

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The following discussion of cultural resources within the plan area summarizes information contained in a previous EIR for the State Route 4 / Bailey Road Interchange Improvement Project and the Pittsburg General Plan Update. Additional information was obtained from interviews as part of this Master EIR. The Cultural Resources setting is presented in Section 16.1, followed by a definition of standards of significance related to cultural resources impacts, and a description of potential impacts and recommended mitigation measures related to the proposed Specific Plan.

16.1 SETTING

Archaeological Resources

Most Native American archeological sites that have been recorded in the City of Pittsburg area are in the form of small to large shell middens, some of which may contain human remains.¹ These sites tend to be situated on alluvial flats and along historic bay margins, as well as near sources of water. Since the Specific Plan area encompasses such environmental settings, there is a potential for identifying archeological sites as projects are constructed. In particular, the portion of the Specific Plan area falling north of the intersection of Mims Road and Bailey Road was identified in the City of Pittsburg General Plan Update as sensitive for Native American resources.

No specific cultural resources are known to occur in the Specific Plan area.² Further, previous archaeological surveys of portions of the plan area have not revealed the presence of any prehistoric or historic cultural resources. The nearest prehistoric site is CA-CCo-609, a petroglyph located outside the plan area approximately 1.25 miles southeast of the intersection of State Route 4 and Bailey Road.³

Historic Resources

Inventories pertaining to the City of Pittsburg's historic resources have been compiled by Contra Costa County (the Historical Resources Inventory), the State Department of Parks and Recreation (the California Inventory of Historic Resources), and the California Office of Historic Preservation (which maintains the National Register of Historic Places). The Office of Historic Preservation has determined that buildings, structures, and objects 45 years or older may be of historical value and may be eligible for inclusion in the National Register. Eligibility for inclusion requires conformance to strict criteria. No structures or objects in the City of Pittsburg are listed in the National Register.

No evidence of any Spanish/Mexican Period, or 19th Century artifact, foundations, or features were recognized during a field survey performed for the State Route 4 / Bailey Road Interchange project. A nearby historic ranch complex, located about one mile southeast of the same intersection, was the only historic resource identified for the vicinity.

A survey of standing structures within the State Route 4 / Bailey Road interchange area revealed a mix of structures, many with associated garages or other secondary structures. In addition, one church, one shopping center, one school, and one trailer park were inventoried. Although many structures appeared to predate World War II, none appeared to represent significant architectural resources.⁴ According to a representative of the Pittsburg Historical Society and long-time resident of the Specific Plan area, the zone proposed for development does not contain significant historical resources.⁵

16.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Specific Plan is considered to have a significant affect on cultural and historical resources if any activity of the plan has the potential to destroy or disturb known, or previously unknown, prehistoric, archaeological, paleontological, or historical resources. An historical resource is defined as a structure or place that is: listed on the National Register of Historic Places, included in the State Historic Resources Inventory, designated as a State Historical Landmark, or designated by the City of Pittsburg as a City Landmark.

16.3 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

IMPACT 16-1. Development of projects proposed in the Specific Plan have the potential to disturb previously unknown cultural resources. This impact is considered potentially significant.

Although no cultural resources have been identified within the Specific Plan area, the possibility that such resources may be present cannot be precluded at this time. Ground surface modifications including grading, fill and coverage by recent construction may have obscured or buried important archaeological resources. Because the area is in proximity to the Suisun Bay water courses (in Lawlor Creek and several minor drainages), evidence of previously unrecognized prehistoric occupation may be encountered during future development. Therefore, construction activities, such as demolition, and site clearing and grading for proposed development projects, could result in the discovery of, or impacts to, previously unknown archaeological resources.

Environmental review of future projects within the Specific Plan area also should include review of possible sites of archaeological significance. In the event that a cultural resource is identified

and evaluated as “unique,” a program of archaeological mitigation should be formulated for the resource(s). This program should be formulated and implemented prior to construction. This program should include, but not be limited to, monitoring during project-related construction. Monitoring should be undertaken by a qualified archaeologist monitor who would keep a log, document and evaluate all finds, and prepare a report of findings.

In the event that a prehistoric site, burial, or other historic resource is encountered during project-specific construction activities, work should be stopped or relocated until the find is examined and evaluated. In the event a significant prehistoric or historic resource is identified, no further construction should be permitted in that location until a mitigation plan can be formulated and implemented by a qualified archaeologist.

MITIGATION MEASURE 16-1. In the event human remains are discovered during construction, such a find would be reported to the Contra Costa County Coroner’s Office; in the event that the remains are determined to be prehistoric, the Native American Heritage Commission should be notified immediately to permit the designation of a Native American representative, in accordance with State regulations.

Consultation between the archaeological consultants in charge of monitoring, the sponsoring agency or agencies, and the Native American representative would determine the course of action to be taken with the cultural resources in question. A report of findings and analyses of all archaeological data recovered during testing/excavation, monitoring, and any mitigation procedures undertaken would be prepared by a qualified archaeologist. Implementation of this mitigation measure would make this impact less than significant.

IMPACT 16-2. Development of the Specific Plan would require removal of existing structures with no historical value or architectural merit. This impact is considered less than significant.

Development associated with the Specific Plan would require the removal of existing structures. Previous studies within the plan area indicated that loss of existing structures would not be considered a significant impact because the structures surveyed do not represent significant examples of their architectural style, nor were they associated with any known historical events. It is recommended that this finding be confirmed through project-specific surveys to determine if historically significant structures could be displaced by future projects.

MITIGATION MEASURE 16-2. None required.

NOTES: Cultural Resources

¹ City of Pittsburg, *Pittsburg General Plan Update: Existing Conditions and Planning Issues Report*, June 1998.

² Ibid.

³ Contra Costa County, *Draft Environmental Impact Report on the State Route 4 / Bailey Road Interchange Improvement Project*, June 1991.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Elaine Null, personal communication, July 1998.