

9. Significant Irreversible Changes Due to the Proposed Project

Section 15126.2(c) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) describe any significant irreversible environmental changes that would be caused by the proposed Project should it be implemented. Specifically, the CEQA Guidelines state:

Uses of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project may be irreversible since a large commitment of such resources makes removal or nonuse thereafter unlikely. Primary impacts and, particularly, secondary impacts (such as highways improvement which provides access to a previously inaccessible area) generally commit future generations to similar uses. Also, irreversible damage can result from environmental accidents associated with the project. Irretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified.

In the case of the proposed Southeast Area Specific Plan, its implementation would involve a land use, development, and implementation framework to support an additional 5,439 residential units, 573,576 square feet of commercial and employment uses, and 50 hotel rooms. Significant irreversible changes that would be caused by the proposed Project if it is implemented would be:

- Construction activities that would entail the commitment of nonrenewable and/or slowly renewable energy resources; human resources; and natural resources such as lumber and other forest products, sand and gravel, asphalt, steel, copper, lead, other metals, water, and fossil fuels. Operation that would require the use of natural gas and electricity, petroleum-based fuels, fossil fuels, and water. The commitment of resources required for the construction and operation of the proposed Project would limit the availability of such resources for future generations or for other uses during the life of the project.
- An increased commitment of social services and public maintenance services (e.g., police, fire, schools, libraries, and sewer and water services) would also be required. The energy and social service commitments would be long-term obligations in view of the low likelihood of returning the land to its original condition once it has been developed.
- Population and employment growth related to project implementation would increase vehicle trips over the long term. Emissions associated with such vehicle trips would continue to contribute to the South Coast Air Basin's nonattainment designation for ozone and particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}), nonattainment for lead (Los Angeles County only) under the California

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and National Ambient Air Quality Standards (AAQS), and nonattainment for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) under the California AAQS.

- Long-term irreversible commitment of vacant parcels of land or redevelopment of existing developed land in the City of Long Beach.
- Given the low likelihood that the land would revert to lower intensity uses or to its current form, the proposed Project would generally commit future generations to these environmental changes.

The Southeast Area Specific Plan is based on priorities and guiding principles that cumulatively represent the community's vision for the future. Planning based on these principles will lead to a number of long-term benefits and are enumerated below.

Priorities

- **Traffic.** Improve vehicular traffic flow and balance new development with roadway capacity.
- **Wetlands Enhancement.** Improve accessibility and pursue opportunities to restore wetland viability.
- **View Preservation.** Preserve views of the hills and mountains and maintain the scenic environment through control of building placement and/or height.
- **Bike and Pedestrian Transportation Options.** Improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity by creating an active streetscape that promotes safe walking and cycling.
- **Gateway to Long Beach.** Use signage, landscaping, or the design of new development to clearly delineate the entrances to Long Beach and the SEASP area from Orange County and/or State Route 22.
- **Public Access to Open Space.** Improve public access to the marina, waterways, wetlands, and parks.
- **Building Form/Architectural Design.** Develop guidelines to guide the character and quality of development while creating a sense of place in southeast Long Beach.
- **Consolidate or Relocate Oil Operations.** Consolidate or relocate oil operations where possible to facilitate wetlands restoration and minimize visual impacts.
- **Retail and Hotel Development.** Encourage upscale shopping and dining as well as hospitality options such as a boutique hotel to the area.

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- **Greater Mix of Land Uses.** Create a land plan that encourages a greater mix of uses and appeals to a diverse population

Guiding Principles

- Implement projects within the Specific Plan area that give equal consideration to planning, environmental and economic feasibility.
- Balance responsible growth with resource preservation through a flexible land use plan that provides a greater mix of uses and through an implementation strategy that is tailored to the local economy.
- Provide clear standards and guidelines to encourage future development that respects the wetlands, protects views, and creates a sense of place through thoughtful building placement, form and architectural design.
- Expand multi-modal transportation options through enhanced pedestrian and bicycle connectivity without compromising vehicular traffic flow.
- Provide options to increase public connectivity to open space, including the marina, other waterways, the wetlands, and parks.
- Identify and plan for enhanced gateway and landmark locations that define the entrance to the City and contribute to a sense of place for the area.

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