4.0 EXISTING SETTING, IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Chapter 4.0 describes the environmental topic areas potentially affected by the proposed La Pata Gap Closure and Camino Del Rio Extension Project. For each environmental impact issue analyzed, the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) includes a detailed explanation of the existing conditions for which potential environmental effects of the proposed project and the project alternatives are evaluated, methodology of the impact analysis, thresholds of significance that will be applied to determine whether the project's impacts are significant or less than significant, analysis of the environmental impacts, and mitigation measures identified to avoid or substantially reduce potentially significant adverse project impacts, as well as a determination of whether the project would have a significant impact if implemented. A "significant impact" or "significant effect" means "a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project" (14 California Code of Regulations [CCR] Section 15382). Chapter 4.0 also includes within each environmental impact analyzed a discussion of the cumulative effects of the project when considered in combination with other projects, causing related impacts, as required by CCR Section 15130 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.

In accordance with CEQA and CEQA Guidelines 14 CCR Chapter 3, Sections 1500–15397, the following environmental issues are assessed in Chapter 4.0:

- 4.1 Land Use
- 4.2 Traffic
- 4.3 Air Quality
- 4.4 Noise
- 4.5 Aesthetics
- 4.6 Biological Resources
- 4.7 Cultural Resources
- 4.8 Geology and Soils
- 4.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- 4.10 Population and Housing
- 4.11 Hydrology and Water Quality
- 4.12 Public Services and Utilities
- 4.13 Recreation
- 4.14 Agricultural Resources
- 4.15 Mineral Resources
- 4.16 Global Climate Change

The figures corresponding to each topic are provided at the end of each section in Chapter 4.0.

4.01 CUMULATIVE PROJECTS

CEQA Guidelines CCR Section 15126 requires that EIRs consider the significant environmental effects of a proposed project, while CEQA Guidelines CCR Section 15130 requires that EIRs consider the cumulative impacts of a proposed project. Cumulative impacts are two or more individual effects that, when considered together, are considerable or that compound or increase other environmental impacts (CEQA Guidelines CCR Section 15355).

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines CCR Section 15130, cumulative impacts are anticipated impacts of the proposed project along with reasonably foreseeable growth. Reasonably foreseeable growth may be based on either:

- A list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency; or
- A summary of projections contained in the adopted General Plan or related planning document, or in a prior environmental document that has been adopted or certified, and that described or evaluated regional or areawide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact.

All proposed, recently approved, under construction, and reasonably foreseeable projects that could produce a related or cumulative impact on the local environment when considered in conjunction with the proposed project are evaluated in an EIR. An analysis of the cumulative impacts associated with these related projects and the proposed project is provided in the cumulative impacts discussion under each individual impact category in this chapter.

Information provided by the County of Orange and Cities of San Clemente and San Juan Capistrano for related development and transportation projects is identified in Table 4.1.3 in Section 4.1, Land Use. The locations of the related projects are shown on Figures 4.1.7 (land use projects) and 4.1.8 (transportation projects) in Section 4.1.