

3 EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING, IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION

Chapter 3 of this volume (Volume 2) of the draft environmental impact report (EIR) evaluates the potential environmental impacts associated with development of new student housing adjacent to the existing West Village development. This chapter is divided by environmental resource category; each resource category is organized to provide an integrated discussion of the existing environmental conditions (including regulatory setting and environmental setting), potential environmental effects (including direct and indirect impacts as needed), and measures to reduce significant effects, where feasible, associated with the construction and operation of the West Village Expansion component of the 2018 LRDP.

The potential cumulative and growth-inducing impacts of the West Village Expansion component are part of and within the scope of analysis of the 2018 LRDP provided in Volume 1. This analysis is provided in Chapters 4, “Cumulative Impacts,” and 5, “Other CEQA Sections,” of Volume 1, respectively.

3.0.1 Introduction to the Analysis

As required by CEQA (State CEQA Guidelines (CCR Section 15126.2)), this Draft EIR identifies and focuses on the significant direct and indirect environmental effects of the West Village Expansion component. Short-term effects are generally those associated with construction, and long-term effects are generally those associated with operation of the West Village Expansion component. This chapter addresses the environmental setting, environmental impacts and mitigation measures associated with the West Village Expansion component in relation to the following resource topics:

- ▲ Section 3.1, Aesthetics
- ▲ Section 3.2, Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- ▲ Section 3.3, Air Quality
- ▲ Section 3.4, Archaeological, Historical, and Tribal Cultural Resources
- ▲ Section 3.5, Biological Resources
- ▲ Section 3.6, Energy
- ▲ Section 3.7, Geology, Soils, and Seismicity
- ▲ Section 3.8, Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change
- ▲ Section 3.9, Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- ▲ Section 3.10, Hydrology and Water Quality
- ▲ Section 3.11, Land Use and Planning
- ▲ Section 3.12, Noise
- ▲ Section 3.13, Population and Housing
- ▲ Section 3.14, Public Services
- ▲ Section 3.15, Recreation
- ▲ Section 3.16, Transportation, Circulation, and Parking
- ▲ Section 3.17, Utilities and Service Systems

Sections 3.1 through 3.17 follow the same general format:

Regulatory Setting presents the laws, regulations, plans, and policies that are relevant to each issue area and that were not previously discussed as part of the analysis of the 2018 LRDP in Volume 1. As noted in Section 3.0.2, “University of California Autonomy” of Volume 1, UC Davis, a constitutionally created State entity, is not subject to municipal regulations of surrounding local governments for uses on property owned or controlled by UC Davis that are in furtherance of the university’s education purposes. However, UC Davis may consider, for coordination purposes, aspects of local plans and policies for the communities surrounding the campus when it is appropriate and feasible, but it is not bound by those plans and policies in its planning efforts.

Environmental Setting presents the existing environmental conditions on the West Village Expansion site, the remote parking area, and surrounding area as appropriate, in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines (CCR Section 15125). The extent of the environmental setting area evaluated (the project study area) differs among resources, depending on the locations where impacts would be expected. For example, air quality impacts are assessed for the air basin (macroscale) as well as the project vicinity (microscale), whereas aesthetic impacts are assessed for the project vicinity only.

Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures identifies the thresholds of significance used to determine the level of significance of the environmental impacts for each resource topic, in accordance with the State CEQA Guidelines (CCR Sections 15126, 15126.2, and 15143). The thresholds of significance used in this Draft EIR are based on the checklist presented in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines; best available data; and regulatory standards of federal, state, and local agencies. The level of each impact is determined by comparing the effects of the West Village Expansion component to the environmental setting. Key methods and assumptions used to frame and conduct the impact analysis as well as issues or potential impacts not discussed further (such issues for which implementation of the West Village Expansion component would have no impact) are also described.

The Draft EIR must describe any feasible measures that could avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce, or compensate for significant adverse impacts, and the measures are to be fully enforceable through incorporation into the West Village Expansion component (Public Resources Code Section 21081.6[b]). Mitigation measures are not required for effects that are found to be less than significant. Relevant mitigation from the programmatic analysis of the 2018 LRDP provided in Volume 1 is applied as appropriate. Each identified mitigation measure is labeled numerically to correspond with the number of the impact that would be mitigated by the measure and includes “WVE” to identify the mitigation measure as related to “West Village Expansion.” The level of significance after application of proposed mitigation is described.

3.0.2 Terminology Used In the EIR

This Draft EIR uses the following terminology to describe environmental effects of the West Village Expansion component:

Less-than-Significant Impact: A project impact is considered less than significant when it does not exceed the threshold of significance and; therefore, would not cause a substantial change in the environment (no mitigation required).

Potentially Significant Impact: A potentially significant impact is an environmental effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the environment; however, additional information is needed regarding the extent of the impact to make the determination of significance. For CEQA purposes, a potentially significant impact is treated as if it were a significant impact.

Significant Impact: A project impact is considered significant if it results in a substantial adverse change in the physical conditions of the environment. Significant impacts are identified by the evaluation of project effects in the context of specified significance criteria. Mitigation measures and/or project alternatives are identified to reduce these effects to the environment where feasible.

Significant and Unavoidable Impact: A project impact is considered significant and unavoidable if it would result in a substantial adverse change in the environment that cannot be feasibly avoided or mitigated to a less-than-significant level if the project is implemented. If a lead agency proposes to approve a project with significant unavoidable impacts, it must adopt a statement of overriding considerations to explain its actions (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15093(b)).

Mitigation Measures: The CEQA Guidelines (CCR Section 15370) define mitigation as:

- a) avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action;
- b) minimizing impacts by limiting the degree of magnitude of the action and its implementation;
- c) rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment;
- d) reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action; and
- e) compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

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