

IMPACTS DISCUSSION

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The determination of whether a project may have a significant effect on the environment is a critical step in the CEQA process. Consistent with *CEQA Statutes Section 21083* (Significance Guidelines) and *CEQA Guidelines Section 15065* (Mandatory Findings of Significance), significance levels as provided in the checklist are generally defined as follows:

- *Potentially Significant Impact* applies where there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. The CEQA Guidelines define “significant effect” as “...a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic and aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment. A social or economic change related to a physical change may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant” (CEQA Guidelines, 15382).
- *Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated* applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from “Potentially Significant Impact” to a “Less Than Significant Impact.” The EIR must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less-than-significant level.
- *Less Than Significant Impact* applies where the project creates no significant impacts, only less than significant impacts.
- *No Impact* applies where a project does not create an impact in that category. “No Impact” answers need to be adequately supported by information which shows that the impact simply does not apply to project.