

3.18 - Wildfire

3.18.1 - Introduction

This section describes the existing wildfire conditions in the project area as well as the relevant regulatory framework. This section also evaluates the possible impacts related to wildfire that could result from implementation of the project. Information in this section are based on information provided by the Contra Costa County General Plan, Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), and the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District (CCCFPD). No public comments were received during the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) scoping period related to wildfire.

3.18.2 - Existing Setting

Wildfire Hazard Area Designations

Contra Costa County

The northwestern, southern, and eastern areas in Contra Costa County are located in Fire Hazard Severity Zones. In general, the majority of these areas are designated “High” fire hazard severity zones with areas of significant elevation change, such as Mount Diablo State Park and Briones Regional Park.¹ Prevailing winds in the County tend to travel in a south to southwest direction.²

Project Site

The project site is not located in a “Fire Hazard Severity Zone” in a State responsibility area or a “Very High Fire Hazard” in a local, State, or federal responsibility area.^{3,4} The closest designated “High” fire hazard zone is located approximately 3.5 miles to the southeast of the project site. The closest BAAQMD air data monitoring station is located in the City of Concord, approximately 1.53 miles to the northeast. The average wind speed in Concord in 2018 ranged from 2 to 5 miles per hour (mph) and the highest hourly wind speed ranged from 10 to 17 mph.^{5,6}

Wildfire-conducive Conditions

Grassland or other vegetation in California is easily ignited, particularly in dry seasons. Wildfire is a serious hazard in high dry fuel load areas, particularly near areas of natural vegetation and steep slopes, since fires tend to burn more rapidly on steeper terrain. Wildfire is also a serious hazard in areas of high wind, given that fires will travel faster and farther geographically when winds are

¹ California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) Resource and Assessment Program. 2019. Fire Hazard Severity Zone Viewer. Website: <http://egis.fire.ca.gov/FHSZ/>. Accessed February 26, 2019.

² Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). Air Monitoring Data. Website: <http://www.baaqmd.gov/about-air-quality/current-air-quality/air-monitoring-data?DataViewFormat=yearly&DataView=met&StartDate=2/19/2019&ParameterId=204>. Accessed February 19, 2019.

³ California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) Resource and Assessment Program. 2019. Fire Hazard Severity Zone Viewer. Website: <http://egis.fire.ca.gov/FHSZ/>. Accessed February 26, 2019.

⁴ State of California. 2012. California Fire Prevention Fee. Website: http://www.fire.ca.gov/firepreventionfee/srviewer_launch. Accessed January 29, 2019.

⁵ Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). Air Monitoring Data. Website: <http://www.baaqmd.gov/about-air-quality/current-air-quality/air-monitoring-data?DataViewFormat=yearly&DataView=met&StartDate=12/11/2017&ParameterId=203&StationId=4902>. Accessed September 28, 2018.

⁶ Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). Air Monitoring Data. Website: <http://www.baaqmd.gov/about-air-quality/current-air-quality/air-monitoring-data?DataViewFormat=yearly&DataView=met&StartDate=2/19/2019&ParameterId=204>. Accessed February 19, 2019.

higher. Furthermore, wildfire is more likely in areas where electric power lines are located above ground where they can come into contact with either vegetation or building materials.

Land uses in Contra Costa County range from rural, agricultural, and open space to urban and developed. According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map, much of Contra Costa County is located in a Moderate, High, and Very High Fire Hazard Zone due to the mountainous terrain and natural vegetation. In particular, areas near open space areas, such as Mount Diablo State Park, Briones Regional Park, and Tilden Regional Park, are located in “High” and “Very High” fire hazard zones. In general, the average wind speed in Contra Costa County ranges from 2 to 5 mph and blows to the southwest.⁷ Electric power lines mostly occur in urban areas and along roadways. Natural gas pipelines occur frequently across Contra Costa County, including residential and commercial areas. Natural gas poses a lower risk of causing a fire than petroleum products because it is transported at lower pressures and when released, rises and dissipates into the atmosphere.⁸

Project Site

The project is located in the central portion of Contra Costa County and is adjacent to the City of Walnut Creek. The project site is primarily undeveloped and contains grassland and other vegetation that is dry in summer and autumn months. The project site is relatively flat with little to no slopes and is located in an urbanized area surrounded by development, such as apartments and a Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) station. According to the CAL FIRE, the project site is not located within a designated “Fire Hazard Severity Zone in a State Responsibility Area” or “Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone in a Local Responsibility Area.”⁹ Prevailing winds near the project site have been recorded in the southwest direction with an average speed of 2 to 5 mph.¹⁰ Electric power lines are located directly across Del Hombre Lane from the project site and run along the Iron Horse Trail.

Emergency and Evacuation Routes/Access

Contra Costa County

The Contra Costa County Office of the Sheriff: Emergency Services Division is responsible for planning, outreach, and training or disaster management and emergency preparedness throughout the County.¹¹ The Contra Costa County General Plan establishes a 5-minute response time standard for responding to fire protection calls for service. Within Contra Costa County, the main routes into and out of the County that would most likely be used as evacuation routes are Interstate 80 (I-80), I-680, and I-580, as well as State Route 4 (SR-4) and SR-24.

⁷ Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). Air Monitoring Data. Website: <http://www.baaqmd.gov/about-air-quality/current-air-quality/air-monitoring-data?DataViewFormat=yearly&DataView=met&StartDate=2/19/2019&ParameterId=204>. Accessed February 19, 2019.

⁸ Contra Costa County. Contra Costa County General Plan, Safety Element, page 10-37.

⁹ California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). Contra Costa County FHSZ Maps. Website: http://www.fire.ca.gov/fire_prevention/fhsz_maps_contracosta. Accessed February 8, 2019.

¹⁰ Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). Air Monitoring Data. Accessed February 19, 2019. Website: <http://www.baaqmd.gov/about-air-quality/current-air-quality/air-monitoring-data?DataViewFormat=yearly&DataView=met&StartDate=2/19/2019&ParameterId=204>.

¹¹ Contra Costa County Office of the Sheriff. 2018. Website: http://www.cocosherriff.org/bureaus/support_services/emergency.htm.

Project Site

The Contra Costa County Office of the Sheriff: Emergency Services Division is responsible for planning, outreach, and training or disaster management and emergency preparedness for the project site.¹² Using an average travel speed of 35 miles per hour, a fire engine would be able to reach construction areas at the project site in 2 minutes and 45 seconds, which is under the 5-minute response standard set by the Contra Costa County General Plan.¹³ Near the project site, the most likely evacuation route would be Treat Boulevard (in the east/west direction) and I-680 (in the north/south direction).

Post-fire Slope Instability and Drainage Pattern Changes

Slope instability from wildfire scarring of the landscape can result in slope instability in the form of more intensive flooding and landslides. These post-fire slope soils and altered drainage patterns can more easily creep away downslope sides of foundations and reduce lateral support.

Contra Costa County

The major post-wildfire hazards in Contra Costa County are unstable hill slopes and altered drainage patterns. Slopes may suffer landslides, slumping, soil slips, and rockslides. Contra Costa County's General Plan historically have recognized that major slope areas in excess of 26 percent are "not readily developable" and "undevelopable," recognizing the cost and engineering difficulties of grading steep slopes as well as their inherent unsuitability.¹⁴ Figure 10-6 of the Contra Costa County General Plan shows Landslide Hazards in Contra Costa County. The most recent fire in Contra Costa County is the Alhambra Fire (off SR-4 and Alhambra Avenue in the City of Martinez, 2019). This fire was located approximately 6 miles to the northwest of the project site.

Project Site

According to Figure 10-6 of the Contra Costa County General Plan, the project site is not located on a site susceptible to landslides or an area where landslides previously occurred. In addition, the drainage pattern on the project site has not been previously altered due to a fire event and generally drains toward Roble Road or Del Hombre Lane. Furthermore, wildfire has not previously occurred on the project site.

3.18.3 - Regulatory Framework

Federal

United States Department of Interior

Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy

1. **Safety**—Firefighter and public safety is the first priority. All Fire Management Plans and activities must reflect this commitment
2. **Fire Management and Ecosystem Sustainability**—The full range of fire management activities will be used to help achieve ecosystem sustainability, including its interrelated ecological, economic, and social components

¹² Contra Costa County Office of the Sheriff. 2018. Website: http://www.cocosheriff.org/bureaus/support_services/emergency.htm.

¹³ Contra Costa County General Plan. 2005.

¹⁴ Contra Costa County. General Plan 2025, page 10-22.

3. **Response to Wildland Fire**—Fire, as a critical natural process, will be integrated into land and resource management plans and activities on a landscape scale, and across agency boundaries. Response to wildland fire is based on ecological, social, and legal consequences of the fire. The circumstances under which a fire occurs, and the likely consequences on firefighter and public safety and welfare, natural and cultural resources, and values to be protected dictate the appropriate management response to the fire.
4. **Use of Wildland Fire**—Wildland fire will be used to protect, maintain, and enhance resources and, as nearly as possible, be allowed to function in its natural ecological role. Use of fire will be based on approved Fire Management Plans and will follow specific prescriptions contained in operational plans.
5. **Rehabilitation and Restoration**—Rehabilitation and restoration efforts will be undertaken to protect and sustain ecosystems, public health, and safety, and to help communities protect infrastructure.
6. **Protection Priorities**—The protection of human life is the single, overriding priority. Setting priorities among protecting human communities and community infrastructure, other property and improvements, and natural and cultural resources will be based on the values to be protected, human health and safety, and the costs of protection. Once people have been committed to an incident, these human resources become the highest value to be protected.
7. **Wildland Urban Interface**—The operational roles of federal agencies as partners in the Wildland Urban Interface are wildland firefighting, hazardous fuels reduction, cooperative prevention and education, and technical assistance. Structural fire suppression is the responsibility of tribal, State, or local governments. Federal agencies may assist with exterior structural protection activities under formal Fire Protection Agreements that specify the mutual responsibilities of the partners, including funding. (Some federal agencies have full structural protection authority for their facilities on lands they administer, and may also enter into formal agreements to assist State and local governments with full structural protection.)
8. **Planning**—Every area with burnable vegetation must have an approved Fire Management Plan. Fire Management Plans are strategic plans that define a program to manage wildland and prescribed fires based on the area’s approved land management plan. Fire Management Plans must provide for firefighter and public safety; include fire management strategies, tactics, and alternatives; address values to be protected and public health issues; and be consistent with resource management objectives, activities of the area, and environmental laws and regulations.
9. **Science**—Fire Management Plans and programs will be based on a foundation of sound science. Research will support ongoing efforts to increase our scientific knowledge of biological, physical, and sociological factors. Information needed to support fire management will be developed through an integrated interagency fire science program. Scientific results must be made available to managers in a timely manner and must be used in the development of land management plans, Fire Management Plans, and implementation plans.

10. **Preparedness**—Agencies will ensure their capability to provide safe, cost-effective fire management programs in support of land and resource management plans through appropriate planning, staffing, training, equipment, and management oversight.
11. **Suppression**—Fires are suppressed at minimum cost, considering firefighter and public safety, benefits, and values to be protected, consistent with resource objectives.
12. **Prevention**—Agencies will work together and with their partners and other affected groups and individuals to prevent unauthorized ignition of wildland fires.
13. **Standardization**—Agencies will use compatible planning processes, funding mechanisms, training and qualification requirements, operational procedures, values-to-be-protected methodologies, and public education programs for all fire management activities.
14. **Interagency Cooperation and Coordination**—Fire management planning, preparedness, prevention, suppression, fire use, restoration and rehabilitation, monitoring, research, and education will be conducted on an interagency basis with the involvement of cooperators and partners.
15. **Communication and Education**—Agencies will enhance knowledge and understanding of wildland fire management policies and practices through internal and external communication and education programs. These programs will be continuously improved through the timely and effective exchange of information among all affected agencies and organizations.
16. **Agency Administrator and Employee Roles**—Agency administrators will ensure that their employees are trained, certified, and made available to participate in the wildland fire program locally, regionally, and nationally as the situation demands. Employees with operational, administrative, or other skills will support the wildland fire program as necessary. Agency administrators are responsible and will be held accountable for making employees available.
17. **Evaluation**—Agencies will develop and implement a systematic method of evaluation to determine effectiveness of projects through implementation of the 2001 Federal Fire Policy. The evaluation will assure accountability, facilitate resolution of areas of conflict, and identify resource shortages and agency priorities.

State

California Emergency Response Plan

California has developed an emergency response plan to coordinate emergency services provided by federal, State, and local governments and private agencies. Responding to hazardous-materials incidents is one part of this plan. The plan is administered by the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services, which coordinates the responses of other agencies. When Contra Costa County experiences an emergency, an Emergency Operations Center may be opened. In the event an Emergency Operations Center is opened, emergency response team members coordinate efforts and work with local fire and police agencies, emergency medical providers, the California Highway Patrol, CAL FIRE, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and California Department of Transportation (Caltrans).

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Threat Potential Mapping

CAL FIRE has mapped fire threat potential throughout California. CAL FIRE maps fire threat based on the availability of fuel and the likelihood of an area burning (based on topography, fire history, and climate). The threat levels include no fire threat, moderate, high, and very high fire threat. Further, the maps designate the City of Pleasant Hill as the Local Responsibility Area of the project site. Additionally, CAL FIRE produced a 2010 Strategic Fire Plan for California, which contains goals, objectives, and policies to prepare for and mitigate the effects of fire on California's natural and built environments. The CAL FIRE Office of the State Fire Marshal provides oversight of enforcement of the California Fire Code as well as overseeing hazardous liquid pipeline safety.

California Building Code

The State of California provided a minimum standard for building design through the 2016 California Building Standards Code (CBC), which is located in Part 2 of Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations. The 2016 CBC is based on the 2015 International Building Code, but has been modified for California conditions. It is generally adopted on a jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction basis, subject to further modification based on local conditions. Commercial and residential buildings are plan-checked by local City and County building officials for compliance with the CBC. Typical fire safety requirements of the CBC include the installation of sprinklers in all new high-rise buildings and residential buildings; the establishment of fire resistance standards for fire doors, building material; and particular types of construction.

California Public Resources Code

The California Public Resources Code (PRC) includes fire safety regulations that restrict the use of equipment that may produce a spark, flame, or fire; require the use of spark arrestors¹⁵ on construction equipment that use an internal combustion engine; specify requirements for the safe use of gasoline-powered tools in fire hazard areas; and specify fire suppression equipment that must be provided on-site for various types of work in fire-prone areas.

These regulations include the following:

- Earthmoving and portable equipment with internal combustion engines would be equipped with a spark arrestor to reduce the potential for igniting a wildland fire (PRC § 4442);
- Appropriate fire suppression equipment would be maintained during the highest fire danger period—from April 1 to December 1 (PRC § 4428);
- On days when a burning permit is required, flammable materials would be removed to a distance of 10 feet from any equipment that could produce a spark, fire, or flame, and the construction contractor would maintain the appropriate fire suppression equipment (PRC § 4427); and
- On days when a burning permit is required, portable tools powered by gasoline-fueled internal combustion engines would not be used within 25 feet of any flammable materials (PRC § 4431).

¹⁵ A spark arrestor is any device that prevents the emission of flammable debris from a combustion source (i.e. fireplaces, internal combustion engines, and wood burning stoves).

Regional

Association of Bay Area Governments Hazard Mitigation Plan

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) multijurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan for the San Francisco Bay Area was updated in 2010 in partnership with the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) Adapting to Rising Tides Program to support local governments in the regional plan for existing and future hazards of climate change. This detailed 5-year plan identifies potential natural and human-made hazards, assesses their potential risks, and includes mitigation methods to reduce risks. The potential hazards identified in the plan include earthquakes and liquefaction, wildfires, floods, drought, solar storms, dam or levee failure, disease outbreak, freezes, wind, heat, thunder and lightning storms, siltation, tornadoes, hazardous materials, slope failure and mudflows, and other hazards. Similarly, mitigation measures include hazard event planning, emergency preparedness coordination, education, facility upgrades, and monitoring actions.

Contra Costa County Hazard Mitigation Plan

The Contra Costa County Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) contains goals and objectives that are intended to reduce loss of life and property from natural disasters.¹⁶ During the planning process this plan used Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) tools to determine the most likely possible threats would be earthquakes, flooding, landslides, tsunamis, and wildfires in urban interface zones. The HMP identifies mitigation action items that aim to meet objectives and reduce the impacts of these hazards. The Contra Costa County Office of Emergency Services and Contra Costa County Department of Conservation and Development share the lead responsibility for overseeing the plan implementation and maintenance strategy. Plan implementation and evaluation will be a shared responsibility among all planning partnership members and agencies identified as lead agencies in the mitigation action plans.

Contra Costa Emergency Operations Plan

The purpose of the Contra Costa Emergency Operations Plan is to provide the basis for a coordinated response before, during and after an emergency affecting Contra Costa County.¹⁷ The emergency operations plan identifies and facilitates inter-agency coordination in emergency operations. The Plan applies to all emergencies in unincorporated areas of Contra Costa County and within incorporated areas when those emergencies require multi-agency coordination at the operational area level.

Local

Contra Costa County General Plan

Public Facilities/Services Element

The Contra Costa County General Plan establishes the following goals and policies related to wildfire hazards that are related to this analysis:

Wildland Fires

- **Goal 7-AA:** To incorporate requirements for fire-safe construction into the land use planning and approval process.

¹⁶ Tetra Tech. 2018. Contra Costa County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

¹⁷ Contra Costa County. 2015. Emergency Operations Plan.

- **Goal 7-AD:** To provide special fire protection for high-risk land uses and structures.
- **Policy 7-64:** New development shall pay its fair share of costs for new fire protection facilities and services.
- **Policy 7-66:** Sprinkler systems may be required in new residential structures, where necessary to protect health, safety and welfare.
- **Policy 7-80:** Wildland fire prevention activities and programs such as controlled burning, fuel removal, establishment of fire roads, fuel breaks and water supply, shall be encouraged to reduce wildland fire hazards.
- **Policy 7-81:** All structures located in Hazardous Fire Areas, as defined in the Uniform Fire Code, shall be constructed with fire-resistant exterior materials, such as fire safe roofing, and their surroundings are to be irrigated and landscaped with fire-resistant plants, consistent with drought resistance and water conservation policies.
- **Implementation Measure 7-at:** The Conservation and Development Department shall include fire agency code requirements requested by the districts as advisory notes to the applicant within proposed conditions of project approval when the Planning Agency is considering subdivisions, development plans, use permits and other entitlement requests.
- **Implementation Measure 7-au:** Fire protection agencies shall be afforded the opportunity to review projects and submit conditions of approval for consideration to determine whether:
 - There is an adequate water supply for fire fighting
 - Road widths, road grades and turnaround radii are adequate for emergency equipment; and
 - Structures are built to the standards of the Uniform Building Code, the Uniform Fire Code, other State regulations, and local ordinances regarding the use of fire-retardant materials and detection, warning and extinguishment devices.
- **Policy 10-89:** Every high-rise building shall be designed and constructed to provide for the evacuation of occupants and/or for the creation of a safe environment in case of a substantial disaster, such as a severe earthquake or fire.

3.18.4 - Impacts and Mitigation Measures

According to the 2019 CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Environmental Checklist, to determine whether wildfire impacts would be considered significant from implementation of the project, the following questions are analyzed and evaluated. If located in or near State responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:

- a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?
- b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?
- c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?
- d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?

Approach to Analysis

The project site is not located in a “Fire Hazard Severity Zone” in a State responsibility area or a “Very High Fire Hazard” in a local, State, or federal responsibility area. The closest designated “High” fire hazard zone is located approximately 3.5 miles to the southeast of the project site. The closest BAAQMD air data monitoring station is located in Concord, approximately 1.53 miles to the northeast. Prevailing winds at this station have been recorded in the southwest direction with an average speed of 2-5 mph with maximum wind speeds of 14-17 mph.¹⁸

As the project site is located more than 3 miles from a State responsibility area or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, this evaluation focuses on whether the project would result in changes to the physical environment that would cause or exacerbate adverse effects related to wildfires or whether the project would be placed in a location susceptible to wildfire or post-wildfire conditions. The evaluation also includes a determination of whether the changes to the physical environment caused by the project would impair or interfere with emergency response plans, expose people to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire, expose people/structures to downslope flooding or landslides, or include the installation or maintenance of infrastructure that may exacerbate fire risk. The following analysis is based, in part, on information provided by the Contra Costa County General Plan, CAL FIRE website, and correspondence with CCCFPD.

Specific Thresholds of Significance

For purposes of this analysis, the following thresholds are used to evaluate the significance of wildfire impacts resulting from implementation of the project.

- Impaired implementation of or interference with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan via blockage of an evacuation route or provision of only one access point for emergency vehicles.
- Location in or near area of steep slopes, high-wind areas, or historical wildfire burn areas leading to greater wildfire risk and, thereby, exposing project occupants to smoke and other wildfire-related air pollutants.
- Installation or maintenance of roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, electrical power lines, or natural gas lines that may exacerbate fire risk.
- Location in or near area of wildfire-scarred slopes or altered drainage areas and, thereby, exposing project occupants to flooding and landslide hazards.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Impact Evaluation

Emergency Response/Evacuation Plan Consistency

Impact WILD-1: **The project would not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.**

Construction

During construction, it is expected that construction equipment and vehicles would be accessing and leaving the project site, which in turn could potentially impede evacuation or emergency vehicle access. However, as discussed under Impact TRANS-5 and Impact HAZ-6, the project would result in less than significant impacts related to emergency vehicle access. In addition, the project would be in compliance with the Contra Costa County Emergency Plan, ensuring efficient response to emergency incidents associated with emergencies affecting Contra Costa County. Furthermore, blockage of an evacuation route would not occur during project construction because the project would not result in road closures to either Treat Boulevard or Interstate 680 (I-680), the most likely evacuation routes from the project site. Therefore, construction impacts related to emergency response/evacuation plan consistency would be less than significant.

Operation

As indicated in Section 3.13, Public Services, Impact PUB-1, and PUB-2, and Section 3.8, Hazards and Hazards Materials, Impact HAZ-6, the project would be adequately served by police and fire services, including respective evacuation or emergency vehicle access. The project would not create a permanent increase in population unaccounted for in the Contra Costa County General Plan that could lead to overwhelming call for emergency services. In addition, the project would be designed in accordance with the County's standards to accommodate emergency vehicle access by providing two points of access to the project site that would be available to emergency vehicles. Furthermore, blockage of an evacuation route would not occur during project operation because the project would not result in road closures to either Treat Boulevard or I-680, the most likely evacuation routes from the project site. With adherence to Contra Costa County General Plan Policies 7-64, 7-66, 7-80, as well as Implementation Measure (IM) 7-at, IM 7-au, and Policy 10-89 that set forth recommendations and requirements related to development fees, installation of sprinkler systems, wildland fire prevention activities, review of project by fire agencies, and creation of a safe environment in the case of substantial disaster, the project would not conflict with the Emergency Operations Plan or Contra Costa County General Plan Safety Goals. Therefore, operational impacts related to emergency response/evacuation plan consistency would be less than significant.

Level of Significance

Less Than Significant

Expose Project Occupants to Pollutant Concentrations from Wildfire

Impact WILD-2: Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, the project would not exacerbate wildfire risks and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire.

Construction

Impacts related to exposure of project occupants to pollutants concentrations from wildfire are limited to operational impacts. No respective construction impacts would occur.

Operation

The project site is located in the central portion of Contra Costa County and adjacent to the City of Walnut Creek. The area surrounding the project site consists of urban development without steep terrain or unmanaged open space areas prone to wildfires. The closest open space area is located approximately five miles to the east of the project site. The BAAQMD monitors the Bay Area's air quality at a number of stations. The closest station to the project site is located in Concord, approximately 1.53 miles to the northeast. According to the BAAQMD, the average wind speed in Concord in 2018 ranged from 2 to 5 mph and the highest hourly wind speed ranged from 10 to 17 mph.¹⁹ In addition, the project site has not previously experienced wildfire. Given that the project site is not located in or near an area of steep terrain or historical wildfire burn nor experiences consistent high winds, the project site would be not be prone to greater wildfire risk.

According to CAL FIRE, the project site is not located in a Severe or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. The closest designated "High" fire hazard zone is located approximately 3.5 miles to the southeast of the project site. In addition, as indicated in Section 3.13, Public Services, Impact PUB-1 and PUB-2, the project would be adequately served in terms of fire protection services by CCCFPD. The CCCFPD was contacted in order to receive their input on the project's wildfire risks. The CCCFPD Fire Prevention Captain determined that the project would not be exposed to wildfire risks.²⁰ Furthermore, project structures would be required to comply with the California Fire Code with regard to emergency/fire access and use of building materials that would limit the spread of wildfire to the greatest extent possible. Therefore, impacts related to exposure of project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or uncontrolled spread of wildfire would be less than significant.

Level of Significance

Less Than Significant

¹⁹ Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). Air Monitoring Data. Website: <http://www.baaqmd.gov/about-air-quality/current-air-quality/air-monitoring-data?DataViewFormat=yearly&DataView=met&StartDate=12/11/2017&ParameterId=203&StationId=4902>. Accessed September 28, 2018.

²⁰ Contra Costa County Fire Protection District (CCCFPD). 2019. Email Correspondence with Tracie Dutter, Fire Prevention Captain. January 18, 2019.

Infrastructure That Exacerbates Fire Risk

Impact WILD-3: The project would not require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment.

Construction

Impacts related to installation or maintenance of infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, electrical power lines, or natural gas lines) that may exacerbate fire risk are limited to operational impacts. No respective construction impacts related to infrastructure that exacerbates fire risk would occur.

Operation

The project would include adequate emergency access via existing roads at two access points. The project site is located in an urban area surrounded by existing roadways. The project would not require the installation of firebreaks, because it is in an urban area surrounded by existing development with little natural vegetation. The project would not require emergency water sources, because potable water is currently provided by the Contra Costa Water District, which has adequate water supplies available to serve the project and future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years. New electrical power and natural gas lines on and connecting to the project site would be installed below ground, minimizing potential ignition and related fire risk above ground, at the project site according to the California Building Code, Uniform Fire Code, and Contra Costa County General Plan IM 7-au.

Therefore, impacts related to infrastructure that exacerbates fire risk would be less than significant.

Level of Significance

Less Than Significant

Flooding and Landslide Hazards Due To Post-fire Slope Instability/Drainage Changes

Impact WILD-4: The project would not expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes.

Construction

Impacts related to post-fire slope instability are limited to operational impacts. No respective construction impacts related to flooding and landslide hazards due to post-fire slope instability or drainage changes would occur.

Operation

The project site is not located on or near steep slopes susceptible to landslides or downstream flooding. The project site has also not been affected by previous wildfires that could have resulted in drainage changes or loss of vegetation. In addition, correspondence with CCCFPD confirmed that the project would not expose people or structures to significant risks due to post-fire slope instability

or drainage changes.²¹ Therefore, impacts related to flooding and landslide hazards due to post-fire slope instability or drainage changes would be less than significant.

Level of Significance

Less Than Significant

3.18.5 - Cumulative Impacts

The geographic scope of the cumulative wildfire analysis is the project vicinity or roughly the central portion of Contra Costa County. The cumulative projects included in this analysis are those listed in Table 3-1 as well as the project.

Wildfire Hazards and Emergency/Evacuation Response

A combination of federal, State, and local regulations limit or minimize the potential for exposure to wildfires by reducing the amount of development in wildland urban interface areas, ensuring new development is developed according to California Building Code and Uniform Fire Code, and incorporating requirements for fire-safe construction into the land use planning. Development listed in Table 3-1 (See Chapter 3.0: Environmental Setting) consists predominantly of residential, commercial, and institutional development. The types and sizes of development anticipated in Table 3-1 would not be located in designated and High or Very High Fire Hazard Zones. In addition, all projects in Table 3-1 would be located in areas that are already developed, and do not contain significant levels of dry fuel susceptible to ignition, or significantly high average wind speed.

The cumulative projects, listed in Table 3-1, would result in predominantly in-fill development and would not significantly increase emergency services beyond the existing service area. Furthermore, all cumulative project construction would adhere to City and County Building Codes that are designed to minimize the potential for uncontrolled fires. Adherence to City and County Building Codes would ensure that California Fire Code standards such as automatic sprinkler systems and management of fuel loads in response to annual inspection by the Fire Department are included in development. Once cumulative development is proposed, the City and County assesses the needs for fire protection services and informs efforts to improve or expand needed facilities. All development would, however, comply with emergency access requirements, such as two emergency vehicle access points, as a condition of construction. Furthermore, the cumulative projects would not result in permanent road closures, nor impede an established emergency or evacuation access route, such as I-680, or interfere with emergency response requirements, such as fire protection response time standards established by respective General Plans for the cumulative project sites. As such, there would be a less than significant cumulative impact associated with wildfire hazards and emergency/evacuation response.

Level of Cumulative Significance

Less Than Significant

²¹ Contra Costa County Fire Protection District (CCCFPD). 2019. Email Correspondence with Tracie Dutter, Fire Prevention Captain. January 18, 2019.

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