

9. Significant Irreversible Changes Due to the Proposed Project

Section 15126.2(c) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) describe any significant irreversible environmental changes that would be caused by the proposed project should it be implemented. Specifically, the CEQA Guidelines state:

Uses of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project may be irreversible since a large commitment of such resources makes removal or nonuse thereafter unlikely. Primary impacts and, particularly, secondary impacts (such as highways improvement which provides access to a previously inaccessible area) generally commit future generations to similar uses. Also, irreversible damage can result from environmental accidents associated with the project. Irretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified.

In the case of the proposed City of Hope Campus Plan, its implementation would involve a land use, development, and implementation framework to support approximately 1,038,500 gross square feet of net new development on the project site—964,340 square feet within the City of Duarte and 74,160 square feet within the City of Irwindale. Significant irreversible changes that would be caused by implementation of the Campus Plan would be:

- Construction activities that would entail the commitment of nonrenewable and/or slowly renewable energy resources; human resources; and natural resources such as lumber and other forest products, sand and gravel, asphalt, steel, copper, lead, other metals, water, and fossil fuels. Operation that would require the use of natural gas and electricity, petroleum-based fuels, fossil fuels, and water. The commitment of resources required for the construction and operation of the project would limit the availability of such resources for future generations or for other uses during the life of the project.
- An increased commitment of social services and public maintenance services (e.g., police, fire, sewer, and water services) would also be required. The energy and social service commitments would be long-term obligations in view of the low likelihood of returning the land to its original condition once it has been developed.
- Employment growth related to project implementation would increase vehicle trips over the long term. Emissions associated with such vehicle trips would continue to contribute to the South Coast Air Basin's nonattainment designations for ozone, particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}), and lead (Los Angeles County only) under the California and National Ambient Air Quality Standards (AAQS), and nonattainment for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) under the California AAQS.

9. Significant Irreversible Changes Due to the Proposed Project

- Long-term irreversible commitment of vacant parcels of land or redevelopment of existing developed land in the cities of Duarte and Irwindale.

Given the low likelihood that the land would revert to lower intensity uses or to its current form, the proposed project would generally commit future generations to these environmental changes. However, the Specific Plan area is already developed; therefore, the use of existing infrastructure is possible with some upgrades and improvements, and environmental impacts can be minimized. Additional development intensities can be more readily accommodated with minimal physical impact, relieving development pressure from other areas where more intensive use of nonrenewable resources would be necessary. The commitment of resources to the proposed project is not unusual or inconsistent with projects of this type and scope. However, once these commitments are made, it is improbable that the Specific Plan area would revert back to its current condition. Thus, the proposed project would result in significant irreversible changes to the environment throughout the lifespan of the structures.