



**RECIRCULATED NOTICE OF PREPARATION  
DRAFT SUBSEQUENT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT  
STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NO. 2016081013**

**April 16, 2019**

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To: (Please see attached list of Responsible, Trustee, Federal, and Local Agencies, and adjacent property owners)

From: City of Hemet Community Development Department  
445 East Florida Avenue  
Hemet, CA 92543

**CEQA Lead Agency**

Staff Contact: Carole Kendrick, Senior Planner  
City of Hemet Community Development Department  
445 East Florida Avenue  
Hemet, CA 92543  
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**SUBJECT: Rancho Diamante Phase II Specific Plan Amendment (SPA 15-001), General Plan Amendment (GPA 15-002) and Tentative Tract Map No. 36841 – Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SCH NO. 2016081013)**

The City of Hemet (City) is resuming preparation of a Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (Draft Subsequent EIR) for the Rancho Diamante Phase II Specific Plan Amendment, General Plan Amendment, and Tentative Tract Map (Project), and has released this Recirculated Notice of Preparation (NOP) per the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). A prior NOP dated August 3, 2016 was circulated for a 30 day review period from August 3, 2016 to September 1, 2016. This Recirculated NOP is necessitated because of changes to the proposed project submitted by the project applicant subsequent to distribution of the original NOP.

The Project site is located in the Page Ranch Planned Community Development Plan Area that was most recently amended in 2009 as part of Specific Plan Amendment SPA 06-004 (SCH#2007091039). Therefore, the City is conducting environmental review of the Project as a Subsequent EIR in accordance with CEQA Guidelines 150162.

The City wants to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities. As a responsible or trustee agency, your agency may need to use the Subsequent EIR prepared by the City when considering issuance of a permit or other approval for the Project. Information gathered during the NOP comment period will be used to shape and focus future analyses of environmental impacts. Please note that information contained in the NOP comment letters already received in response to the original NOP has already been used to focus analyses of environmental impacts in the working versions of the Subsequent EIR. Consequently, NOP comment letter responses to this Recirculated NOP should focus only on new information, data, concerns, or suggestions that differ from or add onto your agency's prior comment letter.

**NOP COMMENT PERIOD**

The City invites you to submit written comments describing your specific environmental concerns, and if representing a public agency, please identify your specific areas of statutory responsibility, if applicable. Written comments are desired at the earliest possible date, but due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent no later than 30 days after receipt of this notice. **The NOP public**

**comment period begins on April 17, 2019 and ends on May 17, 2019.** Please send your written comments to the City staff contact identified above, and please include your name, address, and contact information in you correspondence.

The Project description, location, and the potential environmental effects are contained in the attached materials. An Initial Study was not prepared for the Project.

Project Title: Rancho Diamante Phase II Specific Plan Amendment (SPA 15-001), General Plan Amendment (GPA 15-002) and Tentative Tract Map No. 36841

Project Applicant: Rancho Diamante Investments, LLC  
c/o Benchmark Pacific  
550 Laguna Drive, Suite B  
Carlsbad, California 92008  
Contact: Richard Robotta  
(760) 450-0444

Date: April 16, 2019

Signature:



Carole Kendrick, Senior Planner

## **I. Project Location**

The 245.07-acre Project site is located in the west/southwest portion of the City (Figures 1 and 2). The Project site comprises Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 465-100-016, 465-100-022, 465-110-020, 465-110-021, 465-110-022, 465-110-023, and 465-110-027. The City of San Jacinto is to the north, and unincorporated Riverside County territory surrounds Hemet on the south, west, and east. Diamond Valley Lake and the Santa Rosa Hills lie south of the City. State Route (SR) 74 and SR 79 provide regional access to the Project vicinity. The Project site is in the Page Ranch Planned Community Development Plan (PCD 79-93) located in the southwest portion of the City. Specifically, the Project site is located between: Warren Road to the east; the Second San Diego Aqueduct to the west; the future new Stetson Road alignment, the Hemet Channel, and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad tracks to the north; and agricultural land to the south. The Project site is approximately one-quarter mile southwest of the Hemet-Ryan Airport (Figure 2).

### *Project Site Conditions*

The Project site is undeveloped and highly disturbed with non-native plants. The majority of the site is regularly plowed for weed abatement. The Project Site is located within the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) San Jacinto Valley Area Plan. Approximately 62.75 acres of the western portion of the Project site are located within MSHCP Criteria Cell 4007 (SU4 Hemet Vernal Pool Areas East) and 20.23 acres of the northeastern portion of the Project site are located within MSHCP Criteria Cell 3892 (SU4 Hemet Vernal Pool Areas East).

Historically, the majority of the site has been used for growing crops, primarily dry farming. A grouping of approximately ten eucalyptus trees stands in the eastern portion of the site just north of the Warren Road/Mustang Way intersection. The Second San Diego Aqueduct abuts the western boundary of the site as an above-ground canal in a north to south direction. The First San Diego Aqueduct traverses the site below ground in a northeasterly to southwesterly direction within a 150-foot-wide easement adjacent and parallel to two Eastern Municipal Water District easements (20-foot and 40-foot) for public utilities. The First and Second San Diego Aqueducts are owned and operated by Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

A drainage channel and a detention basin are located along the southern border of the Project site. The drainage channel and basin were constructed as part of the Tracts 31807 and 31808 located on the east side of Warren Road to collect runoff from the site and adjacent properties. A drainage channel conveys runoff from the existing drainage basin south to the existing channel at Simpson Road. This drainage channel will be improved as part of the Modified Project (Figure 2). Additionally, the Hemet Channel abuts the northern boundary of the site in a northeast/southwest alignment.

The Project site is generally flat and ranges in elevation from approximately 1,510 feet above mean sea level (AMSL) in the northeastern corner of the site to approximately 1,490 feet AMSL in the drainage basin located in the southwestern portion of the site. Site soils include artificial fills, topsoils, young alluvial-valley deposits, and older alluvium. The artificial fill soils were encountered where construction work has been performed on the site in the past associated with the drainage channel and detention basin, old Warren Road, and the Hemet Channel.

The current General Plan land use designation for the Project site is Low Density Residential [2.1 - 5.0 dwelling units/acre (du/ac)], and the current zoning designation is Planned Community Development (PCD 79-93), specifically Page Ranch Planned Community Development Specific Plan. According to the Page Ranch Planned Community Development Specific Plan, the Specific Plan land use designations for the Project site are Low Density Residential R-1 (1 dwelling unit/2.5 acres) and Low-Medium Density R-5 (5 dwelling units/1 acre) (see Figure 3).

### *Surrounding Land Uses*

The Project site is surrounded by primarily undeveloped land to the north, south, and west. Two rural residences are located to the west across the Second San Diego Aqueduct canal, and another rural residence is located to the south. A residential subdivision, Solera Diamond Valley, is located across Warren Road to the east. The Project site is approximately one-quarter mile southwest of the Hemet-Ryan Airport (Figure 2).

The General Plan designates the areas directly north of the Project site across the railroad track for Industrial uses, to the east and west for Low Density Residential (LDR) uses, and to the south for LDR and Mixed Use uses. The zoning of properties surrounding the Project site include Heavy Manufacturing and Heavy Agricultural across the railroad track to the north; Page Ranch Planned Community Development to the east; Specific Plan-Low Density Residential and Specific Plan-Mixed Use to the south; and Open Space and Specific Plan-Low Density Residential to the west.

Figure 1, Regional and Project Location

Figure 2, Aerial View

Figure 3, Existing Page Ranch Community Development Land Use Plan

## II. Project Description

The Rancho Diamante Phase II Project proposes a Specific Plan Amendment (SPA) to the Page Ranch Planned Community Development (PCD) originally approved as PCD 79-93. The PCD was originally adopted in 1980 and functions as an SP, and has been amended several times including the last amendment in 2009 (SPA 06-004).

The Page Ranch PCD/SP regulates land uses within the PCD/SP Planning Area. These regulations specify a variety of land uses governed by a supporting master plan and development standards. The PCD/SP also provides flexibility in terms of both land use and development standards so that a high quality development product is achieved. The PCD/SP land uses include residential uses ranging from Low Density (1 dwelling unit per 2.5 acres) up to High Medium Density (17 dwelling units per acre), Open Space Preserve, Open Space Recreation, Commercial, Industrial, Fire Station, and Public School. Previously-referenced Figure 3 identifies the existing Land Use Plan for Page Ranch.

In addition to the SPA, the Project includes a General Plan Amendment (GPA) and Tentative Tract Map (MAP) applications from the project proponent Rancho Diamante Investments, LLC. The three discretionary actions (SPA, GPA, and MAP) are described below.

**Specific Plan Amendment (SPA 15-001).** The proposed SPA (SPA 15-001) would amend the adopted Page Ranch PCD 79-93/SP within Planning Areas VI, X, and XIII. Planning Areas VI and X are currently separated by the location of New Warren Road, and Planning Area XIII is located in the northeast corner of the Modified Project site. The proposed SPA would revise land use boundaries and planning areas, extend Mustang Way from its current terminus at Warren Road westward and northward through the proposed Modified Project site to the alignment of new Stetson Avenue (on the south side and parallel to the railroad tracks), delete the alignment of new Warren Road through the property, and reduce residential density resulting in a corresponding reduction in the dwelling unit count from 744 to 586 units. The SPA will merge Planning Areas VI and X into Planning Area X due to the deletion of new Warren Road and the extension of Mustang Way and convert the land use designation of former Planning Area VI from Low Density Residential to that of Planning Area X: Low Medium Density Residential. Lastly, the SPA will modify the boundary between Planning Areas X and XIII and change the land use designation for Planning Area XIII from Low Density Residential to Commercial. The SPA also includes associated text changes. Figure 4 presents the proposed land use plan associated with the SPA. Figure 5 presents the existing and proposed Specific Plan Planning Areas.

**General Plan Amendment (GPA 15-002).** The proposed GPA (GPA 15-002) would amend the City's General Plan Circulation Element to delete the future north-south alignment of new Warren Road through the middle portion of the proposed Modified Project site, extend Mustang Way from Warren Road westward and northward to the new Stetson Avenue (Figure 4), and change the classification of Warren Road from a 6-lane arterial to a 4-lane secondary arterial between Domenigoni Parkway and new Stetson Avenue. In addition, the Modified Project would amend the General Plan Land Use Designation for 19.67 acres of the site from Low Density Residential (LDR) to Community Commercial (C-C) in Planning Area XIII located at the southwest corner of Warren Road/New Stetson Road.

**Tentative Tract Map No. 36841 (MAP 15-008).** The proposed Tentative Tract Map (TTM) No. 36841 (MAP 15-008) would subdivide 245.07 acres into 586 single family residential lots on approximately 160.51 acres,<sup>1</sup> one lot for future commercial uses on 19.67 acres, and 64.89 acres of public parks and private HOA parks and open space areas. The new community will contain a mix of residential lot sizes,

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<sup>1</sup> 160.51 acres comprised of 86.55 acres of single family homes, 2.58 acres of street landscape, and 71.38 acres of public streets.



with the smallest lot having a minimum of 5,000 square feet and the largest lot having approximately 10,990 square feet, with an average lot size of 6,434 square feet. Paseos are proposed for dispersed open space, pedestrian pathways, and the conveyance of drainage and other water quality benefits throughout the community. Drainage will be conveyed north to the Hemet Channel or south to the existing drainage channel and basin serving TTM 31807 and 31808, then south in the new drainage channel to Simpson Road. Improvements will be made flanking the existing channel along the southern boundary to ensure its intended function, while preserving the vegetation that has occurred within the existing channel.

Proposed TTM No. 36841 establishes the ultimate subdivision with 586 residential lots. The proposed TTM replaces and expands previously approved TTM No. 35394 (Planning Areas VI, X and XIII) of the Approved Project and is being processed concurrently with the other two discretionary actions associated with the proposed Modified Project. The revised TTM [No. 36841] is shown in Figure 6.

**Offsite Improvements.** Offsite improvements to be implemented under the proposed Project include construction of water and reclaimed water pipelines in the abutting roads, drainage conveyance features, and the construction of the westerly half of Warren Road (Figure 2). The Warren Road improvements include modifications to the Stetson Avenue intersection at the northeast corner of the Project site including a realigned transition back to the existing Warren Road alignment. Proposed utility lines will be constructed to the extent they are required within the rights-of-way of the abutting roads. Offsite utility pipelines will be constructed by others during future offsite road construction. Offsite drainage improvements include connections to the existing Hemet Channel north of the site [installation of seven (7) drainage connections] and improvements to an existing drainage channel from the existing drainage basin in the southwest corner of the Project site extending southerly to Simpson Road. From Simpson Road, the channel would continue to convey runoff south towards Salt Creek without further modifications. Temporary impacts for the channel assume a width of 20 feet for construction purposes on both sides of the ultimate channel and maintenance drive.

Figure 4, Proposed Page Ranch Community Development Land Use Plan

Figure 5, Existing and Proposed Specific Plan Planning Areas

Figure 6, Proposed Tentative Tract Map No. 36841

### III. Required Actions/Permits

To allow for development of the Modified Project, the following discretionary actions are required from the City:

- **Approval of a Specific Plan Amendment (SPA 15-001):** To revise the Page Ranch PCD/SP land use boundaries and planning areas, extend Mustang Way to new Stetson Avenue, delete the alignment of new Warren Road through the property, and reduce the residential density resulting in a corresponding reduction in the unit count from 744 to 586 units.
- **Approval of a General Plan Amendment (GPA 15-002):** To amend the City's General Plan Circulation Element to include the extension of Mustang Way from Warren Road westward to the future realignment of new Stetson Avenue, and to change the classification of Warren Road from a 6-lane arterial to a 4-lane secondary arterial between Domenigoni Parkway and new Stetson Avenue.. In addition, the Modified Project would amend the General Plan Land Use Designation for 19.67 acres of the site from Low Density Residential (LDR) to Community Commercial (C-C),
- **Approval of a Tentative Tract Map (TTM 36841):** To subdivide the 245.07-acre Modified Project site into 586 residential lots, 1 commercial lot, and 64.89 acres of private HOA and public parks and open space areas to implement the proposed Modified Project (e.g., tentative and final maps).
- **Approval of a Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIR):** The City of Hemet has determined an SEIR to the Certified SEIR (SCH #2007091039) is required to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Modified Project. The SEIR to the Certified SEIR (SCH #2007091039) will include mitigation measures, as appropriate, to reduce potential environmental impacts, and will be prepared in accordance with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines. The City of Hemet will consider certification of the SEIR prior to taking action on the requested approvals. In conjunction with Certification of the SEIR and approval of the proposed Modified Project, the City will adopt a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP), which will ensure implementation of the measures and conditions of project approval that were adopted to mitigate or avoid potentially significant effects on the environment.
- **Encroachment Permits:** To excavate or otherwise encroach within the City of Hemet's public road right-of-way and for connections to the existing Hemet Channel for drainage purposes.
- **Any other discretionary approvals:** As required by applicable laws or regulations to implement the proposed Modified Project.

Other non-discretionary actions anticipated to be taken by the City at the staff level as part of the Project include:

- Review and approval of all on- and off-site grading and infrastructure plans, including street and utility improvements pursuant to the conditions of approval.
- Approval of a Preliminary and Final Water Quality Management Plan to mitigate post-construction run-off flows pursuant to the conditions of approval.
- Building permits pursuant to the conditions of approval.
- Any other non-discretionary actions consistent with the conditions of approval to implement the Project.

Other City, regional, and state departments/agencies also may use the Subsequent EIR in conjunction with other required permits and approvals, including (but not limited to) the following:

- Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board [Construction General Permit to comply with the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements].
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife [Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan, Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement (Fish and Game Code Section 1600-1616), Determination of Biologically Equivalent or Superior Preservation].
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service [Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan, Determination of Biologically Equivalent or Superior Preservation].
- Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority [Habitat Acquisition and Negotiation Strategy (HANS) and Joint Project Review (JPR) processes, Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan, Determination of Biologically Equivalent or Superior Preservation, Minor Amendment].
- Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission [Assessment of the Modified Project pursuant to the Hemet-Ryan Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan].
- Metropolitan Water District Southern California [Easements along the First and Second San Diego Aqueducts].
- Eastern Municipal Water District [Provision of wet utilities].
- Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District [Easements for flood control facilities].

#### **IV. Probable Environmental Effects of the Project**

The Subsequent EIR shall contain a detailed Project Description, a map identifying the location of the Project site and surrounding land uses, a description of the existing environmental setting, Project-specific impacts, cumulative impacts, mitigation measures to reduce potentially significant impacts, and an alternatives analysis. It is anticipated that the Subsequent EIR will focus on the following environmental issues:

- A. Aesthetics.**
- B. Agriculture and Forestry Resources.**
- C. Air Quality.**
- D. Biological Resources.**
- E. Cultural Resources.**
- F. Geology and Soils.**
- G. Greenhouse Gas Emissions.**
- H. Hazards and Hazardous Materials.**
- I. Hydrology and Water Quality.**

- J. Land Use and Planning.**
  - K. Mineral Resources.**
  - L. Noise.**
  - M. Population and Housing.**
  - N. Public Services.**
  - O. Recreation.**
  - P. Transportation/Traffic.**
  - Q. Utilities and Service Systems.**
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- V. Future Public Meetings**

As noted previously, a prior NOP dated August 3, 2016 was circulated for a 30-day review period from August 3, 2016 to September 1, 2016. This Recirculated NOP is necessitated because of changes to the proposed project submitted by the project applicant subsequent to distribution of the original NOP.

Prior to approval, the proposed Modified Project will be considered at a City Planning Commission hearing and City Council hearing at future dates to be announced.

## **VI. RESPONSE TO THIS NOP**

Please provide written comments to the City no later than 30 days from receipt of this NOP. According to Section 15082(b) of the *CEQA Statute and Guidelines*, your comments should address the scope and content of environmental information related to your agency's area of statutory responsibility. More specifically, your response should identify the significant environmental issues and reasonable alternatives and mitigation measures that your agency will need to have explored in the Subsequent EIR, and whether your agency will be a responsible agency or trustee agency, as defined by Sections 15381 and 15386 of the *CEQA Statute and Guidelines*, respectively.

Please note that information contained in the NOP comment letters already received in response to the original NOP has already been used to shape and focus the analyses of environmental impacts in the working versions of the Subsequent EIR. Consequently, NOP comment letter responses to this recirculated NOP should focus only on new information, data, concerns, or suggestions that differ from or add onto your agency's prior comment letter.

Please return all comments to the following address:

Carole Kendrick, Senior Planner  
City of Hemet Community Development Department  
445 East Florida Avenue  
Hemet, CA 92543  
Email: [ckendrick@cityofhemet.org](mailto:ckendrick@cityofhemet.org)  
Fax: (951) 765 2359

The City appreciates your conscientious attention to this recirculated NOP.