

CHAPTER 9.0 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES WHICH CANNOT BE AVOIDED IF THE PROPOSED PROJECT IS IMPLEMENTED

Section 15126.2(c) of the CEQA Guidelines requires the evaluation of impacts to nonrenewable resources that would be irreversible should the proposed Downtown Community Plan be implemented. Nonrenewable resources generally include: biological habitat, agricultural land, mineral deposits, water bodies, and some energy sources.

As discussed in Section 8.0, approval of the proposed Plans and Ordinances would not have any significant irreversible impacts on biological, agricultural or mineral resources. The downtown planning area is highly urbanized in character, and exhibits no natural vegetation. No agricultural soils occur within the planning area, and being urbanized, downtown would not be conducive to agricultural production. No significant mineral deposits underlie the planning area.

No water bodies occur within the downtown planning area. However, the San Diego Bay is located adjacent to the planning area. While water quality control measures implemented by the proposed Plans and Ordinances would minimize impacts, as discussed earlier, cumulative impacts from runoff pollutants would represent a significant irreversible impact to San Diego Bay.

Energy resources would be used during construction projects as the proposed Plan is implemented. Energy would also be consumed to provide lighting, heating and cooling for future development. The availability of mass transit in the planning area may serve to reduce consumption of gasoline associated with commute trips.

Construction projects resulting from implementation of the proposed Plan would require commitment of other nonrenewable resources associated with construction and long-term operation. These resources include, but are not limited to: lumber and other related forest products; sand, gravel and concrete; asphalt; petrochemical construction materials; steel, copper, lead, and other metals; and water. Use of these resources would represent an incremental effect on the regional consumption of these commodities.

In addition to the traditional nonrenewable resources discussed above, the impacts to some cultural and paleontological resources would be irreversible as well. Although the potential demolition of historic structures would be reduced through documentation prior to demolition, the loss of the buildings themselves would represent an irreversible impact. Similarly, impacts to important paleontological resources would be irreversible even though a salvage operation would mitigate the impact to below a level of significance.