

1.0 Introduction



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1. PURPOSE OF THIS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The purpose of an environmental impact report (EIR) is to identify a project's significant effects on the environment, identify alternatives to the project, and indicate the manner in which those significant impacts can be mitigated or avoided (California Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21002.1). Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), when preparing a supplemental EIR, the additional CEQA analysis shall focus solely on the incremental changes in the project, changes in circumstances, or new information in comparison to the analysis in the prior certified EIR.¹ As detailed further below, development within both the Entrada South and Valencia Commerce Center (VCC) Planning Areas was previously evaluated under CEQA in an EIR and associated Additional Environmental Analysis, which were certified by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) in 2017. Accordingly, this Draft Supplemental EIR (SEIR) focuses on the incremental changes to the development associated with the Entrada South and VCC Project since its approval in 2017, as well as changes in circumstances and new information since certification of the original EIR by CDFW. A detailed description of the Entrada South and VCC Project is provided in **Section 3.0**, Project Description, of this Draft SEIR.

The Project Site is within the planning boundary of the State-approved Newhall Ranch Resource Management and Development Plan and Spineflower Conservation Plan (RMDP/SCP), which was the subject of an EIR and the Additional Environmental Analysis that was certified by CDFW (SCH No. 2000011025; hereafter collectively referred to as the State-certified EIR).² In the State-certified EIR for the RMDP/SCP, the Project Site is identified as the "Entrada South Planning Area" and the "VCC Planning Area." The Entrada South Planning Area is also sometimes referred to as Entrada South. CDFW certified the State-certified EIR in June 2017, at which time it also approved the

¹ See *CEQA Guidelines Section 15163(b)*; *Friends of the College of San Mateo Gardens v. San Mateo County Community College District* (2016) 1 Cal.4th 937, 949; and *Benton v. Board of Supervisors* (1991) 226 Cal.App.3d 1467, 1482.

² The RMDP/SCP EIR and its Additional Environmental Analysis are available for review at <https://case.planning.lacounty.gov/case/view/rmdp>.

RMDP/SCP and related State permits. The County of Los Angeles (County) was a responsible agency for the RMDP/SCP and participated in the State-certified EIR process through the receipt and review of the Draft and Final EIRs, as well as the Draft and Final Additional Environmental Analysis, and the submittal of comments, which were addressed by CDFW. For purposes of this discussion, the “2017 Project” refers to the resource management activities and development facilitated by the RMDP/SCP as approved by CDFW in 2017 for the Entrada and VCC Planning Areas. The 2017 Project should not be construed to mean that the Project Site has received local entitlements from the County of Los Angeles; rather, the Project Site has received initial environmental clearance through the State-certified EIR in 2017 as provided under CEQA.

The Entrada South and VCC Project as currently proposed reflects minor changes and refinements related to the development of the Entrada and VCC Planning Areas, as compared to the 2017 Project. As such, the Entrada South and VCC Project is referred to herein as the “Modified Project.” The Modified Project provides for continued implementation of the resource management and development activities facilitated by the RMDP/SCP within the Entrada South and VCC Planning Areas. This Draft SEIR is intended to facilitate consideration and approval of additional discretionary entitlements from the County of Los Angeles and other responsible agencies required for the Modified Project in order to develop the Entrada South and VCC Planning Areas. Therefore, in accordance with PRC Section 21080, the Modified Project is subject to environmental review requirements under CEQA. For purposes of CEQA, the County is the Lead Agency for the Modified Project.

This Draft SEIR has been prepared in conformance with CEQA (PRC Section 21000, et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14, California Code of Regulations [CCR] Section 15000, et seq.). CEQA Guidelines Section 15151 defines the standards for EIR adequacy as follows:

An EIR should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision-makers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences. An evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in the light of what is reasonably feasible. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR should summarize the main points of disagreement among the experts. The courts have looked not for perfection but for adequacy, completeness, and a good faith effort at full disclosure.

This Draft SEIR is intended to provide the supplemental environmental information necessary for the County to make a final decision on the requested entitlements for the

Modified Project (PRC Section 21166; State CEQA Guidelines Section 15163). This Draft SEIR is an important document that will ultimately be used by the County Board of Supervisors when considering whether or not to approve, deny, or alter the Modified Project. This Draft SEIR is also intended to support necessary approvals by other agencies.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

This Draft SEIR has been prepared pursuant to CEQA to assess the environmental effects associated with implementation of the Modified Project, as well as the anticipated associated discretionary actions and approvals for the Modified Project, all as compared to the 2017 Project and its associated environmental analysis in the State-certified EIR.

An EIR is the most comprehensive form of environmental documentation identified in CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines and provides the information needed to assess the environmental consequences of a proposed project, to the extent feasible. EIRs are intended to provide an objective, factually supported, full-disclosure analysis of the environmental consequences associated with a proposed project that has the potential to result in significant, adverse environmental impacts. An EIR is also one of various decision-making tools used by a lead agency to consider the merits and disadvantages of a project that is subject to its discretionary authority.

Prior to approving the Modified Project, the County as Lead Agency must consider the information contained in the State-certified EIR as revised in this SEIR; determine whether the SEIR was properly prepared in accordance with CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines; determine that it reflects the independent judgment of the Lead Agency; and adopt findings concerning the Modified Project's significant environmental impacts.

3. FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS FOR THIS DRAFT SEIR

This Draft SEIR analyzes the changes in comparison to the 2017 Project that are proposed as part of the Modified Project. CEQA dictates when a supplemental or subsequent EIR is required for changes made to a project that was previously analyzed under CEQA. Once a project has been approved based on a CEQA analysis contained in an EIR or negative declaration, and the EIR or negative declaration is no longer subject to challenge, CEQA Section 21166 provides that "no subsequent or supplemental environmental impact report shall be required by the lead agency or any responsible agency" unless one of three circumstances apply: (1) substantial changes to the approved project will require major revisions to the certified EIR; (2) substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the approved project is being undertaken will require major revisions to the certified EIR; or (3) new information that was not known and

could not have been known at the time the EIR for the approved project was certified becomes available.³

In accordance with Section 15163 of the CEQA Guidelines, this document:

- Incorporates the State-certified EIR by reference, as discussed in **Section 3.0, Project Description**, of this Draft SEIR.
- Contains information necessary to for the State-certified EIR to adequately address the Modified Project.
- Evaluates the potential environmental impacts of the changes to the 2017 Project that are proposed as part of the Modified Project. When evaluating whether changes to the Modified Project would result in new significant environmental impacts or more severe impacts, this Draft SEIR considers the incremental difference between the 2017 Project and the Modified Project; the environmental review is limited to effects not previously considered and which were not known and could not have been known at the time of the prior environmental analysis.⁴
- Assesses whether new information or changed circumstances would result in new significant impacts or increase the severity of previously identified significant impacts as compared to the analysis presented in the State-certified EIR.

The Modified Project's changes to the 2017 Project are described in **Section 3.0, Project Description**, of this Draft SEIR.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

In accordance with the requirements of CEQA, the County prepared an Initial Study dated October 7, 2021, that identified the topics to be analyzed in the SEIR and scoped out from further analysis those issues for which the Modified Project's impacts would be clearly less than significant or unchanged from those identified in the State-certified EIR.⁵ In

³ CEQA Section 21166.

⁴ See *Citizens for Responsible and Equitable Environmental Development v. City of San Diego* (2011) 196 Cal.App.4th 515 [“An SEIR is not required absent new information, and as Pardee pointed out, information on the effect of greenhouse gas emissions on climate was known long before the City approved the 1994 FEIR...The effect of greenhouse gas emissions on climate could have been raised in 1994 when the City considered the FEIR. A challenge to an EIR must be brought within 30 days of the lead agency's notice of approval...Under PRC Section 21166, an agency may not require an SIER unless 'new information, which was not known and could not have been known at the time the [EIR] was certified as complete, becomes available...”]

⁵ CEQA Guidelines Section 15063(b)(1)(C) and subd. (c)(3)(D).

compliance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) also was prepared and distributed on October 7, 2021, to the State Clearinghouse, various public agencies, and other interested parties for the required 30-day review and comment period. Additionally, a Scoping Meeting was held on October 19, 2021, via Zoom to facilitate public review and comment on the Modified Project. The Initial Study, NOP, NOP comments received by the County, and Scoping Meeting comments are contained in **Appendix 1** of this Draft SEIR, which were reviewed and considered in the preparation of this Draft SEIR.

Based on the review of environmental issues by the County in the Initial Study, this Draft SEIR analyzes the environmental topics listed below.

- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology
- Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
 - Water Supply and Service
 - Wastewater
 - Solid Waste
- Wildfire

Based on the Initial Study included as **Appendix 1** of this Draft SEIR, the following issues were screened out from further review:

- Aesthetics

- Agriculture/forest
- Air Quality—partially screened out (odors)
- Biological Resources—partially screened out (conservation plans)
- Cultural Resources—partially screened out (historical and human remains)
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards—partially screened out (hazardous materials sites, airport land use plans, emergency response)
- Hydrology and Water Quality—partially screened out (groundwater recharge, on-site wastewater treatment, inundation)
- Land Use—partially screened out (physical division of a community, conflicts with plans)
- Mineral resources
- Noise—partially screened out (vibration, airport noise)
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation—partially screened out (hazardous design features), and
- Utilities and Service Systems—partially screened out (new or expanded facilities).

This Draft SEIR was prepared under the direction and supervision of the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning (Regional Planning), Special Projects Section. A 45-day public review period is required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15105. However, the Draft SEIR is being circulated for an extended 60-day public review period. During the 60-day public review period, written comments concerning the adequacy of the Draft SEIR may be submitted by public agencies and interested members of the public to Attention: Subdivisions (Jodie Sackett), County of Los Angeles, Department of Regional Planning, 320 West Temple Street, 13th Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

Public hearings will be held before the Los Angeles County Hearing Examiner, Regional Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors. The Hearing Examiner will conduct a public hearing to take testimony on the Draft SEIR during the public review and comment period. After the public review and comment period, written responses to all written comments and oral testimony pertaining to environmental issues will be prepared as part of the Final SEIR. As required by CEQA, responses to comments submitted by responsible public agencies will be distributed to those agencies for review prior to consideration of the Final SEIR by the Regional Planning Commission. Upon completion of the Final SEIR and other required documentation, the Regional Planning Commission may take various actions necessary to implement the Modified Project including, but not limited to, the following: certify the SEIR; adopt findings relative to the Modified Project's environmental effects; approve, approve with modifications, or deny the requested Vesting Tentative Tract Map, Vesting Tentative Parcel Map, Conditional Use Permit, Oak Tree Permits, Parking Permits, and potential Development Agreements; and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding the requested Zone Change. The Board of Supervisors will complete the public hearing process by adopting, adopting with modifications, or rejecting the SEIR and all Modified Project entitlements.

5. ORGANIZATION OF THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The Draft SEIR is comprised of the following sections:

- 1.0 Introduction.** This section briefly discusses the purpose of the SEIR, identifies the environmental issues assessed in the SEIR, and describes the environmental review process and organization of the SEIR.
- 2.0 Executive Summary.** This section provides a summary of the Modified Project Description, alternatives to the Modified Project, environmental impacts, mitigation measures, areas of controversy known to the Lead Agency, and issues to be resolved.
- 3.0 Project Description.** This section provides a detailed description of the Modified Project, including: Modified Project background; Modified Project location; Modified Project characteristics; Modified Project objectives; a general description of the Modified Project's technical, economic, and environmental characteristics; a list of public agencies expected to use the SEIR and consultation requirements (to the extent known); and a list of permits and other approvals (to the extent known).
- 4.0 Analysis Background.** This section provides a brief description of the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the Project Site as they existed at the time the NOP/Initial Study was published, from both a local and

regional perspective. This section also provides a summary of the regulatory requirements to which the Modified Project would be subject, as well as a description of the methodology used to evaluate the cumulative impacts of the Modified Project, including a discussion of growth forecasts and a list of related projects considered in the cumulative impact analysis.

- 5.0 Environmental Impact Analysis.** This section presents the environmental setting, regulatory setting, Modified Project and cumulative impact analyses, mitigation measures, and conclusions regarding the level of significance after mitigation for each environmental impact issue.
- 6.0 Alternatives to the Modified Project.** This section provides a comparative analysis of alternatives to the Modified Project.
- 7.0 Other Environmental Considerations.** This section provides a discussion of any significant and unavoidable impacts that may result from the Modified Project and, if applicable, the reasons why the Modified Project is being proposed notwithstanding those significant, unavoidable impacts. An analysis of the significant irreversible changes in the environment that would result from the Modified Project, if applicable, also is presented. In addition, this section analyzes the Modified Project's potential growth-inducing impacts which could foster economic or population growth or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly. Furthermore, discussion is provided regarding change of character impacts, which include changes in land use pattern, scale, or visual character. Potential secondary effects caused by implementation of the Modified Project's mitigation measures are also addressed. Finally, a summary of Modified Project impacts that were determined in the Initial Study not to be significant or not requiring further analysis is provided.
- 8.0 Organizations and Persons Consulted.** This section lists the public agencies, public service providers, and other persons consulted in the preparation of this Draft SEIR.
- 9.0 List of Preparers.** This section lists the persons that contributed to the preparation of this Draft SEIR.
- 10.0 References.** This section lists all the references and data sources used in the preparation of the Draft SEIR.
- 11.0 Acronyms, Shortened Terms, and Abbreviations.** This section provides a list of acronyms and abbreviations used in the Draft SEIR.