

4 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

4.1 APPROACH TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

This draft environmental impact report (DEIR) evaluates and discloses the environmental impacts associated with the 1215 O Street Office Building Project, in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21000, et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulation, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 1500, et seq.). Sections 4.2 through 4.15 of this DEIR present a discussion of regulatory background, existing conditions, environmental impacts associated with construction and operation of the project, mitigation measures to reduce the level of impact, and residual level of significance (i.e., after application of mitigation, including impacts that would remain significant and unavoidable after application of all feasible mitigation measures). Issues evaluated in these sections consist of the environmental topics identified for review in the Notice of Preparation (NOP) prepared for the project (see Appendix A of this DEIR). Chapter 5 of this DEIR, “Cumulative Impacts,” presents an analysis of the project’s impacts considered together with other past, present, and probable future projects producing related impacts, as required by Section 15130 of the State CEQA Guidelines. Chapter 6, “Other CEQA-Mandated Sections” includes an analysis of the project’s growth inducing impacts, as required by Section 21100(b)(5) of CEQA. Chapter 7, “Project Alternatives,” presents a reasonable range of alternatives and evaluates the environmental effects of those alternatives relative to the proposed project, as required by Section 15126.6 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

Sections 4.2 through 4.15 of this DEIR each include the following components.

Regulatory Background: This subsection presents information on the laws, regulations, plans, and policies that relate to the issue area being discussed. Regulations originating from the federal, State, and local levels are each discussed as appropriate.

Existing Conditions: This subsection presents the existing environmental conditions on the project site and in the surrounding area as appropriate, in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15125. The discussions of the environmental setting focus on information relevant to the issue under evaluation. The extent of the environmental setting area evaluated (the project study area) differs among resources, depending on the locations where impacts would be expected. For example, traffic impacts resulting from the proposed project are assessed for the regional roadway network, whereas cultural-resource impacts from the proposed project are assessed for the project site only.

Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures: This subsection presents thresholds of significance and discusses potentially significant effects of the 1215 O Street Office Building Project on the existing environment, including the environment beyond the project boundaries, in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2. The methodology for impact analysis is described, including technical studies upon which the analyses rely. The thresholds of significance are defined and thresholds for which the project would have no impact are disclosed and dismissed from further evaluation. Project impacts and mitigation measures are numbered sequentially in each subsection (Impact 4.2-1, Impact 4.2-2, Impact 4.2-3, etc.). A summary impact statement precedes a more detailed discussion of the environmental impact. The discussion includes the analysis, rationale, and substantial evidence upon which conclusions are drawn. The determination of level of significance of the impact is defined in bold text. A “less-than-significant” impact is one that would not result in a substantial adverse change in the physical environment. A “potentially significant” impact or “significant” impact is one that would result in a substantial adverse change in the physical environment; both are treated the same under CEQA in terms of procedural requirements and the need to identify feasible mitigation. Mitigation measures are identified, as feasible, to avoid, minimize,

rectify, reduce, or compensate for significant or potentially significant impacts, in accordance with the State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4. Unless otherwise noted, the mitigation measures presented are recommended in the EIR for consideration by the State to adopt as conditions of approval.

Where an existing law, regulation, or permit specifies mandatory and prescriptive actions about how to fulfill the regulatory requirement as part of the project definition, leaving little discretion in its implementation, and would avoid an impact or maintain it at a less-than-significant level, the environmental protection afforded by the regulation is considered before determining impact significance. Where existing laws or regulations specify a mandatory permit process for future projects, performance standards without prescriptive actions to accomplish them, or other requirements that allow substantial discretion in how they are accomplished, or have a substantial compensatory component, the level of significance is determined before applying the influence of the regulatory requirements. In this circumstance, the impact would be potentially significant or significant, and the regulatory requirements would be included as a mitigation measure.

This subsection also describes whether mitigation measures would reduce project impacts to less-than-significant levels. Significant-and-unavoidable impacts are identified as appropriate in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(b). Significant-and-unavoidable impacts are also summarized in Chapter 6, "Other CEQA-Mandated Sections."

References: The full references associated with the parenthetical references found throughout Sections 4.2 through 4.15 can be found in Chapter 9, "References," organized by section number.