

# 3 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING, IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

This chapter of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) evaluates the potential environmental impacts associated with implementation of the 2021 Long Range Development Plan (2021 LRDP) by the University of California, Santa Cruz (UC Santa Cruz). It is divided into sections addressing different environmental resource topics. Each section is organized to provide an integrated discussion of the existing environmental conditions (both regulatory setting and environmental setting); potential environmental effects (direct and indirect impacts as needed); and measures to reduce the significant effects, where feasible, of construction and operation in the plan area.

Cumulative and growth-inducing impacts are discussed in Chapter 4, "Cumulative Impacts," and Chapter 5, "Other CEQA Sections," respectively.

## 3.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE ANALYSIS

As required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (State CEQA Guidelines) (California Code of Regulations (CCR) Section 15126.2), this Draft EIR identifies and focuses on the significant direct and indirect physical environmental effects of the project. It evaluates both short-term and long-term effects. Short-term effects are generally those associated with construction, and long-term effects are generally those associated with operation of the project. The following resource topics are addressed in this chapter; no environmental issues were scoped out of this EIR:

- ▶ Section 3.1, Aesthetics
- ▶ Section 3.2, Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- ▶ Section 3.3, Air Quality
- ▶ Section 3.4, Archaeological, Historical, and Tribal Cultural Resources
- ▶ Section 3.5, Biological Resources
- ▶ Section 3.6, Energy
- ▶ Section 3.7, Geology and Soils
- ▶ Section 3.8, Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change
- ▶ Section 3.9, Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- ▶ Section 3.10, Hydrology and Water Quality
- ▶ Section 3.11, Land Use and Planning
- ▶ Section 3.12, Noise
- ▶ Section 3.13, Population and Housing
- ▶ Section 3.14, Public Services
- ▶ Section 3.15, Recreation
- ▶ Section 3.16, Transportation
- ▶ Section 3.17, Utilities and Service Systems
- ▶ Section 3.18, Wildfire

Sections 3.1 through 3.18 follow the same general format:

- ▶ The **“Regulatory Setting”** section presents the laws, regulations, plans, and policies that are relevant to the issue area. Regulations originating from the federal, State, University of California (UC), and local levels are each discussed where applicable. Please see the discussion in Section 3.0.2, below, regarding UC autonomy with respect to land use policies and municipal regulations.
- ▶ The **“Environmental Setting”** section presents the existing environmental conditions within the LRDP area and in the surrounding area as appropriate, in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15125. The geographic extent of the environmental setting area evaluated (the LRDP area or plan area) differs among resources, depending on the locations where impacts would be expected. For example, air quality impacts are assessed for the air basin (macroscale), as well as the site vicinity (microscale), whereas aesthetic impacts are assessed for the plan area vicinity only. This EIR uses the 2018-2019 academic year as the baseline year for existing environmental conditions unless otherwise specified and explained in relation to a specific topic.
- ▶ The **“Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures”** section identifies the significance criteria used to determine the level of significance of the environmental impacts for each resource topic, in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15126, 15126.2, and 15143. The significance criteria used in this Draft EIR are based on the checklist presented in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, best available data, and the applicable regulatory standards of relevant public agencies. The criteria may also reflect local policies adopted for the purpose of avoiding or reducing an environmental impact, particularly for impacts that may affect off-campus resources, even though UC Santa Cruz is not bound by such policies (see Section 3.0.2, below). The level of each impact is determined by comparing the effects of the project to the existing environmental conditions and the listed criteria. Key methods and assumptions used to frame and conduct the impact analysis, as well as issues or potential impacts not discussed further (such issues for which the project would have no impact), are also described.

Project impacts are organized numerically in each subsection (e.g., Impact 3.2-1, Impact 3.2-2, Impact 3.2-3, etc.). Each impact discussion is preceded with a summary impact statement that concludes with the level of significance identified in bold type. The discussion that follows the impact summary presents the substantial evidence supporting the impact significance conclusion.

This Draft EIR must describe any feasible mitigation measures that could avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce, or compensate for significant adverse impacts, and the measures are to be fully enforceable through incorporation into the project (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21081.6[b]). Mitigation measures are not required for impacts found to be less than significant. Where feasible mitigation for a significant impact is available, it is described following the impact, along with its effectiveness at addressing the impact. Each identified mitigation measure is labeled numerically to correspond with the number of the impact that would be mitigated by the measure. Where sufficient feasible mitigation is not available to reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level, or where the UC Board of Regents (Regents) lacks the ability to ensure that the mitigation will be implemented when needed, the impact is identified as “significant and unavoidable.”

### 3.0.1 University of California Autonomy

UC Santa Cruz is part of the UC, a constitutionally created entity of the State of California, with “full powers of organization and government” (Cal. Const. Art. IX, Section 9). As a constitutionally created State entity, the UC is not subject to the regulations of local non-state agencies, such as those that may be found in the *City of Santa Cruz General Plan* or land use ordinances, for uses on property owned or controlled by the UC that are in furtherance of the UC’s educational purposes. Although there is no formal mechanism for doing so, UC Santa Cruz may consider, for coordination purposes, aspects of local plans and policies for the communities surrounding the campus.

UC Santa Cruz seeks to maintain an ongoing exchange of ideas and information and to pursue mutually acceptable solutions for issues that confront both the campus and its surrounding community. To foster this process, UC Santa Cruz communicates with City of Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz County, and community organizations; sponsors various meetings and briefings to keep local organizations, associations, and elected representatives apprised of ongoing planning efforts; and considers community input.

## 3.0.2 Terminology Used in This EIR

This Draft EIR uses the following terminology in discussions of the project's environmental effects:

- ▶ **Less-than-Significant Impact:** A project impact is less than significant when it does not exceed the significance criteria and therefore would not cause a substantial change in the environment. No mitigation is required.
- ▶ **Potentially Significant Impact:** A potentially significant impact is a potentially substantial adverse change in the environment. There may be uncertainty as to whether an adverse change will occur because, for instance, the exact location of buildings may not be known at this time because of the current stage of planning. Additional information would be needed regarding whether an impact may occur and its extent. In these instances, if a substantial adverse change is reasonably foreseeable, the impact is determined to be potentially significant. For CEQA purposes, a potentially significant impact is treated as if it were a significant impact. Mitigation measures and/or project alternatives are identified to reduce potentially significant effects on the environment where feasible.
- ▶ **Significant Impact:** A project impact is significant if it is a substantial adverse change in the physical environment. Significant impacts are identified by the evaluation of project effects in the context of specified significance criteria. Mitigation measures and/or project alternatives are identified to reduce significant effects on the environment where feasible.
- ▶ **Significant and Unavoidable Impact:** A project impact is significant and unavoidable if it is a substantial adverse change in the environment that cannot be feasibly avoided or mitigated to a less-than-significant level. If a lead agency proposes to approve a project with significant and unavoidable impacts, it must adopt a statement of overriding considerations to explain its actions (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15093[b]).
- ▶ **Cumulative Impacts:** "Cumulative impacts' refers to two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts" (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15355). An EIR must either discuss cumulative impacts when the "project's incremental effect is cumulatively considerable...[or]...briefly describe its basis for concluding that the incremental effect is not cumulatively considerable" (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15130[a]).
- ▶ **Mitigation Measures:** State CEQA Guidelines Section 15370 defines "mitigation" as:
  - a) avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action;
  - b) minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation;
  - c) rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment;
  - d) reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action; or
  - e) compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments, including through permanent protection of such resources in the form of conservation easements.

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