

## NOTICE OF PREPARATION

DATE: January 20, 2020

TO: State Clearinghouse, Office of Planning and Research (15 copies)  
P.O. Box 3044, Sacramento, CA 925812-3044

LEAD AGENCY: Pauma Band of Luiseño Indians  
1001 Reservation Road,  
P.O. Box 369,  
Pauma Valley, CA 92061

**SUBJECT: Notice of Preparation of an Off-Reservation Tribal Environmental Impact Report for the Pauma Casino Replacement and Hotel Project**

The Pauma Band of Luiseño Indians (Tribe) will be the lead agency for the preparation of a Tribal Environmental Impact Report (TEIR) in accordance with Section 10.8 of its Tribal/State Gaming Compact. The TEIR will analyze the potentially significant off-Reservation environmental impacts of the proposed Casino Expansion and Hotel Project (Project).

The purpose of this notice is to advise and solicit comments and suggestions regarding the preparation of the TEIR, environmental issues to be addressed in the TEIR, and any related issues from Interested Persons including members of the public. Interested Persons are requested to identify in their comments the Off-Reservation environmental issues and reasonable mitigation measures that the Tribe will need to explore in the draft TEIR. Any comments regarding on-Reservation environmental impacts will not be addressed in the draft TEIR. In accordance with the Tribal/State Gaming Compact, this Notice is being provided to the State Clearinghouse in the State Office of Planning and Research ("State Clearinghouse") and to the County of San Diego for distribution to the public. Comments to the Tribe must be provided within thirty (30) days of the date of the receipt of this Notice by the State Clearinghouse and the County.

Please send your written responses to:

Michael Baksh  
Tierra Environmental Services  
10650 Scripps Ranch Blvd., Suite 105  
San Diego, CA 92131

The project description, setting, and potential off-Reservation environmental effects are provided below.

## **Project Description**

This Off-Reservation Tribal Environmental Impact Report (TEIR) addresses the potential off-Reservation environmental effects of the proposed Pauma Casino Expansion Project (Proposed Project), which consists of the replacement of the existing Casino Pauma's temporary spring strung with a permanent facility. The permanent facility will be entirely located on the Tribal trust land south of the existing facility, largely where existing surface parking is currently located. The gaming area will increase from a current 36,000 square feet to 60,000 square feet, and the number of slot machines will increase from 1,000 to 1,500. In addition to the casino replacement, a new four story hotel with 80-100 rooms is proposed.

The proposed Project will improve the long-term socioeconomic condition of the Tribe through the provision of increased revenue and the generation of additional employment opportunities for Tribal members. The proposed Project will also provide additional employment opportunities for non-Tribal members and the opportunity for employment and the purchase of additional goods and services within the project vicinity. The number of employment opportunities is expected to rise from 300 to 700.

## **Project Setting**

The 5,855-acre Pauma and Yuima Reservation is located in the northeastern portion of San Diego County, predominantly in Pauma Valley below Palomar Mountain, within the North County Inland Mountain Region. Two small and unpopulated tracts of land make up the Yuima reservation, in the foothills of the Palomar Mountains east of the main reservation. The Reservation is approximately 8.5 miles northeast of the nearest community of Valley Center, and approximately 45 miles northeast of downtown San Diego. A Regional Location Map is provided in Figure 1, and a Project Location Map is provided in Figure 2.

## **Off-Reservation Environmental Effects of the Project**

Based on requirements of the Tribal/State Gaming Compact, an Off-Reservation Environmental Impact Analysis Checklist will be completed. The environmental issues identified in the Checklist include the following.

1. Aesthetics
2. Agricultural and Forest Resources
3. Air Quality
4. Biological Resources
5. Cultural Resources
6. Energy
7. Geology and Soils
8. Greenhouse Gas Emissions
9. Hazards and Hazardous Materials

10. Hydrology and Water Quality
11. Land Use and Planning
12. Mineral Resources
13. Noise
14. Population and Housing
15. Public Services
16. Recreation
17. Transportation/Traffic
18. Tribal Cultural Resources
19. Utilities and Service Systems
20. Cumulative Effects

Those issues found to have potential adverse effects will be analyzed further in the TEIR, and those issues without potential adverse effects will be identified as such in the checklist along with a brief rationale or reference supporting the conclusion. A brief discussion of each issue is provided below.

**1. Aesthetics.** Potential impacts to the off-Reservation visual environment resulting from project implementation will be analyzed. Appropriate mitigation measures, such as natural tone color choices and materials, landscaping and the use of attractive building materials, will be proposed to reduce any visual impacts.

**2. Agricultural Resources.** All proposed development is on the Reservation. No off-Reservation prime farmland will be converted to non-agricultural uses, no agricultural production will be disrupted, and therefore no impacts to Off-Reservation agricultural resources will occur. Approximately six acres of on-Reservation avocado/orange grove will be converted to non-farmland use.

**3. Air Quality.** An air quality analysis will estimate the pollutant emission rates for the construction and operations phases of the proposed improvements and additions at the casino. The principal component of operations emissions will be motor vehicle use from incoming and outgoing patrons, employees, and vendors; the traffic study will be used as a basis of trip generation data. The new vehicle trips will form the basis for calculating the new emissions, and the TEIR will identify whether the proposed project will conflict with any applicable air quality plan or standard. If it is projected that some of the standards would be exceeded, feasible mitigation measures will be discussed.

**4. Biological Resources.** No construction will occur off-Reservation or outside of areas previously paved or disturbed. No off-Reservation impacts to biological resources are expected.

**5. Cultural Resources.** No construction will occur off-Reservation or outside of areas previously paved or disturbed. No off-Reservation impacts to cultural resources are expected.

**6. Energy.** There are no foreseeable practices during construction or operations that would result in wasteful or dangerous energy consumption, or not in keeping with current standards.

**7. Geology and Soils.** No construction will occur off-Reservation or outside of areas previously paved or disturbed. No off-Reservation impacts to geology and soils will occur.

**8. Greenhouse Gas Emissions.** A short-term temporary increase in greenhouse gas emissions may occur during construction. The air quality analysis will be used to identify potential impacts and if those impacts will effect off-Reservation resources. The air quality analysis will also identify mitigation measures and technical guidance for minimizing the amount of greenhouse gas emissions and potential off-Reservation impact.

**9. Hazards and Hazardous Materials.** No off-Reservation impacts associated with hazards or hazardous materials are expected to result from the proposed Project.

**10. Hydrology and Water Quality.** While the replacement casino and new hotel will require additional water usage, the Pauma Reservation has access to many sources of water which are anticipated to meet the demands of the proposed Project.

**11. Land Use and Planning.** The project site is located on tribal trust land and is located away from off-Reservation land uses. Therefore, no conflict with off-Reservation land uses are anticipated. The TEIR will provide documentation to this effect. The proposed Project will expand the existing gaming facility and provide a new hotel, and therefore is an integral part of the Tribe's overall planned land use for the area.

**12. Mineral Resources.** The proposed Project will not adversely impact any known off-Reservation or on-site mineral resources, and no impacts are expected.

**13. Noise.** Increased traffic may result in increased noise levels along SR-76 between the Reservation and I-15. The traffic generation and distribution data of the traffic analysis will be reviewed to determine if the increased traffic noise will be adverse at any sensitive off-Reservation noise receptors. If any substantial increases are identified, the impact will be assessed in accordance with County of San Diego or Caltrans standards, as appropriate to the roadway, and feasible mitigation measures will be identified. Temporary noise impacts from construction of the expanded facilities will also be evaluated.

**14. Population and Housing.** No substantial off-Reservation population increases are expected and no off-Reservation housing will be displaced. No impacts to population and housing on the Reservation are expected.

**15. Public Services.** The TEIR will identify the potential for the proposed Project to adversely affect off-Reservation public services associated with fire and police protection. The proposed Project is not expected to have any effect on off-Reservation recreational or other public facilities. Solid waste will continue to be transported to Sycamore landfill in accordance with the Reservation's existing provisions for solid waste transport. The Tribe will continue to divert solid waste from local landfills through an extensive recycling program and will coordinate with the

desired service providers for utilities on the Reservation.

**16. Recreation.** The proposed project will not adversely impact off-Reservation recreational opportunities or facilities.

**17. Transportation/Traffic.** A traffic study is being conducted and will include collection of existing traffic counts, analysis of existing traffic conditions, trip generation, analysis of future traffic conditions, and recommendation of mitigation measures. The study will be conducted in coordination with Caltrans and San Diego County and will be attached to the TEIR.

The intersection of SR-76 and Pauma Reservation Road was recently signalized, and Pauma Reservation Road and the entrance to the casino property will accommodate traffic associated with the permanent casino. In the event that additional road improvements are proposed in the future for Pauma Reservation Road, an Encroachment Permit will be required from San Diego County (County), and the County will need to comply with CEQA.

**18. Tribal Cultural Resources.** Archival research has been conducted, and consultation with the Tribe and their Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) will occur. No Tribal Cultural Resources have been identified within the Project area, and due to existing disturbances, Tribal Cultural Resources are unlikely to be found. The Pauma Reservation is recognized as Pauma's traditional cultural settlement.

**19. Utilities and Service Systems.** Existing water and wastewater treatment services will be evaluated. No significant off-Reservation impacts associated with the provisioning of water or treatment of wastewater are expected.

### **Other Mandatory Sections**

Several mandatory sections are required by Section 10.8 of the Tribe's current Tribal-State Gaming Compact.

**Cumulative Effects.** The Off-Reservation cumulative effects associated with the proposed Project will be described based upon a review of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects in the area. It is expected that the emphasis of this analysis will be on traffic impacts.

As required by the Tribal/State Gaming Compact, other mandatory discussions will be provided in the TEIR under the following headings:

- All Significant Effects on the Environment of the Proposed Project
- Any Significant Effect on the Environment that cannot be avoided if the Project is implemented
- Any Significant Effect on the Environment that would be Irreversible if the Project is implemented
- Mitigation Measures Proposed to Minimize Significant Effects on the Environment

- Alternatives to the Project
- Whether any Proposed Mitigation would be Feasible
- Any Direct Growth-Inducing Impacts of the Project
- Whether the Proposed Mitigation would be Effective to Substantially Reduce the Potential Significant Effects on the Environment

### **Environmental Review Process**

Following completion of the 30-day Notice of Preparation review period, the Tribe will incorporate relevant information into the Draft TEIR. The Draft TEIR will be circulated for public review and comment for 30 days. The Tribe will then prepare, certify, and make available to the County of San Diego a Final TEIR that will include the Draft TEIR, or a revision of the Draft; comments and recommendations received on the Draft TEIR; a list of persons, organizations, and public agencies commenting on the Draft TEIR; and responses of the Tribe to significant environmental points raised in the review and consultation process. Before commencement of the proposed Project, and no later than the issuance of the Final TEIR to the County of San Diego, the Tribe will offer to negotiate mitigation matters with the County as specified in Section 10.8 of the Tribal/State Gaming Compact, if not previously resolved.

Sincerely,



Dr. Michael Baksh  
President/Principal Planner

Tierra Environmental Services, Inc.  
10650 Scripps Ranch Blvd., Suite 105  
San Diego, Ca 92131