



NOTICE OF PREPARATION (NOP) FOR AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

To: Responsible and Trustee Agencies, Interested Organizations, and Individuals
From: Matthew C. Bassi, Community Development Director, City of Wildomar
Subject: **City of Wildomar Proposed General Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)**

Purpose:

In accordance with Section 15021 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the City of Wildomar, as lead agency, will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for an update to the City of Wildomar General Plan (proposed General Plan). Pursuant to Section 15082(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, the City of Wildomar (City) has issued this Notice of Preparation (NOP) to provide responsible agencies, trustee agencies, and other interested parties with information describing the proposed General Plan and its potential environmental effects.

Project Location:

The City of Wildomar is in western Riverside County, California, and is bordered by the City of Lake Elsinore to the north and northwest, unincorporated Riverside County to the west, City of Murrieta to the south, and City of Menifee to the east. Interstate and regional access to the City is provided by Interstate 15 (I-15), which runs in a general north-south direction through the City. Figure 1, *Regional Location*, and Figure 2, *Citywide Aerial*, show the City in its regional and local contexts [USGS 2018 Wildomar, CA Quadrangle Map, Latitude 33° 35' 39.8034", Longitude -117° 14' 28.104"].

Project Summary:

The City of Wildomar’s proposed General Plan will provide the long-term planning framework for the improvements needed to accommodate the City’s growing population over the 20-year planning horizon. The City could potentially result in a growth of 8,992 dwelling units, 27,999 residents, 2,965,538 non-residential square feet, and 6,724 jobs by 2040 (buildout year), as shown in Table 1, *Proposed General Plan Buildout*.

Table 1 – Proposed General Plan Buildout

	Dwelling Units	Population	Non-Residential Square Footage	Employment
Existing	11,988	37,326	2,992,377	5,841
General Plan Update	20,980	65,325	5,957,915	12,115
Net Change	8,992	27,999	2,965,538	6,274

In addition to the land use map, the proposed General Plan will identify long-term goals; provide a basis for decision-making; provide citizens with a forum for input on their community's direction; and inform citizens, developers, decision-makers, and other cities of the ground rules for development.

The proposed General Plan will advance the City's vision for a safe and active community with high-quality development, urban centers, and corridors while keeping a hometown feel. The proposed General Plan includes comprehensive updates to the required elements under the State Planning and Zoning Law, as well as other optional elements that the City has elected to include in its proposed General Plan: (1) Land Use and Design, (2) Circulation and Mobility, (3) Recreation and Community Services, (4) Open Space and Conservation, (5) Noise, and (6) Economic Development.

The City adopted its 2021-2029 Housing and Safety Elements on October 13, 2021, and therefore, these elements will not be updated as part of the proposed General Plan, other than a possible format change. In addition, Environmental Justice policies will be embedded throughout the proposed General Plan elements. Each proposed General Plan element includes goals and policies that are based, in part, on the City's vision, State and local law, and other considerations.

The Zoning Ordinance and map will also be updated to reflect the changes in the proposed General Plan. Additionally, a Climate Action Memorandum, which will include an analysis of feasible mitigation measures that could be applied to future development projects, will be prepared.

Additional information regarding the General Plan update can be found on the City's website: <https://envisionwildomar2040.com/>

Project Description:

The City's vision is: *"The City of Wildomar will be a safe and active community with responsible growth and quality infrastructure while keeping a hometown feel."*

Development consistent with the vision must also be in line with the core values of the community which provide emphasis on community character; growth, land use, and development; environment; economic health; mobility; and infrastructure and services. The core values are used to develop policies guiding future development.

The projected growth over the next twenty years is guided into areas of the City that have been designated for growth in the existing General Plan, that have the infrastructure to accommodate it, or where the infrastructure can be improved. This means that much of the community is expected to continue the incremental growth allowed by the existing general plan land use map, while allowing for improvements such as enhanced connectivity.

To accommodate the anticipated growth, some of the existing land use designations are proposed to be adjusted so that development uses land more efficiently with more units and population. This will reduce the land area needed to accommodate projected growth. Key corridors in the City will be improved, such as Clinton Keith, which will benefit from planning that capitalizes on the economic potential but also meet the design ideal for the City, and Wildomar Trail west of I-15, which has the potential to evolve in its role as the historical heart of the City.

NOP Public Comment Period:

This NOP is being circulated for a 30-day public review/comment period beginning on **Thursday September 7, 2023, and concluding on Friday, October 6, 2023.** Comments on this NOP should be submitted to the City of Wildomar, Community Development Department at the earliest possible date, but no later than the **October 6, 2023** deadline. Comments must be submitted in writing, or via email, to:

Mr. Matthew Bassi, Community Development Director
City of Wildomar, Community Development Department
23873 Clinton Keith Road, Suite 110, Wildomar, CA 92595
(951) 677-7751, Ext. 213
mbassi@cityofwildomar.org

Public Scoping Meeting:

A public scoping meeting will be conducted to provide the public with the opportunity to learn more about the proposed General Plan and to provide an opportunity for a full discussion of the environmental issues that are important to the community. The scoping meeting will include a presentation of the extent of the proposed General Plan and a summary of the environmental issues to be analyzed in the EIR. Following the presentation, interested agencies, organizations, and members of the public will be encouraged to present views concerning the environmental issues that should be included in the EIR. The oral and written comments provided during the meeting will assist the City in scoping the potential environmental effects of the project to be addressed by the EIR. The scoping meeting will be held via Zoom on **Monday, September 25, 2023, at 5:00 PM:**

Join from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone, or Android device:

Please click this URL to join:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84353777805>

Meeting ID: 84353777805#

Or iPhone one-tap:

+1-669-444-9171

Environmental Impacts:

The City has determined that the implementation of the proposed General Plan may have a significant effect on the environment. The EIR will evaluate the potential for the proposed General Plan to cause direct and indirect growth-inducing impacts, as well as cumulative impacts. Mitigation will be proposed for those impacts that are determined to be significant, and a mitigation monitoring and reporting program will be developed as required by the CEQA Guidelines (Section 15150). The EIR will evaluate the following topics:

- **Aesthetics:** The City anticipates that the implementation of the proposed General Plan would have impacts on aesthetics in the following areas: scenic highways and light and glare impacts. Although, the overall effect of the proposed General Plan would be to improve the aesthetic quality of the City as new development is required to comply with adopted design standards.
- **Agricultural and Forestry Resources:** The City anticipates that the implementation of the proposed General Plan would have less than significant impacts on agricultural resources in the following areas: agricultural zoning, forest land conversion, and conversion of agricultural land under a Williamson Act contract.

- **Air Quality:** Construction and operation of land uses accommodated under the proposed General Plan would result in air pollutant emissions. Ground disturbance during site development activities will generate dust, and construction equipment will create short-term pollutant emissions. Development accommodated under the proposed General Plan could result in additional vehicular traffic that would generate air pollution, exacerbated by the City's proximity to high-traffic corridors. The proposed General Plan will incorporate policies addressing sources of air pollution.
- **Biological Resources:** The City implements the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) and the Stephen's Kangaroo Rat Habitat Conservation Plan. The proposed General Plan will include policies and action items needed to ensure continued compliance with these habitat conservation plans. Development accommodated under the proposed General Plan may have an adverse effect on rare, threatened, or endangered species and/or the habitat that supports them, which could impact potential development outcomes. In addition, such development could potentially affect existing wildlife corridors including riparian habitat and/or wetlands.
- **Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources:** Development accommodated under the proposed General Plan may have an adverse effect on historic, archaeological, and/or tribal cultural resources. There is the potential for construction-related effects on historical and archaeological resources.
- **Energy:** The construction and operation of development accommodated under the proposed General Plan would require the use of energy in various forms which could impact energy sources.
- **Geology and Soils:** Development accommodated under the proposed General Plan may result in soil erosion or the loss of topsoil and/or allow development in areas with geologic or soils constraints. There could be potential effects associated with geologic or soil limitations, including the discovery of paleontological resources. There could be impacts associated with grading, such as increased wind and water erosion potential. Impacts may involve disruptions of the soil, changes in topography, erosion from wind or water, and other impacts.
- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** While a goal of the proposed General Plan is to help further the reduction in greenhouse gas production from existing operations and future development, it is likely that future development may contribute to cumulative increases in greenhouse gases. The analysis will assume a buildout figure for the existing land use pattern and use traffic data to determine the potential GHG emissions. The EIR will include mitigation measures for reducing greenhouse gases, which would be included in the Climate Action Memorandum. Additionally, the proposed General Plan will include associated action items, such as strategies to increase the intensity and mix of land uses, which could encourage people to walk or bike for short trips, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the City.
- **Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** Development accommodated under the proposed General Plan could have public and environmental health effects related to hazardous material exposure either during construction or during long-term occupation. Portions of the City are also located in areas exposed to fire hazards, which are exacerbated due to ongoing drought conditions.
- **Hydrology and Water Quality:** Development accommodated under the proposed General Plan may affect groundwater supplies, could change drainage patterns, and/or could have the potential to contribute polluted stormwater runoff. There could be impacts related to urban runoff and flooding

potential, as well as to water quality. There is also the threat of ongoing drought conditions leading to a decrease in annual rainfall in the coming years. The limited supply of water in the City could negatively affect future development.

- **Land Use and Planning:** The proposed General Plan affords the City an opportunity to increase the density and mix of land uses for purposes of providing mobility options and to encourage job growth in the City reducing the need to commute.
- **Mineral Resources:** The City is designated as MRZ-3 which includes areas where the available geologic information indicates that while mineral deposits are likely to exist, the significance of the deposit is undetermined. There are no areas within the City that are designated for mineral resource extraction.
- **Noise:** Increases in traffic because of future development accommodated under the proposed General Plan may result in an increase in ambient and transportation noise, although efforts would be made to incorporate higher-density mixed-use development into the proposed General Plan to minimize any increases in transportation noise.
- **Population and Housing:** The proposed project would directly and indirectly induce population growth as a result of development accommodated under the proposed General Plan.
- **Public Services and Utilities and Service Systems:** Additional growth generated by the development accommodated under the proposed General Plan will increase demand for the City's services and utilities. The EIR will evaluate the availability and capacity of the systems to provide for the increase in growth. The City will coordinate with service providers such as the Lake Elsinore Unified School District, Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, and Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District to ensure that service demand can be addressed by these independent agencies.
- **Recreation:** The City's provision of public park space is below the established park standard of 3.0 acres for every 1,000 persons. Potential options for increasing recreational space in the City include working to increase access to alternative recreation spaces, amending established goals and standards in the proposed General Plan, or the construction of additional public recreational space.
- **Transportation:** Future development may result in impacts on area roadways, including roadways outside of the City's jurisdiction. The City will use traffic information and provide a summary of the buildout analysis based on the proposed General Plan land use designations. The proposed General Plan will also include strategies to increase employment opportunities within the City to minimize vehicle trips to other areas by commuters, as well as increase active transportation opportunities.
- **Wildfire:** Portions of the City are subject to an increase in fire hazards due to ongoing drought conditions. The EIR will include a discussion of potential environmental impacts, and the proposed policy or implementation strategy that would address the impact. Also, included will be a discussion of alternatives that could reduce or eliminate an identified impact. If the environmental analysis identifies appropriate mitigation measures, they will be included as policies in the proposed General Plan, or as action items in the implementation strategy.

Type of EIR:

The City will prepare a program EIR pursuant to Section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines. Use of a program EIR allows analysis consistent with the high-level nature of the General Plan. The proposed General Plan EIR will serve as a cumulative impact analysis for implementation of the proposed General Update.

Use of the Proposed General Plan EIR:

Projects implemented after adoption of the proposed General Plan will be examined considering the General Plan EIR to determine whether an additional environmental document must be prepared. In addition, the CEQA Guidelines currently provide for streamlining through Section 15183 (Projects Consistent with a Community Plan or Zoning), Section 15183.3 (Streamlining for Infill Projects), and 15183.5 (Tiering and Streamlining the Analysis of Greenhouse Gas Emissions). The City intends to promote streamlining for future development through certification of the General Plan Update EIR. Later development may have to conduct site-specific environmental analysis; however, the cumulative analysis will be addressed in the General Plan EIR and proposed General Plan policies and implementation strategy.

This transmittal constitutes the official NOP for the EIR and serves as a request for environmental information that you or your organization believe should be included or addressed in the proposed General Plan EIR 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 to the proposed project.

If you have any questions or require additional information regarding this NOP, please contact Matthew C. Bassi, Community Development Director, at (951) 677-7751, Extension 213, or via email at mbassi@cityofwildomar.org.

Sincerely,



Matthew Bassi,
Community Development Director

Attachments:

- Figure 1 Regional Location
- Figure 2 Citywide Aerial