

SECTION 4.0

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section describes the environmental consequences that would result from the development of the project alternatives. The analysis presented in this section has been prepared in accordance with Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations 40 CFR Section 1502.16 and Section 15125 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) *Guidelines*. The direct and indirect environmental impacts of each alternative are provided under the resource headings described in **Section 3.0**, and listed below. This section also provides analysis of cumulative, indirect, growth-inducing, and unavoidable adverse impacts. Consistent with the CEQ's NEPA Regulations Section 1508.8, the term "effects" is used synonymously with the term "impacts" (40 CFR 1508.8).

Section	Resource Area/Issue
4.2	Geology and Soils
4.3	Hydrology and Water Quality
4.4	Air Quality
4.5	Biological Resources
4.6	Cultural Resources
4.7	Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice
4.8	Transportation/Circulation
4.9	Land Use and Planning
4.10	Utilities and Public Services
4.11	Noise
4.12	Hazardous Materials
4.13	Aesthetics
4.14	Indirect and Growth-Inducing Impacts
4.15	Cumulative Impacts

4.1.1 DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

Significance criteria have been established which serve as the benchmark for determining impacts. Significance criteria are identified for each environmental category to determine if the project alternatives will result in a significant environmental impact when evaluated against the affected environment (**Section 3.0**). The significance criteria vary depending on the environmental category. In general, impacts can be either significant (above threshold) or less than significant (below threshold). Impacts found to be significant may be reduced to less than significant levels with the identification of feasible mitigation measures.

Significance criteria are more precisely defined in standard practices, environmental compliance criteria, or in the statutes and ordinances of the jurisdictional entities. Thus, the City of Richmond's determination of significance of impacts is accomplished with the assistance of governmental entities that have jurisdiction or special expertise for each resource. While some other entities or consultants may also possess special expertise for assessing impacts to key resources, the lead agency is particularly interested in the unique aspects of special expertise offered by the governmental entities in the locality of the occurrence of impacts. Note that the significance of impacts is determined in this EIS/EIR as an attempt to be as informative as possible to the public on the magnitude of potential impacts. Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines* and the City of Richmond's *Guidelines and Procedures for the Implementation of CEQA* (Resolution No. 125-03, adopted September 23, 2003) were used to guide the evaluation of project-related impacts. Specific significance thresholds are defined in the relevant technical sections of the EIS/EIR (**Sections 4.2** through **4.15**).

4.1.2 SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

CEQA Guidelines Section 21100(b)(2) requires that any significant and unavoidable impact on the environment be identified. In addition, Section 15093(a) of the *CEQA Guidelines* allows the decision-making agency to determine if the benefits of a proposed project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental impacts of implementing the project. The City of Richmond can approve a project with unavoidable adverse impacts if it prepares a "Statement of Overriding Considerations" setting forth the specific reasons for making such a judgment.

As demonstrated in **Section 4.0** of this EIS/EIR, Alternatives A through D would each result in two significant and unavoidable adverse impacts to the environment related to cultural resources, while Alternative F would result in one such impact. These impacts are related to the demolition of a contributing element of the Winehaven National Register Historic District (Alternatives A – D), introduction of incompatible new construction in the District (Alternatives A – D), and continuing neglect and deterioration of buildings in the District (Alternative F).

Alternatives A, B, and C would each result in one significant and unavoidable impact related to socioeconomic conditions. Specifically, development of Alternatives A, B, and C would cause a portion of revenues to be diverted from existing tribal casinos.

In the cumulative year (2025), Alternatives A through D would each result in significant and unavoidable traffic-related impacts at roadway intersections, roadway segments, and the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge toll plaza. While mitigation is proposed in **Section 5.0** for these impacts that would reduce them to less than significant levels, the full suite of required improvements are considered infeasible at this time due to lack of funding and/or because the improvements fall within the responsibility and jurisdiction of a public agency other than the City of Richmond for which there is no existing plan to implement or fund.

Alternative E would result in a significant and unavoidable traffic-related impact at the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge toll plaza in the cumulative year (2025).

Alternative F, the No Action Alternative, would result in two significant and unavoidable impacts related to the aesthetic character of the project site. As a result of neglect and deterioration of the historic buildings located on-site, Alternative F would lead to degradation of the existing visual character of the site and impact a scenic vista.

Based on the identification of the aforementioned impacts to cultural resources, transportation, socioeconomic conditions, and aesthetics, for which no reasonable mitigation is currently feasible (or for which the City of Richmond cannot assure implementation), a Statement of Overriding Considerations for the significant unavoidable impacts associated with the proposed development alternatives is necessary.