

4. Environmental Analysis

Scope of Analysis

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) provides analysis of impacts for those environmental topics where it was determined in the Notice of Preparation, as provided in Appendix A, or through subsequent analysis that the proposed project would result in “significant impacts.” Sections 4.1 through 4.14 discuss the environmental impacts that may result with approval and implementation of the proposed project.

Each environmental resource area potentially impacted by the project is addressed in the following sections numbered as follows:

- 4.1 Aesthetics
- 4.2 Air Quality
- 4.3 Biological Resources
- 4.4 Cultural and Tribal Resources
- 4.5 Geology, Soils, and Seismicity
- 4.6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- 4.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- 4.8 Hydrology and Water Quality
- 4.9 Land Use and Planning
- 4.10 Noise
- 4.11 Population and Housing
- 4.12 Public Services and Recreation
- 4.13 Transportation and Traffic
- 4.14 Utilities and Service Systems

The following resource categories were determined to have no impact during the NOP process, and are therefore not discussed further in this EIR: Agricultural and Forestry, and Mineral Resources. Reference the NOP in Appendix A for a discussion of these resource categories.

Environmental Impact Section Format

Each impact section of Chapter 4 contains the following elements:

Existing Setting. This subsection presents a description of the existing physical environmental conditions in the project area with respect to each resource area at an appropriate level of detail to understand the impact analysis. It describes existing conditions and provides a baseline by which to compare the potential impacts of the proposed project. Consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15125, the existing physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project, as they exist at the time the Notice of Preparation is published, is considered the baseline physical conditions for this EIR.

Regulatory Framework. This subsection provides a brief discussion of federal, state, and local regulations and policies that are relevant to the resource.

Evaluation Criteria and Significance Thresholds. This subsection provides the significance thresholds for evaluation of environmental impacts. The significance thresholds are based on State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G.

Methodology. The methodology subsection discusses the approach to the analysis.

Impact Analysis describes the environmental changes to the existing physical conditions that may occur if the proposed project is implemented, and evaluates these changes with respect to the thresholds of significance. Potential impacts are identified and characterized, and where feasible, mitigation measures are identified to avoid or reduce significant impacts to a less-than-significant level.

- **Level of Significance** describes the level of impact significance for the project, as a whole, prior to applying mitigation measures.
- **Mitigation Measures** are those specific measures that may be required of the project by the Lead Agency in order to (1) avoid an impact, (2) minimize an impact, (3) rectify an impact by restoration, (4) reduce or eliminate an impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations, or (5) compensate for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources.
- **Level of Significance after Mitigation** describes the level of impact significance remaining after mitigation measures have been implemented.

Cumulative Impacts. Cumulative impacts are discussed in each environmental resource section following the description of the project-level impacts and mitigation measures. The cumulative impact analysis is based on the same setting, regulatory framework, and significance thresholds presented in each resource topic section. Additional mitigation measures are identified if the analysis determines that the project's contribution to an adverse cumulative impact would be cumulatively considerable and, therefore, significant.

Significance Determination

The lead agency must determine whether a project may result in a significant environmental impact, as required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15064. The lead agency has a duty to prevent or minimize environmental damage through the findings required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15091. If the EIR identifies any significant impacts, for which no feasible mitigation has been identified, CEQA Guidelines Section 15093 requires decision makers in approving a project to adopt a statement of overriding considerations that explains why the benefits of the project outweigh the adverse environmental consequences identified in the EIR.

The level of significance for each impact examined in this Draft EIR was determined by considering the predicted magnitude of the impact against the applicable threshold. Thresholds were developed using criteria from the CEQA Guidelines and checklist; state, federal, and local regulatory schemes; local/regional plans and ordinances; accepted practice; consultation with recognized experts; and other professional opinions. For the impact analyses, the following terms are used to identify the significance of the project's impact:

No Impact if a resource is absent or if a resource exists within the project area, but there is no potential that the project could affect the resource.

Less-than-Significant Impact if there is a potential for some limited impact on a resource, but the impact is not significant under the significance threshold.

Significant Impact applies if there is the potential for a substantial adverse effect in accordance with the significance threshold. This term is used prior to application of mitigation measures.

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation applies if there is the potential for a substantial adverse effect in accordance with the significance threshold, but mitigation is available to reduce the impact to a less than significant level.

Significant and Unavoidable Impact applies to impacts that are significant, and mitigation has been incorporated, but the mitigation does not reduce the impact to less than significant and there appears, or if no feasible mitigation exists.

Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are defined as “two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts” (CEQA Guidelines Section 15355). Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor, but collectively significant, actions taking place over a period of time.

The cumulative impact analysis for each environmental resource topic is described in the appropriate subsections of this Chapter, following the description of direct project impacts and identified mitigation measures.

Approach to Cumulative Impact Analysis

Two approaches to the definition of the cumulative project scenario are discussed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b). The first approach is a list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts. The second approach is a summary of projections contained in an adopted local, regional or statewide plan, such as a general plan or related planning document, or in an adopted or certified environmental document, which describes or evaluates conditions contributing to cumulative effects. This Draft EIR uses a combination of list and plan approach to cumulative impacts.

An information request was submitted to the County of Humboldt for a list of any past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects within and near the project area. The County provided a list of all projects within 5 miles of the project site. The projects on that list included small scale uses and land use entitlements with negligible cumulative effects such as a minor subdivision to divide two parcels, a permit renewal, a CDP to demolish and replace an existing dwelling unit with a new dwelling unit, a CDP to remodel a dwelling unit, a lot line adjustment, a Zone Reclassification, etc. The relevant projects in the project vicinity are listed in Table 4-1 (Projects Considered for Cumulative Impacts).

Table 4-1 Projects Considered for Cumulative Impacts

Project Name	Project Description	Estimated Construction Schedule	Project Location
Samoa Townsite Master Plan (STMP)	Master Plan for the Samoa Townsite covers approximately 173 acres on the north end of the Samoa Peninsula. The STMP includes development of the Samoa Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) that would serve development within the STMP boundary	Begin construction for the WWTF in 2020.	In Humboldt County, in the Samoa area, on the west side of New Navy Base Road, just north of the New Navy Base Road Water Pump Station.
Manila CSD Modernization	Coastal Development Permit (CDP) for the Manila Community Services District (CSD) to modernize the CSD water system infrastructure. The approximately sixteen-hundred (1,600) acre CSD service area is located in the California Coastal Commission's Appeal Zone	Unknown	In Humboldt County, north of the Samoa Area, generally west of Samoa Boulevard, north of the intersection of New Navy Base Road and the Samoa Bridge, south of the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge.
Samoa Airfield Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS)	Upgrade the existing on-site wastewater treatment system for an existing bed & breakfast and restaurant to allow the facility to operate at full capacity.	Unknown	In Humboldt County, in the Samoa Area, at the Samoa Field Airport, west of New Navy Base Road
Coast Seafoods Project	Construct and operate an onshore shellfish hatchery at the RMT II facility	Unknown	In Humboldt County, in the Samoa Area, at the RMT II facility

Incorporation by Reference

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15150, an EIR may incorporate by reference all or portions of another document which is a matter of public record or is generally available to the public. Where all or part of another document is incorporated by reference, the incorporated language shall be considered to be set forth in full as part of the text of the EIR. The County of Humboldt's General Plan certified EIR and the Samoa Townsite Master Plan certified EIR are incorporated by reference. The certified EIRs can be viewed at:

General Plan EIR - <https://humboldt.gov/626/Draft-Environmental-Impact-Report-EIR> .

Samoa Townsite Master Plan EIR - County's planning desk at 3015 H St, Eureka, CA 95501

Humboldt County General Plan and Environmental Impact Report

The Humboldt County General Plan Update (GPU) was adopted on October 23, 2017, and the associated Environmental Impact Report was certified (SCH 2007012089). Although the Humboldt Bay Area Plan (HBAP) is the applicable planning document for the project area, and remains a stand-alone document, it is subject to the mapping and policy revisions of the GPU adopted by the County.

As stated in the GPU's certified EIR, the EIR evaluates the impacts associated with the growth expected during the planning horizon lasting until 2040, including new housing to be developed to support the projected population growth within the County. The certified EIR identifies that, if fully developed at the full density allowed for each land use designation as identified in the General Plan, the unincorporated area currently vacant or underdeveloped and without physical constraint would allow for as many as 38,972 additional dwelling units. Physical constraints identified by the certified EIR include steep slopes (slopes >30 percent), 100-year flood zones, wetlands, streamside management areas, earthquake fault zones, and areas of historic landslide occurrence. The EIR distributed the projected growth of 1,721 housing units by 2040 from the Department of Finance and commensurate commercial and industrial growth across the County by Traffic Analysis Zone. Significant impacts were identified for the following resources:

Land Use	Geology and Soils
Noise	Hydrology and Water Quality
Biological Resources	Air Quality
Agricultural and Timber Resources	Cultural Resources
Utilities and Service Systems	Scenic Resources
Transportation	Energy Consumption and Conservation
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	

Impacts were mitigated to less than significant for land use, noise, and biological resources; however, impacts remained significant and unavoidable for the remaining resource topics.

The material incorporated by reference into the proposed Samoa Wastewater Project EIR include the environmental setting from the certified EIR and the growth assumptions of the certified EIR. Growth assumptions in the certified EIR focus potential new residential structures on the core, partially developed area of Fairhaven, including the 62 potential residential units that would be allowed to connect to the Samoa Peninsula Wastewater Project. Therefore, the environmental impacts associated with potential future residential development within the Fairhaven area were previously identified and addressed in the GPU EIR, and no further analysis is warranted.

Samoa Townsite Master Plan and Environmental Impact Report

The Samoa Townsite Master Plan (STMP), prepared by the Samoa Pacific Group (SPG), was approved in 2009 with the STMP Master Environmental Impact Report (EIR) (State Clearinghouse Number: 2003052054) certified on October 27, 2009 by the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors. After certification of the STMP Master EIR, amendment of the Humboldt County General Plan (Humboldt Bay Area Plan [HBAP]) was approved by the County of Humboldt on December 6, 2011. The HBAP amendment incorporates the adopted findings of the California Coastal Commission (LCP Amendment HUM-MAJ-01-08, March 10, 2011).

The material incorporated by reference into the proposed Samoa Wastewater Project EIR from the certified EIR include environmental setting and impacts associated with the Approved Samoa WWTF. The STMP and Master EIR include the Approved Samoa WWTF. See Section 3.3.2 for details regarding the Approved Samoa WWTF. CEQA review and approval has been completed for the

Approved Samoa WWTF, as described and contained in the approved STMP and certified Master EIR. Therefore, this EIR does not include environmental analysis for the Approved Samoa WWTF.