

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

This section contains a discussion of the possible environmental effects of the proposed Scotts Valley Town Center Specific Plan for the specific issue areas that were identified through the Initial Study process as having the potential to experience significant impacts.

“Significant effect” is defined by the *State CEQA Guidelines* §15382 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 or aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment, but may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant.”

The assessment of each issue area begins with an italicized introduction that summarizes the environmental effects considered for that issue area. This is followed by the setting and impact analysis. Within the impact analysis, the first subsection identifies the methodologies used and the “significance thresholds,” which are those criteria adopted by the City, other agencies, universally recognized, or developed specifically for this analysis to determine whether potential effects are significant. The next subsection describes each impact of the proposed project, mitigation measures for significant impacts, and the level of significance after mitigation. Each effect under consideration for an issue area is separately listed in bold text, with the discussion of the effect and its significance following. Each bolded impact listing also contains a statement of the significance determination for the environmental impact as follows:

Class I. Significant and Unavoidable: *An impact that cannot be reduced to below the threshold level given reasonably available and feasible mitigation measures. Such an impact requires a Statement of Overriding Considerations to be issued if the project is approved per §15093 of the State CEQA Guidelines.*

Class II. Significant but Mitigable: *An impact that can be reduced to below the threshold level given reasonably available and feasible mitigation measures. Such an impact requires findings to be made under §15091 of the State CEQA Guidelines.*

Class III. Not Significant: *An impact that may be adverse, but does not exceed the threshold levels and does not require mitigation measures. However, mitigation measures that could further lessen the environmental effect may be suggested if readily available and easily achievable.*

Class IV. Beneficial: *An effect that would reduce existing environmental problems or hazards.*

Following each environmental effect discussion is a listing of recommended mitigation measures (if required) and the residual effects or level of significance remaining after the implementation of the measures. In those cases where the mitigation measure for an impact could have a significant environmental impact in another issue area, this impact is discussed as a residual effect. The impact analysis concludes with a discussion of cumulative effects, which evaluates the impacts associated with the proposed project in conjunction with other future development in the area.



If an impact is identified as remaining significant even with proposed mitigation measures, a Statement of Overriding Considerations would need to be issued if the project is approved, per Section 15093 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*. The impact analysis concludes with a discussion of cumulative effects, which evaluates the impacts associated with the proposed Specific Plan in conjunction with other future development in the area.

This is a Program EIR, which describes a series of future actions related to development within the proposed Specific Plan area, the timing of which are not yet known, and somewhat speculative. Thus, for each issue area, the EIR will then describe the conditions under which future projects that may be considered under the proposed Specific Plan would need to undergo subsequent environmental review, if any.

Please refer to the Executive Summary for this EIR, which clearly summarizes all impacts and mitigation measures that apply to the proposed Specific Plan.

