

4. Environmental Evaluation

4.1 CHAPTER ORGANIZATION

This chapter of the Draft EIR is made up of nine sub-chapters, which evaluate the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts of the proposed project. The following sections describe the format of the environmental analysis, the thresholds of significance, and the methodology of the cumulative impact analysis.

4.2 FORMAT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Each sub-chapter is organized into the following sections:

- **Environmental Setting** provides a description of the existing environmental conditions, providing a baseline against which the impacts of the proposed project can be compared, and an overview of federal, State, regional, and local laws and regulations relevant to each environmental issue.
- **Thresholds of Significance** refer to the quantitative or qualitative standards, performance levels, or criteria used to compare the existing setting with and without the proposed project to determine whether the impact is significant. These thresholds are based primarily on the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, Environmental Checklist, and also may reflect established health standards, ecological tolerance standards, public service capacity standards, or guidelines established by agencies or experts.
- **Impact Discussion** gives an overview of the potential impacts of the proposed project and explains why impacts were found to be significant or less than significant prior to mitigation. This subsection also includes a discussion of cumulative impacts of the proposed project. Impacts and mitigation measures are numbered consecutively within each topical analysis and begin with an acronymic or abbreviated reference to the impact section. The environmental effects of the proposed project are analyzed for potential significant impacts in the following environmental issue areas, which are organized with the listed abbreviations:
 - Air Quality (AQ)
 - Biological Resources (BIO)
 - Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources (CULT)
 - Geology and Soils (GEO)
 - Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG)
 - Hazards and Hazardous Materials (HAZ)
 - Noise (NOISE)
 - Transportation (TRANS)
 - Utilities and Service Systems (UTIL)

ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

4.3 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

All documents cited or referenced are incorporated into the Draft EIR in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15148 and 15150, including but not limited to the City of Cupertino General Plan (Community Vision 2015-2040).¹ In each instance where a document is incorporated by reference for purposes of this report, the Draft EIR will briefly summarize the incorporated document or briefly summarize the incorporated data if the document cannot be summarized. In addition, the Draft EIR will explain the relationship between the incorporated part of the referenced document and the Draft EIR.

This Draft EIR also relies on previously adopted regional and statewide plans and programs, agency standards, and background studies in its analyses, such as the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's (BAAQMD) air quality management plan. Subchapters 4.1 to 4.9 of Chapter 4 of this Draft EIR include references to all documents utilized in preparing this Draft EIR. All of the documents that are not published that are incorporated by reference are available for review at the City of Cupertino Community Development Department at 10300 Torre Avenue, Cupertino, California 95014.

4.4 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

As stated above, the significance criteria are identified before the impact discussion subsection, under the subsection, "Thresholds of Significance." For each impact identified, a level of significance is determined using the following classifications:

- *Significant (S)* impacts include a description of the circumstances in which an established or defined threshold would be exceeded.
- *Less-than-significant (LTS)* impacts include effects that are noticeable, but do not exceed established or defined thresholds, or are mitigated below such thresholds.
- *No impact* describes the reasons that the project would have no adverse effect on the environment.

For each impact identified as being significant, the EIR identifies mitigation measures to reduce, eliminate, or avoid the adverse effect. If the mitigation measures would reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level successfully, this is stated in the EIR. However, significant and unavoidable (SU) impacts are described where mitigation measures would not diminish these effects to less-than-significant levels.

¹ City of Cupertino, certified General Plan Amendment, Housing Element Update, and Associated Rezoning EIR, (December 2014) and approved General Plan Amendment, Housing Element Update, and Associated Rezoning EIR Final Addendum, State Clearinghouse Number 2014032007 (October 2015).

ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

4.5 CUMULATIVE IMPACT ANALYSIS

A cumulative impact consists of an impact created as a result of the combination of the proposed project evaluated in the EIR, together with other reasonably foreseeable projects causing related impacts. Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines requires an EIR to discuss cumulative impacts of a project when the project's incremental effect is "cumulatively considerable." As defined in Section 15065(a)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines, 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.

When the combined cumulative impact caused by the project's incremental effect and the effects of other projects is not significant (i.e., not cumulatively considerable), the EIR must briefly indicate why the cumulative impact is not significant.

The cumulative impacts discussions in sub-chapters 4.1 through 4.9 explain the geographic scope of the area affected by each cumulative effect (e.g., immediate project vicinity, city, county, watershed, or air basin). The geographic area considered for each cumulative impact depends upon the impact that is being analyzed. For example, in assessing noise-related impacts, the pertinent geographic study area is the vicinity of the area of proposed new development within which the new development can be heard and may contribute to a significant cumulative noise impact. In assessing macro-scale air quality impacts, on the other hand, all development within the air basin contributes to regional emissions of criteria pollutants, and basin-wide projections of emissions is the best tool for determining the cumulative effect.

The CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 provides for two approaches to analyzing cumulative impacts. The first is the "list of projects" approach, which is based on a list of past, present and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts. The second is the "summary of projections" approach, which is based on a summary of projections contained in an adopted local, regional or statewide plan or related planning document that describes or evaluates conditions contributing to the cumulative effect. A reasonable combination of the two approaches may also be used.

The cumulative impact analysis in this Draft EIR relies on a projections approach supplemented by the list of projects approach that, when considered with the effects of the proposed project, may result in cumulative effects.

Table 4-1 shows the other reasonably foreseeable projects in Cupertino and how they relate to the maximum buildout potential evaluated in the General Plan EIR.

ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

TABLE 4-1 REASONABLY FORESEEABLE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN CUPERTINO

	Hotel	Residential	Commercial	Office
General Plan EIR: Maximum Development Potential	1,339	4,421	1,343,679	4,040,231
<i>Reasonably Foreseeable Projects</i>				
<i>Foothill Apartments^a</i>		15		
<i>Marina Plaza^a</i>	122	188	23,000	
<i>The Hamptons Redevelopment^a</i>		600		
<i>The Forum^a</i>		23		
<i>De Anza Hotel^b</i>	156			
<i>The Village Hotel^b</i>	185			
<i>Public Storage^{a, d}</i>			209,485	
<i>Loc-N-Stor^{b, d}</i>			96,432	
<i>Canyon Crossings^b</i>		18	4,536	
<i>Vallco^{a, c}</i>		2,402	400,000	1,810,000
Total Foreseeable Development	463	3,219	748,917	1,810,000
General Plan EIR: Remaining Development Potential	876	1,202	594,762	2,230,231

Notes:

a. The project has been approved.

b. The project is under review.

c. The buildout numbers are for the Vallco SB 35 Application (0 hotel rooms, 2,402 units, 1,810,000 square feet commercial, and 400,000 square feet commercial).

d. The storage facility sites currently have existing storage facilities and the square footage shown in this table is the net new.

Source: City of Cupertino, 2019.

The General Plan EIR evaluated the cumulative effects of the General Plan Amendments, Housing Element Update, and Associated Rezoning using the summary of projections approach provided for in CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b)(1)(B). The General Plan EIR took into account growth from the General Plan within the Cupertino city boundary and Sphere of Influence (SOI), in combination with projected growth in the rest of Santa Clara County and the surrounding region, as forecast by ABAG. As shown in Table 4-1, the proposed project when combined with the other reasonably foreseeable projects in Cupertino, would not exceed the maximum buildout potential evaluated in the General Plan EIR.

With respect to projections, this EIR relies on the estimated growth in the San José/Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant (SJ/SCWPCP) service area for the analysis of cumulative impacts to water supply and wastewater generation and treatment capacity.