Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report for the City of Corona General Plan Housing Element Update Rezoning Program

TO: Reviewing Agencies and Other Interested Parties

FROM: City of Corona, Lead Agency

PROJECT TITLE: City of Corona General Plan Housing Element Rezoning Program Update

APPLICANT: City of Corona

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: July 1, 2022 through August 1, 2022

The purpose of the NOP is to notify reviewing agencies, including Responsible and Trustee Agencies that the City of Corona, as the Lead Agency will be preparing a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) for the City of Corona General Plan Housing Element Rezoning Program Update for the City’s adopted 2021-2029 Housing Element Update.

The City is requesting comments on the scope and content of the Supplemental EIR from Responsible and Trustee agencies, interested public agencies, organizations and the general public pursuant to State of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines §15082. The City will need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information, which is germane to your agency’s statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed Project. The project description, location, and the probable environmental effects are contained in the Initial Study, which can be accessed at www.CoronaCA.gov/GPUpdate.

Scoping Meeting: As part of the notice of preparation process, the City will hold a public scoping meeting on the future preparation of the Supplemental EIR to the General Plan EIR to receive public comments and suggestions on information that should be included in the environmental analysis for the Project as it relates to the California Environmental Quality Act. The public scoping meeting will be held on July 20, 2022, from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at Corona City Hall, Multi-Purpose Room at 400 S. Vicentia Avenue, Corona, CA 92882.

Public comments can also be submitted in writing and emailed to GPUpdate@CoronaCA.gov or mailed to CITY OF CORONA, CITY HALL, Planning and Development Department, 400 South Vicentia Avenue Corona, California 92882.

Project Location: The Project is located in the City of Corona (Corona), which is in northwestern Riverside County (County). The City is generally bordered by the City of Norco and the City of Riverside to the north and northeast, the City of Chino Hills and the City of Yorba Linda to the northwest, the City of Anaheim to the west, the Cleveland National Forest and the Santa Ana Mountains to the southwest, and

NOP – Corona General Plan Housing Element Rezoning Program Update SEIR

June 29, 2022
unincorporated Riverside County along the remaining City borders, as shown in Figure 1. The Project is interspersed throughout the City, which has a land area of approximately 40 square miles, as shown in Figure 2. The Project would affect specific parcels within the City, by proposing to rezone parcels to accommodate high density residential uses or an Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) zone in order to plan for additional affordable housing units.

**Project Description:** The City’s 2021-2029 Draft Housing Element Update was adopted by the City Council on November 3, 2021 and has been reviewed by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). The City is continuing to work with HCD on obtaining Housing Element compliance.

The General Plan Update EIR certified on June 30, 2020, anticipated an additional 5,494 residential units; however, the State’s Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) allocation for the Housing Element Update now exceeds the City’s housing unit projection for Year 2040 in the General Plan Update. The City’s total RHNA allocation is 6,088 units with 3,888 allocated to low- and moderate-income housing units, consisting of 2,792 units and 1,096 units, respectively. Currently, the City’s RHNA allocation of 6,088 exceeds its projected housing growth by 594 units, in addition to accommodating an additional buffer.

As such, the City is now proposing a rezoning program to accommodate the planning of low- and moderate-income households as required by the state’s RHNA allocation for the City. These additional 594 housing units from the RHNA were not known at the time the General Plan Update EIR was prepared, potentially resulting in additional impacts that were not evaluated in the General Plan Update EIR. Therefore, supplemental environmental evaluation pursuant to CEQA is required to address the potential impacts from growth that could occur as a result of Project implementation.

The proposed Project is ultimately implementing the General Plan. As such, the General Plan Update EIR is incorporated by reference herein, as the evaluations of potential environmental impacts associated with adoption of the General Plan include mitigation measures and consistency evaluations which are directly applicable to the proposed Project.

The City’s Housing Element Update includes an inventory of properties that are intended to be rezoned to high density residential or an Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) zone in order to plan for potential sites to accommodate the RHNA allocation of units that would also be suitable for low- and moderate-income units. The AHO zone is a new zone being proposed by the City to establish by-right development standards for affordable housing projects. The AHO zone will cover existing properties that are currently developed with non-residential land uses. The overlay zone will allow current uses to remain but would allow property owners the option to develop per the underlying General Plan and zoning or the AHO zone. The City is proposing to create development standards (i.e., criteria for building setbacks, parking, building height, landscaping, open space amenities, lot coverage, etc.) and architectural design guidelines for the AHO zone.

In addition to the RHNA allocation, a buffer is necessary to ensure that if one or more of the identified candidate sites are developed at lower densities or with non-housing uses, there would be remaining capacity to ensure an ongoing supply of sites for housing during the eight-year-cycle of the Housing Element. If there were no buffer provided, then the City could be obliged to identify new sites and amend the Housing Element if an identified site were developed with a non-housing project or developed at a density less than that anticipated in the Housing Element. The need for a substantial buffer is even more important during this cycle because of new rules in the Housing Accountability Act’s “no net loss”
provisions. Senate Bill (SB) 166 (2017) requires that the land inventory and site identification programs in the Housing Element always include sufficient sites to accommodate the unmet RHNA.

Table 1 City of Corona RHNA Allocation & Sites Inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lower Income</th>
<th>Moderate Income</th>
<th>Above Moderate Income</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RHNA Allocation</td>
<td>2,792</td>
<td>1,096</td>
<td>2,200</td>
<td>6,088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned and Approved Units</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>2,110</td>
<td>2,202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADUs Anticipated for Development</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remaining RHNA Units Required After Credits</td>
<td>2,746</td>
<td>976</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>3,806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Units</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonvacant Units</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Rezone</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable Housing Overlay (60 du/ac maximum)</td>
<td>3,442</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>4,651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Units</td>
<td>3,837</td>
<td>1,288</td>
<td>1,096</td>
<td>6,221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Buffer of Remaining Needs after Credits</td>
<td>39.5%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Unit Surplus</td>
<td>1,091</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>1,012</td>
<td>2,415</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Anticipated approvals include, but are not limited to:

1) General Plan Amendment  
2) Change of Zone  
3) Amendment to Title 17, Zoning Code of the Corona Municipal Code  
4) Amendment to various specific plans  
5) Adoption of Design Guidelines

Public comments on the Initial Study are invited to be submitted in writing before August 1, 2022. The document is available for review on the city’s website at www.CoronaCA.gov/GPUpdate. The document is also available at Corona City Hall in the Planning and Development Department. Comments should be sent to:

CITY OF CORONA, CITY HALL  
Planning and Development Department  
400 South Vicentia Avenue  
Corona, California 92882-2187  
Contact: Joanne Coletta, Director  
Email: GPUpdate@CoronaCA.gov  
(951) 736-2434
Figure 1 Vicinity Map
Figure 2 City of Corona Boundary and Sphere of Influence
TO:
☒ Reviewing Agencies, Interested Parties, and Organizations
California Department of Planning and Research
Via Electronic Submittal

FROM: Name: City of Corona, Lead Agency
Address: 400 S. Vicentia Avenue
        Suite 120
        Corona, CA 92882
Telephone: (951) 736-2434


The City of Corona will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an environmental impact report for the project identified below. We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the project.

The Project description, location, and the potential environmental effects are contained in the attached materials.

☒ A copy of the Initial Study IS attached.
☐ A copy of the Initial Study IS NOT attached.
☒ The proposed project IS considered a project of statewide, regional or areawide significance.
☐ The proposed project IS NOT considered a project of statewide, regional or areawide significance.
☐ The proposed project WILL affect highways or other facilities under the jurisdiction of the State Department of Transportation.
☒ The proposed project WILL NOT affect highways or other facilities under the jurisdiction of the State Department of Transportation.
☒ A scoping meeting WILL be held by the Lead Agency.
☐ A scoping meeting WILL NOT be held by the Lead Agency.

If the project meets the criteria requiring the scoping meeting, or if the agency voluntarily elects to hold such a meeting, the date, time and location of the scoping meeting are as follows:

Date: July 20, 2022  Time: 5:00 p.m.  Location: Corona City Hall, Multi-Purpose Room, 400 S. Vicentia Avenue, Corona, CA 92882

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date, but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice.

Please send your response to Joanne Coletta, Planning & Development Director at the address shown above or email at GPUpdate@CoronaCA.gov. We will need the name of a contact person in your agency.

Project Title: City of Corona General Plan Housing Element Rezoning Program Update Project

Project Location – Specific: Identify street address and cross street or attach a map showing project site (preferably a U.S.G.S. 15’ or 7 1/2’ topographical map identified by quadrangle name): City of Corona, California
| **Project Description:** | The City is proposing a rezoning program to accommodate the planning of low and moderate income households as required by the state’s Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) allocation for the City. The City’s Housing Element Update includes an inventory of properties that are intended to be rezoned to high density residential or an Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) zone in order to plan for potential sites to accommodate the RHNA allocation of units that would also be suitable for low- and moderate-income units. The AHO zone is a new zone being proposed by the City to establish by-right development standards for affordable housing projects. The AHO zone will cover existing properties in the City that are currently developed with non-residential land uses. The overlay zone will allow current uses to remain but would allow property owners the option to develop per the underlying General Plan and zoning or the AHO zone. The City is proposing to create development standards (i.e., criteria for building setbacks, parking, building height, landscaping, open space amenities, lot coverage, etc.) and architectural design guidelines for the AHO zone. |
| **Project Applicant (if any):** | City of Corona |
| **California Environmental Protection Agency Hazardous Waste List (if applicable):** | Click to enter text |

| **Date:** June 29, 2022 | **Signature:** Joanne Coletta |
| **Name:** Joanne Coletta | **Title:** Planning and Development Director |
| **Telephone:** (951) 736-2434 |

Consulting firm retained to prepare draft EIR (if applicable):

| **Name:** Stantec Consulting Services Inc. |
| **Address:** 290 Conejo Ridge Avenue |
| **City/State/Zip:** Thousand Oaks, CA 91361 |
| **Contact Person:** Christine Abraham |

**Reference:** California Code of Regulations, Title 14, (CEQA Guidelines) Sections 15082(a), 15103, 15375.