



## NOTICE OF SCOPING MEETING & PREPARATION OF A DRAFT PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

**Date:** February 3, 2021

**To:** State Clearinghouse, Responsible and Trustee Agencies; Property Owners; and Interested Individuals and Organizations.

**Subject:** A Notice of Scoping Meeting and a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the City of Menifee 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element Update Project, Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) and related Planning Application Nos. General Plan Amendment No. (GPA) PLN21-0022, and Change of Zone No. (CZ) PLN21-0021.

**Scoping Meeting:** To be held virtually via ZOOM on February 25, 2021 at 6 p.m. with Meeting ID: 717 211 9849 and Passcode: 164671. Further information provided below.

**Comment Period:** February 3, 2021 through March 5, 2021

### **Notice of Preparation of a Draft PEIR:**

The City of Menifee (City) will serve as the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and will be responsible for the preparation of a Draft PEIR for the City of Menifee 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element Update Project (Project) referenced above. The PEIR will evaluate the potential significant environmental impacts that may result from implementation of an updated Housing Element and expanded housing potential. Additionally, the PEIR will evaluate the related General Plan Land Use Element, Safety Element, and Environmental Justice component updates that will be evaluated to ensure consistency with the new laws and regulation, General Plan, and updated Housing element policies.

### **Project Setting and Location:**

The Project encompasses the entire City, which is located in the western portion of Riverside County (County). The City is directly north of Murrieta; south of Perris; east of Canyon Lake, Lake Elsinore, and Wildomar; and west of unincorporated County land. The City is characterized by its mixture of residential, commercial, and industrial uses distributed to create an eclectic, diverse community. The City fosters a cohesive range of activity for its residents and visitors which vary from rural uses to urban uses. The City is also poised for continued growth through 2040 in both population and job availability as the Menifee community continues to develop and expand.

### **Project Description:**

The 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element Project includes the following:

#### Housing Element Update

The Housing Element is a California (State)-mandated policy document within the Menifee General Plan that provides direction for the implementation of various programs to meet existing and projected future housing needs for all income levels within the City. The Housing Element provides policies, programs, and actions that accommodate growth, produce opportunity for the development of new housing units, preserve existing housing stock, and assist the existing population.

California Government Code §§65580–65589.8 requires that jurisdictions evaluate and update their Housing Elements every eight years. The current statutory update in the SCAG region covers the eight-year 5<sup>th</sup> Cycle

Housing Element (2013-2021). The City of Menifee 2021-2029 Housing Element is proposed to ensure consistency with current State Housing laws and cover the 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element Update (2021-2029). The Project represents a comprehensive update to the City’s last adopted Housing Element (i.e., the 5<sup>th</sup> Cycle). The Project will include revised goals and policies, and new, modified, and continuing implementation programs.

The Housing Element will provide the City with a coordinated and comprehensive strategy for promoting the production of safe, decent, and affordable housing for all within the City. The Housing Element Update will be prepared to ensure the City establishes policies, procedures, and incentives in its land use planning and development activities that result in maintenance and expansion of the housing supply to adequately accommodate households currently living and expected to live in the City. The Housing Element will institute policies intended to guide City decision-making and establish an Implementation Program to achieve housing goals through the year 2029.

The statutory deadline for adopting the Housing Element is October 15, 2021. The City’s goal is to complete the approval process by August 31, 2021. Regularly scheduled meetings with the Planning Commission, Joint City Council and Planning Commission, and workshops, may be used as a public forum to further discuss associated housing issues, receive public input, discuss options, and provide direction regarding the content of the Housing Element.

### 6th Cycle Housing Element Update Components

The 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element update will consist of five main components:

1. Assessment of City-wide Housing Needs and Opportunities;
2. Drafting of Goals, Policies, Programs, and Objectives (GPPOs);
3. Preparation of CEQA - Environmental Review Documents;
4. Preparation of the Sixth Cycle Housing Element; and
5. Coordination with HCD to Obtain State Certification

Completion of these five components and local adoption process are currently underway and are expected to continue through August 2021, and will include additional public engagement opportunities, such as public workshops and meetings, and public hearings before the City Council and Planning Commission.

### Regional Housing Needs Assessment Allocation (RHNA)

The RHNA is a State Housing law requirement that is part of the periodic process of updating local General Plan Housing Elements. The RHNA allocation process is conducted by regional planning agencies every eight years. On September 3, 2020 the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) adopted the final draft RHNA allocations and distributed the RHNA allocation to all local jurisdictions. The City is a member city of SCAG, which allocates to the Riverside County cities and unincorporated areas their fair share of the total RHNA housing needed for each income category. The RHNA quantifies the housing need within each jurisdiction for all economic segments of the community in four income categories: very low, low, moderate, and above moderate. Each jurisdiction must demonstrate within its Housing Element that it can accommodate its RHNA at all income levels. The City’s RHNA allocation is as follows:

<b>City of Menifee Final Draft RHNA Allocation: 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle (2021 – 2029)</b>			
<b>Income Category</b>	<b>Income Range*</b>		<b>RHNA Allocation (Housing Units)</b>
	Min	Max	
Very Low (31% to 50% MFI)	--	\$37,650	<b>1,756 units</b>
Low (51% to 80% MFI)	\$37,651	\$60,240	<b>1,049 units</b>
Moderate (81% to 120% MFI)	\$61,241	\$90,360	<b>1,104 units</b>
Above Moderate (120% MFI) or more)	\$90,361	> \$91,361	<b>2,685 units</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>6,594 units</b>

\*MFI= Median Family Income. Income ranges are based on the 2020 HUD Median Family Income (MFI) for Riverside County of \$75,300

## **Available Sites and Capacity Analysis**

To comply with Housing Element law, the City must identify candidate housing sites that can accommodate their 2021-2029 RHNA allocation. This may include the identification of current vacant land that can accommodate residential use or infill sites that permit residential development. If the City cannot identify enough sites/parcels appropriately zoned to accommodate RHNA allocations, then the City must identify additional candidate housing sites. Approved specific plans containing entitlements for residential uses were found to accommodate a large portion of the required moderate and above moderate housing units. These specific plans include:

- Cantalena Specific Plan;
- Cimarron Ridge Specific Plan;
- Menifee North Specific Plan;
- Newport Estates Specific Plan;
- Legado Specific Plan;
- Audie Murphy Ranch Specific Plan; and
- Rockport Ranch Specific Plan.

The City is not required to build dwelling units in order to meet its RHNA allocation, only to identify potential sites and create the framework to allow the market the opportunity to develop these units. The Housing Element will explore opportunities to accommodate the RHNA through current production, entitled units, or the availability of properly zoned land that can accommodate additional growth. The Housing Element will further identify and address potential and actual governmental and non-governmental constraints on the development of housing for all income levels.

The City can also accommodate very low- and low-income housing development through the utilization of existing high-density residential zones as well as specific plan areas. To fully generate adequate potential for very low- and low-income housing units, the City proposes to rezone select residential parcels to higher density zones in order to further accommodate the required RHNA units.

### Land Use Element Update

In coordination with the Housing Element update, the General Plan Land Use Element will be evaluated to identify future growth and development patterns. The analysis will outline the existing land uses with undeveloped and underutilized parcels to ensure adequate land for housing, commercial, industrial and public facility uses within the City limits and sphere of influence. The analysis will help identify potential land use conflicts and will be an opportunity to address amendments necessary as part of the Housing Element Update. This will ensure consistency with the Housing Element Update. General Plan land use amendments and rezoning of land may be required as necessary to support the policies of the Housing Element Update.

### Safety Element Update

The General Plan Safety Element will be updated to be consistent with Government Code Section 65302 (g) and to address any relevant safety issue to reduce the potential short and long-term risk to the public from fires, floods, droughts, earthquakes, landslides, climate changes and other hazards. The Safety Element must identify hazards and hazard abatement as well as methods of minimizing risks to guide local decisions related to zoning, subdivisions and entitlement permits and economic disruptions.

The Safety Element shall address at a minimum, seismic, slope instability, flooding, fire, and climate change hazards and create a set of feasible mitigation measures. As the Safety Element directly relates to the topics in the Land Use Element and proposed Environmental Justice policies, any relevant policy will also be updated in applicable elements for consistency. The fire hazard goals and policies of the Safety Element will include input from the Fire Department/CalFire and will identify Fire Hazard Severity Zones based on the latest updated California Department of Forestry High Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps. Finally, State law requires the Draft Safety Element to be submitted to the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection for review 90 days prior to adoption.

## Environmental Justice

Under Senate Bill 1000 (SB 1000), cities are required to incorporate environmental justice goals and policies into the General Plan if they have disadvantaged communities within their jurisdiction and when updating/revising two or more elements of the General Plan. CalEnviroScreen 3.0 is an online Global Info Systems (GIS) mapping tool used to identify disadvantaged communities in the State. While this tool does not show any disadvantaged communities (DACs) for the City of Menifee (i.e., DACs as defined by SB 535), the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) guidance recommends that identification of DACs involve mapping of areas of the City with household incomes that are at or below 80 percent of the area median income, to comply with SB 1000.

For disadvantaged communities identified within the City, the City will analyze existing policies and programs to help identify and develop policies directing resources to disadvantaged communities to improve health, recreation, and economic mobility through cleaner air, better access to transportation, education and employment. This will help inform more equitable development and design to improve community resilience. Environmental justice policies will be located in various Elements of the General Plan, where appropriate.

### **Potential Environmental Effects:**

The City, as the lead agency for the proposed 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element and PEIR, is responsible for environmental review under CEQA. CEQA Guidelines §15063 provide that if a lead agency determines that an EIR will clearly be required for a project, an Initial Study is not required. In this case, the City has already determined that an PEIR will need to be prepared based on the Project's potential to create short-term, long-term, and cumulative impacts. Therefore, a PEIR will be prepared to fully evaluate the potential impacts of the Project. The PEIR will be comprehensive in nature evaluating all identified issues from the 2019 CEQA Initial Study Checklist.

The City will address the following potentially significant impacts in the PEIR: Aesthetics; Air Quality; Biological Resources; Cultural Resources; Energy; Geology and Soils; Greenhouse Gas Emissions; Hazards and Hazardous Materials; Hydrology/Water Quality; Land Use/Planning; Mineral Resources; Noise; Population and Housing; Public Services; Recreation; Transportation and Traffic; Tribal Cultural Resources; Utilities and Service Systems; Wildfire Hazards; and Mandatory Findings of Significance.

The PEIR will address the short-term and long-term effects of the Project on the environment. It will also evaluate the potential for the Project to cause direct and indirect growth-inducing impacts, as well as cumulative impacts. Alternatives to the proposed Project will be evaluated based on their ability to reduce impacts that are determined to be significant in the PEIR. Mitigation may be proposed for those impacts that are determined to be significant. A mitigation monitoring and reporting program (MMRP) will also be developed as required by §15097 of the CEQA Guidelines. The environmental determination in this NOP is subject to a 30-day public review period per Public Resources §21080.4 and CEQA Guidelines §15082. Public agencies, interested organizations, and individuals have the opportunity to comment on the Project, to identify those environmental issues, potentially affected by the Project which should be addressed further by the City of Menifee in the PEIR.

### **Agency/Public Comments:**

This transmittal constitutes the official NOP for the proposed Project PEIR and serves as a request for environmental information that you or your organization believe should be included or addressed in the proposed PEIR document. Please be sure to address the scope and content of environmental information or issues that may relate to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed Project.

### **PEIR Public Scoping Meeting:**

Notice is hereby given that the City of Menifee, Community Development Department will hold a Scoping meeting for the general public and any interested agencies regarding the PEIR addressing the proposed Project. The Scoping meeting will be held on Thursday, February 25, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. The Scoping meeting will be held virtually on ZOOM.

To join the ZOOM meeting please follow this link:

<https://cityofmenifee-us.zoom.us/j/7172119849?pwd=UWlwZjVJWEx4MmNoMwpmMamIFZDUvQT09>

Meeting ID: 717 211 9849

Passcode: 164671

To participate by phone, dial: 1-669-900-6833

Meeting ID: 717 211 9849

Passcode: 164671

**Purpose of the Notice of Preparation:**

The purpose of this NOP is to fulfill legal notification requirements and inform the public, and CEQA Responsible and Trustee Agencies, that an EIR is being prepared for the proposed Project by the City. This NOP solicits agency and interested party concerns regarding the potential environmental effects of implementing the proposed Project at the Project location. CEQA encourages early consultation with private persons and organizations that may have information or may be concerned with any potential adverse environmental effects related to physical changes in the environment that may be caused by implementing the Project. Responses to the NOP that specifically focus on potentially significant environmental issues are of particular interest to the City of Menifee. All written responses to this NOP will be included in the appendices to the PEIR. The content of the responses will help guide the focus and scope of the PEIR in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines.

**Public Comment Period:**

Based on the time limits defined by CEQA, the 30-day public review/comment period on the NOP will commence on February 3, 2021 and conclude on March 5, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. Further information regarding the City's 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element Update and PEIR is available on the City's website:

<https://cityofmenifee.us/658/2021-2029-Housing-Element-Update>

Any responses must be submitted to the City of Menifee, Community Development Department at the earliest possible date, but no later than the March 5, 2021 deadline. Comments must be submitted in writing, or via email, to:

**Douglas A Darnell, Senior Planner**

City of Menifee, Community Development Department

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Menifee, CA 92586

(951) 723-3744

[ddarnell@cityofmenifee.us](mailto:ddarnell@cityofmenifee.us)

**AS A RESULT OF THE COVID-19 VIRUS, AND RESULTING ORDERS AND DIRECTION FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, AND THE RIVERSIDE COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT, AS WELL AS THE CITY OF MENIFEE EMERGENCY DECLARATION, THE PUBLIC WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO PHYSICALLY ATTEND THE MENIFEE MEETING TO WHICH THIS NOP APPLIES. YOU MAY PARTICIPATE IN THE MEETING VIRTUALLY (SEE MEETING PARTICIPATION INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE).**

Attachments:

Exhibit 1 – Regional Map

Exhibit 2 – City Map





Source: Google Earth, 2021

**EXHIBIT 2: City Map**  
City of Meniffee 6th Cycle Housing Element Update Project  
City of Meniffee

