

Chapter 7

Significant and Irreversible Changes

7.1 Introduction

Pursuant to Section 15126.2(d) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must consider any significant irreversible environmental changes that would be caused by a project should it be implemented. CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(d) states:

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 a highway 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. Irrecoverable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified.

7.2 Significant and Irreversible Changes

Construction of the West Harbor Modification Project (Proposed Project) would require the use of non-renewable resources, such as fossil fuels and non-renewable construction materials. Operation of the Proposed Project would also result in an irreversible commitment of non-renewable resources, including fossil fuels and natural gas. Use of these resources, however, would not substantially deplete existing supplies.

Fossil fuels and energy would be consumed during construction and operational activities. Fossil fuels, in the form of diesel oil and gasoline, would be used for construction equipment and vehicles. During operations, diesel oil and gasoline would be used by vehicles servicing and attending events. Electrical energy and natural gas would also be consumed during construction and operation. These energy resources would be irretrievable and irreversible.

Non-recoverable materials and energy would be used during construction and operational activities, but the amounts needed would be accommodated by existing supplies. Although the increase in the amount of materials and energy used would be minimal, they would nevertheless be unavailable for other uses.

Construction activities that result in physical changes to the environment have the most potential to result in irreversible changes. Improvements to the 208 E. 22nd Street Parking Lot would require the removal of an existing Red Car maintenance facility, existing Red Car loading platform, existing rails, and the 3,500-square-foot Pacific Performance Racing building located at 264 E. 22nd Street, and then paving the majority of the 18-acre site. Demolition of the Red Car maintenance facility, Red Car loading platform, and the building at 264 E. 22nd Street, as well as removal of the rails, would be considered an irreversible change. However, none of the Proposed Project elements would result in irreversible environmental damage. For example, the Proposed Project would not have a significant impact on aesthetic resources, historical resources, or sensitive biological species or communities that could not be mitigated to less-than-significant levels. The Proposed Project would not result in a loss of significant environmental resources or irreversible changes, with the exception of demolition of the

Red Car maintenance facility, Red Car loading platform and rails, and the Pacific Performance Racing building at 264 E 22nd Street, which could not be returned to pre-Project conditions. However, these are not historical resources under CEQA.

Impacts associated with operation of the Proposed Project would occur as described in Chapter 3, *Environmental Impact Analysis*. However, such impacts would cease or would change in some fashion should the Proposed Project, or portions thereof, cease to operate, change operations, or otherwise be redeveloped and reused. For example:

- Potential impacts related to aesthetics would change should the Proposed Project be demolished and/or the area redeveloped in the future;
- Potential impacts on air quality related to increased pollutants and emissions would be reduced or eliminated should the area not be occupied in the future;
- Potential impacts related to sensitive biological species or communities would be eliminated should the Amphitheater cease to operate;
- Potential impacts related to energy would be reduced or eliminated should Amphitheater activities be reduced or eliminated;
- Potential impacts related to noise would be reduced or eliminated should the Amphitheater or commercial activities be reduced or eliminated. Significant and unavoidable impacts related to ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the Proposed Project would remain even with mitigation and features due to both construction and operation; and
- Significant and unavoidable Transportation impacts related to VMT would be eliminated or reduced with operational changes or physical changes that may occur in the future or if the project approved under the 2009 SPW EIS/EIR were to be implemented.

Therefore, the Proposed Project and Alternative 2 could result in significant irreversible changes due to the use of energy resources and fossil fuels during construction and operation. However, construction and operation of the Proposed Project would not result in significant irreversible impacts on other environmental resources, as described above. Alternative 1 could result in the significant irreversible changes that were discussed in the 2009 SPW EIS/EIR.