



NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY (NOA)

Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR)

SCH# 2020070349

City of El Centro General Plan Update

Notice is hereby given that, as the lead agency, the City of El Centro (City), in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has prepared a Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the El Centro General Plan Update (project or General Plan Update). The General Plan Update is considered a project under CEQA (Guidelines Section 15378), and the City has discretionary authority over the project (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15357).

Project Location: The City encompasses approximately 11 square miles and is the largest city in the Imperial Valley. It is in the County of Imperial, Southern California, 11 miles north of the United States–Mexico border; is adjacent to the City of Imperial along its northern boundary; and is approximately 120 miles east of the City of San Diego. Interstate 8 provides a regional east–west connection, which leads to north–south connectivity by way of State Route 86 in the City and State Route 111 east of the City.

Project Description: The City is undertaking updates to the Land Use Element and Mobility Element of its General Plan and the creation of a new Environmental Justice Element. The General Plan was last updated in 2004. The updates are being funded by a grant from the Sustainable Communities Program administered by the California Department of Transportation.

Land Use Element Update

The proposed update to the Land Use Element in the General Plan would be based on the City’s existing Vision 2050 Strategic Plan (2015); Project Shape; policy direction from the City Council, Planning Commission, and staff; and input from the Community Advisory Committee and the public. The overall goal of the Land Use Element Update would be to create a land use plan that would promote quality of life, health, and safety; meet the needs of the City’s residents; support multiple modes of transportation; foster economic prosperity; provide a range of affordable housing options; be sustainable and environmentally responsible; encourage social cohesion and equity; and reflect and celebrate the City’s unique character, culture, identity, and traditions. It would incorporate policies that integrate land use and transportation strategies to increase the share of bicycle, transit, and pedestrian trips, reducing greenhouse gas emissions. An overarching objective of the update would be to promote infill development and encourage efficient development patterns to spur economic revitalization, provide opportunities for innovative lifestyles envisioned by the Vision 2050 Strategic Plan (2015), and promote environmental justice. As part of the updates to the El Centro General Plan, five opportunity areas were identified throughout the City targeting larger, specific areas for anticipated change.

Mobility Element Update

The proposed update to the Mobility Element would be based on the current Circulation Element in the El Centro General Plan (2004), Bicycle Master Plan (2010), Vision 2050 Strategic Plan (2015), and Active Transportation and Safe Routes to School Plan (2019). Specific objectives of the Mobility Element Update would include adopting Complete Streets policies that are accessible to all ages, supporting a safe pedestrian and bicycle transportation network, promoting a public transportation network that allows convenient



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access to major destinations, offering appropriate vehicle circulation, and providing a safe and efficient mobility system. The overall goal of the Mobility Element Update would be a balanced, interconnected, multimodal transportation network that accommodates future growth for the City.

Environmental Justice Element Preparation

The Environmental Justice Element is a new state requirement for jurisdictions with disadvantaged communities and represents an opportunity to develop new goals and policies that reduce the unique or compounded health risks in the community. The Environmental Justice Element would examine the impact negative environmental factors have on disadvantaged communities in the City, including pollution exposure, land use incompatibility, food access, safe and sanitary homes, and physical activity. Potential opportunities for improvement include expanding public participation, increasing collaboration with associated public agencies and organizations, promoting food security and healthy eating, increasing opportunities for physical activity, addressing housing affordability and homelessness, and incorporating plans for new public facilities in strategic locations.

Based on the analysis and conclusions in the Draft PEIR, the project would result in potentially significant and unavoidable environmental impacts related to (1) agricultural and forestry resources, (2) air quality, (3) cultural and tribal resources, (4) greenhouse gas emissions, (5) noise, and (6) transportation.

The project would result in potentially significant impacts that would be reduced to less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures related to (1) air quality, (2) biological resources, (3) cultural and tribal cultural resources, and (4) noise.

The Draft PEIR for the General Plan Update can be reviewed by appointment only during regular business hours at the following locations:

Community Development Department
1275 Main Street, El Centro, California 92243

El Centro Public Library
1140 N. Imperial Avenue, El Centro, California 92243

Electronic copies of the Draft PEIR and the Draft Land Use Element, Mobility Element, and Environmental Justice Element can be reviewed and downloaded from the City's website here: tinyurl.com/EC2040GPU.

Written and electronic comments regarding the Draft PEIR must be received by mail or email at the following address starting on March 9, 2021, and ending on April 23, 2021, at 5:00 p.m.:

Angel Hernandez, AICP, Associate Planner
1275 Main Street, El Centro, California 92243
angel_hernandez@cityofelcentro.org

Signature

Date