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**Notice of Availability of a Program-Level Draft Environmental Impact Report
for the Monterey 2031 General Plan Update**

February 9, 2024

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Monterey, as the lead agency, is circulating a draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)(SCH# 2023080034) for public review in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act for the Monterey 2031 General Plan Update (General Plan Update).

PROJECT TITLE: Monterey 2031 General Plan Update

PROJECT LOCATION: The City of Monterey is located in northern Monterey County, about 19 miles west of Salinas, 29 miles north of Big Sur, and 120 miles south of San Francisco. The City's General Plan Area (Planning Area) comprises a total of 5,522 acres (8.67 square miles) of incorporated land within the City of Monterey.

Sites included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 (i.e., the "Cortese List") are located within and in the vicinity of the Planning Area's limits.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Background

The Project under review is the Monterey 2031 General Plan Update, which includes updates to the City of Monterey Housing, Land Use, Safety, and Circulation Elements, and is intended to respond to emerging issues and new State laws and guide development and conservation within the Planning Area.

The following are some of the specific objectives of the targeted General Plan Update: 1) Address the Regional Housing Needs Allocation, 2) Provide a variety of housing opportunities, 3) Provide equal housing opportunities, 4) Address affordable housing needs, 5) Address the housing needs of special needs groups, 6) Remove potential constraints to housing, 7) Maintain existing housing, 8) Provide adequate housing sites, 9) Promote sustainability and energy efficiency, 10) Address risks from natural hazards, and 11) Consistency with the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan.

Housing Element Update

Under State law, each city and county in California must plan to accommodate its share of the regional housing need—called the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA)—for the coming 8-year planning period, which runs from December 15, 2023, through December 15, 2031. The State determines the estimated need for new housing in each region of California, based on population projections and other factors including rates of vacancy, overcrowding, and cost-burden. The various

regional planning agencies then allocate a target to each city or town within their jurisdiction, considering factors such as access to jobs, good schools, and healthy environmental conditions. RHNA is split into four categories representing different levels of affordability, based on area median income (AMI) in the county. The affordability categories are as follows:

- Very Low Income - Households making less than 50 percent of AMI
- Low Income - Households making 50–80 percent of AMI
- Moderate Income - Households making 80–120 percent of AMI
- Above Moderate Income - Households making more than 120 percent of AMI

Amid the ongoing housing crisis in California, Monterey is required to plan for at least 3,654 new housing units between 2023 and 2031, including 1,177 Very Low-Income units, 769 Low Income units, 462 Moderate Income units, and 1,246 Above Moderate units. As required by State law, the Draft Housing Element will include an inventory of sites available for housing and a projection of the realistic capacity of the inventory for housing. The Draft Housing Element will also include a Housing Action Plan, organized around community-wide housing goals. Each goal will be supported by policies and implementing programs that describe actions the City will take to help meet its RHNA obligations.

On August 2, 2023, the Draft Housing Element was released for public review. Together with development proposals currently in the pipeline and expected to be approved and constructed within the planning period, the inventory has a total projected capacity for up to 5,787 new homes, which is sufficient to meet the City's assessed share of the regional housing need at all income levels with a buffer. The inventory assumes a combination of strategies to ensure the City meets its RHNA obligations, including:

- Infill development on vacant and underutilized properties downtown and along commercial corridors, including North Fremont Street, Garden Road, Lighthouse Avenue, Del Monte Avenue, Munras Avenue, and Abrego Street;
- Preparation of a specific plan to guide future residential and mixed-use development in the Fort Ord/Ryan Ranch area, identify infrastructure needs and financing mechanisms, and establish measures to ensure sustainable development and adequate resource protection;
- Facilitating construction of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and junior ADUs that provide affordable housing options on existing residential properties throughout the community; and
- Development or redevelopment of several larger sites to increase the range of housing options available in Monterey.

To accommodate the City's RHNA, the Proposed Plan would focus future development and redevelopment primarily into seven key opportunity areas within the city. These opportunity areas are locations with the greatest potential to accommodate new housing or other types of development based on community input collected in a communitywide survey. Outside of these areas, the existing land use pattern would generally be preserved. Some infill development is anticipated on vacant sites in residential neighborhoods, together with the construction of up to 120 accessory dwelling units (ADUs) citywide. Additionally, implementation of the Proposed Plan would involve the adoption of three new zoning overlays: an educational workforce housing overlay that would permit multifamily housing to be added on Monterey Peninsula United School District (MPUSD) properties in residential neighborhoods; a congregational overlay that would permit the development of affordable housing on properties owned by religious institutions; and an employer sponsored housing overlay that would facilitate development of employee housing on properties owned by major employers in the city, subject to objective standards. Change envisioned reflects existing site constraints, such as existing

long-term leases, existing development agreements, and pending development applications, as well as physical and jurisdictional constraints and market conditions.

The Draft Housing Element includes an Action Plan, organized around six housing goals. Each goal is supported by policies and implementing programs that describe actions the City will take to help meet its RHNA obligations.

Land Use Element Update

The Proposed Plan also involves updates to the Land Use Element of the General Plan. The current Land Use Element incorporates policies and standards that seek to foster compact, walkable, mixed use neighborhoods and provide housing to meet the needs of the local workforce. The Proposed Plan maintains the basic framework and objectives of the existing Land Use Element, but incorporates targeted updates needed to accommodate the City's RHNA allocation as identified in the proposed Housing Element. Specifically, this includes:

- Updating the Commercial land use designation to clarify that multifamily residential uses are permitted in a standalone or mixed use format at up to 30 dwelling units per acre and to establish an allowable non-residential floor area ratio of between 0.25 and 1.0 FAR.;
- Creating a new Mixed Use Neighborhood (MUN) land use classification applicable to the Downtown, Lighthouse Avenue, and North Fremont Avenue Specific Plan areas, as well as to the portion of the former Fort Ord site that is within the City limit. The MUN classification is intended to foster a mix of residential, retail, employment, entertainment, cultural, public, and personal service uses that encourages people to live, work, play, and shop in close proximity. Allowable non-residential floor area ratio is up to 2.0 FAR and maximum permitted residential density is 30 dwelling units per acre, with allowances for higher intensity development in certain areas and under certain conditions as defined in the zoning ordinance, specific plans, or area plans;
- Creating a new Multifamily Residential Overlay (MFR-O) intended to increase opportunities for housing to meet the needs of the local workforce and address a shortage of supply. Attached housing is permitted on sites within the MFR-O at densities of up to 50 dwelling units per acre;
- Renaming the Industrial land use classification Employment to better reflect the range and type of uses permitted, which includes administrative and professional offices, light manufacturing, and research and development at up to 0.8 FAR. Secondary and accessory uses such as restaurants, cafes, printers, and office supply stores to serve the needs of employees and businesses are encouraged;
- Renaming the Public/Semi-Public land use classification Public/Institutional to better reflect the type of facility permitted, which includes public schools, military facilities, the airport, cemetery, large public parking facilities, hospitals, museums, conference center, and some publicly-owned historic buildings;
- Amending the policy framework to reflect the vision for multifamily housing to serve the needs of the local workforce at the Old Capital site and on the 50-acre MPUSD property within the Highway 68 Area Plan boundaries; and further to reflect the vision for an integrated mixed use village in the Fort Ord/Ryan Ranch Area to provide housing, jobs, schools, shops, services and recreation for future residents while also preserving carefully selected areas of natural open space and habitat;

- Revising the projections of development potential citywide and in mixed use areas to match the projections contained in the proposed Housing Element; and
- Updating the map of mixed use areas to show Fort Ord/Ryan Ranch, consistent with the proposed Housing Element.

Additionally, the proposed Land Use Element incorporates a new Airport Compatibility Overlay with performance standards oriented to protecting airport operations and ensuring public safety. The purpose of the overlay is to resolve conflicts with respect to permitted development types and intensities on properties in the vicinity of the Monterey Regional Airport that have resulted from an update to the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP) prepared by the County in 2019. The overlay would be applied to the General Plan Land Use map and would:

- Permit continuance of existing uses and allow for new development or expansion of existing uses consistent with the ALUC infill exemption;
- Establish requirements for ALUC notification and project approval; and
- Incorporate new mitigation requirements for interior noise levels by land use type.

The Draft Land Use Element incorporates a new goal and six supporting policies intended to minimize airport safety hazards and promote compatibility with airport and military operations. Consistent with guidance from the California Governor's Office of Planning and Research, military installations in the planning area are identified and described.

Safety Element Update

Originally adopted in 2005 and amended in 2009, the current Safety Element is organized around eight goals that address seismic, geologic, flood, wildfire, and airport hazards as well as crime, hazardous materials, and emergency preparedness. The Proposed Plan would involve a comprehensive update to the background data and hazard mapping in the Safety Element to reflect current and projected conditions in the Planning Area, along with amendments and additions to policies that strengthen resilience to natural and human made hazards and enhance emergency preparedness and response. Specifically, new and amended Safety Element policies proposed for inclusion would:

- Enhance communitywide emergency preparedness through the creation of neighborhood-level emergency response plans, the organization of annual disaster preparedness training for volunteers and community members, and public awareness activities;
- Strengthen emergency response with enhanced wayfinding and signage, refinements to roadway maintenance and design standards that facilitate efficient emergency evacuation, and coordination with other agencies in Monterey and the surrounding area to develop a coordinated emergency evacuation process; and

Address wildfire risks by promoting proactive vegetation management practices on public and private property, requiring the preparation of Fire Protection Plans for new development in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, including fuel breaks into the design of new subdivisions in and adjacent to wildland-urban interface areas, and incorporating actions to mitigate risk in areas with existing development that does not meet current state and/or locally adopted fire safety standards.

Circulation Element Update

The Proposed Plan incorporates a comprehensive update to the Circulation Element, organized around 11 key goals that seek to promote an integrated multimodal transportation system that provides a range

of safe, equitable, and efficient options for mobility and supports the reduction of transportation related greenhouse gas emissions through the reduction of vehicle miles traveled. Pursuant to the Complete Streets Act (2008), the Draft Circulation Element incorporates strategies for a balanced, multimodal transportation network that meets the needs of all users of streets. The Draft Circulation Element also establishes vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as the metric to measure transportation environmental impacts, includes strategies to prioritize safety over congestion management, and outlines a framework for effectively managing parking supply while encouraging reduced auto travel.

DRAFT EIR OVERVIEW: The Draft EIR is a public information document that assesses the potential physical environmental impacts that could result from implementation of the Project, recommends mitigation measures to lessen or eliminate adverse impacts, examines feasible alternatives to the Project, and is intended to inform City of Monterey decision makers, other responsible agencies and the public. The Draft EIR evaluates potential physical environmental impacts that could result from the Project and identifies that the Project may have significant and unavoidable impacts in the following areas: agricultural resources, air quality, greenhouse gases, transportation, utilities, and wildfire.

COMPLETION AND AVAILABILITY OF THE DRAFT EIR: The City of Monterey issued a Notice of Preparation for a Draft EIR on August 2, 2023. The City has prepared a Draft EIR for the Project in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (California Public Resources Code Section 2100 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (Guidelines) (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Section 15000 et seq). This notice is being sent to Responsible Agencies and other interested parties, including persons who responded to the NOP. The Draft EIR will be uploaded to the State Clearinghouse CEQAnet portal (<http://ceqanet.opr.ca.gov/>). Starting on February 9, 2024, the Draft EIR and its appendices may be viewed and downloaded from the project website under News feed: <https://haveyoursaymonterey.org/monterey2031>

Printed copies of the document are available for public review at the following locations during normal business hours:

Monterey Public Library
625 Pacific Street
Monterey CA 93940

City of Monterey Planning Division
580 Pacific Street (Colton Hall)
Monterey CA 93940

PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT PERIOD: The City invites comments on the Monterey 2031 General Plan Update Draft EIR during a **45-day comment period that begins on February 9, 2024, and ends on March 25, 2024 at 5:00 PM.** The City directs comments to be submitted via email to sabdo@monterey.org. Alternatively, comments may also be submitted in writing by hand delivery or mail to Christy Sabdo, AICP, Senior Associate Planner, City of Monterey Planning Division, 580 Pacific Street, Monterey, CA 93940. Please reference *Monterey 2031 General Plan Update Draft EIR Comments* in all correspondence.

PUBLIC HEARING: Anticipated to be held in April 2024; separate noticing for public hearing