Beach</u>	<u>Pending</u>

Notes: A 'pending' or reasonably foreseeable project can include either a pre-application or a formal application for development which has been submitted to a public agency for review.

3.0.4 Southpark Specific Plan, Sakioka Site

In addition to analysis of cumulative pending or approved projects, the cumulative impacts analysis includes the planned maximum buildout of the Southpark Specific Plan, which was adopted by the City in 1987, and includes the “Sakioka Site”. As agreed upon by the City and Sakioka Farms in a 1989 Development Agreement, the City is required to consider development of the Sakioka Site to be fully developed and built out at the maximum density permitted by the Southpark Development Plan. While no permit applications for development of this site have been submitted to the City, potential buildout allowed under the Southpark Specific Plan is estimated to be 1,017,000 square feet of commercial, office, industrial, and warehouse use, as acknowledged by the 1988 Sakioka Development Agreement with the City and originally recorded in 1989, with an amendment in 2004.

3.0.5 **Concurrent Projects**

The concurrent projects list was obtained from the City Planning & Building Department in June 2016, and was updated in 2017 to include additional projects as appropriate, and as required under CEQA Section 15130(b), and includes those projects that are ~~reflects projects that are either currently pending or probable, or are funded and approved, under construction or recently completed.~~ The list of cumulative projects was developed with the inclusion of relevant projects within the City of Fountain Valley as well as adjacent jurisdictions including the Cities of Costa Mesa, Garden Grove, Huntington Beach, Santa Ana, and Westminster. Only projects that would have the potential to contribute to cumulative impacts in the vicinity of the Fountain Valley Specific Plan have been included in Table 3.0-2. Of the ~~five~~ projects listed within Table 3.0-2, one project (the Interstate 405 [I-405] Improvement Project, described below) directly affects land within the Project Area and could be constructed concurrently with improvements recommended within the FVCSP. Pursuant to CEQA Section 15130(a)(b), discussion of cumulative impacts reflects the proposed Project’s contribution to cumulative impacts, the severity of the impacts, ~~and~~ their likelihood of occurrence, and identifies whether the Project’s contribution would be “cumulatively considerable”. Consistent with the requirements of CEQA Section 15130(a)(b), discussion of cumulative impacts is not as detailed as that provided for effects attributable to the Project alone. While development of the proposed Project concurrently with the I-405 Improvement Project would potentially create the widest range of cumulative impacts be most prevalent within the Project Area, all projects identified within Table 3.0-2 are addressed within individual resource area analyses of this EIR.

3.0.5.1 **Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA)/California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) I-405 Improvement Project**

OCTA and Caltrans are currently undertaking a large-scale improvement project for the widening of the San Diego Freeway (I-405) between State Route 73 (SR-73) and Interstate 605 (I-605). The OCTA/Caltrans I-405 Improvement Project (I-405 Improvement Project) proposes to improve the mainline freeway and interchanges by adding one general purpose (GP) lane in each direction from Euclid Street to the I-605 interchange, plus adding a tolled Express Lane in each direction of I-405 from SR-73 to SR-22 East. The tolled Express Lane and the existing

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high-occupancy vehicle lane would be managed jointly by OCTA and Caltrans as a tolled Express Facility with two lanes in each direction from SR-73 to I-605. Under the OCTA/Caltrans I-405 Improvement Project (~~I-405 Improvement Project~~), additional improvements would be made to existing freeway entrances, exits, bridges, and street networks within the Project Area (Figure 3.0-2). As described in the FVCSP, key elements of the I-405 Improvement Project within and affecting the Project Area will include:

- Widening and improvements of the freeway and on- and off-ramps;
- A new elevated onramp (“flyover”), which would extend over the Santa Ana River, connecting eastbound Ellis Avenue directly to southbound I-405. The flyover would provide high-capacity free-right turn movements, relieving congestion present with the existing signalized left-turn configuration; and would include removal of existing two left-turn lanes on Ellis Avenue;¹
- Restructuring of the current Ellis Avenue/Euclid Street/southbound I-405 ramp intersection and incorporation of an additional pedestrian crosswalk across Euclid Street;
- Improvements to the current Newhope Street/Euclid Street/northbound I-405 ramp intersection;
- Reconstruction and widening of the current Ward Street Bridge over I-405 from 2 vehicle lanes to 4 vehicles lanes (existing bike lanes will be retained);
- Construction of a continuous sidewalk to the east side of the Ward Street Bridge to address current missing segments;
- Reconfiguration of the existing Ward Street/Antelope River Avenue intersection to include a pedestrian crosswalk across Ward Street; and
- Improvements to the current Talbert Avenue/Ward Street intersection.

A Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (FEIR/EIS) for the I-405 Improvement Project was completed in March 2015. Caltrans plans for implementation of the Design and Build Project in the 2017-2022 timeframe. As such, the I-405 Improvement Project is expected to occur concurrently with implementation of this Project. Streetscape and circulation improvements proposed under the Project and described in Section 2.4.2, *Circulation and Mobility*, would occur separately from the projects proposed under the I-405 Improvement Project. Impacts resulting from implementation of the OCTA/Caltrans I-405 Improvement Project are cumulatively assessed with impacts of the FVCSP Project.

¹ Following release of the Partial Recirculated Draft EIR for public review in October 2017, Caltrans and OCTA have chosen to proceed with alternative design improvements to the Ellis Avenue/Euclid Street & Southbound I-405 Ramps (Intersection #19) than what had been identified, planned, funded, and approved under the Caltrans I-405 Improvement Project. A revised analysis of Project effects on these modified improvements has been prepared and provided in an Addendum to the Draft Recirculated EIR TIA (December 2017) included in Appendix C of this EIR. Detailed discussion of the revised improvements and effects on Project traffic conditions are provided in Section 8.0, *Response to Comments*. Figure 3.0-2 has been updated to reflect the most recently proposed improvements to this intersection.

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