

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This Program Environmental Impact Report (“PEIR”) has been prepared to evaluate environmental impacts associated with the proposed Sustainable Santee Plan: The City’s Roadmap to Greenhouse Gas Reductions (“Sustainable Santee Plan” or “proposed project”) in the City of Santee (City). The City is the “public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving the project” and, as such, is the “Lead Agency” for this project under the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA) (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15367). CEQA requires the Lead Agency to consider the information contained in the PEIR prior to taking any discretionary action. This PEIR is intended to serve as an informational document to be considered by the City during deliberations on the proposed project. The Project approvals associated with the proposed project are described in Section 3.0, Project Description.

An Initial Study (IS), prepared by the City, indicated that the proposed project may have a significant effect on the environment and that an PEIR would be required to fully evaluate potential adverse environmental impacts that may result from implementation of the project. As a result, this Draft PEIR has been prepared in accordance with CEQA, as amended (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21000, et seq.), and the *State CEQA Guidelines for Implementation of CEQA* (California Code of Regulations [CCR], Title 14, Section 15000, et seq.). This PEIR also complies with the procedures established by the City for the implementation of CEQA.

2.1 PURPOSE AND TYPE OF EIR/INTENDED USES OF THE EIR

This Draft PEIR has been prepared to evaluate environmental impacts that may result from implementation of the proposed project. As the Lead Agency, the City is responsible for preparation of this PEIR and, after the comment/response process, certification of the Final Program Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) and is the authority to approve or disapprove the proposed project as described in this PEIR.

This PEIR is a program-level EIR pursuant to *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15168(a)(3), prepared in connection with issuance of rules, regulations, plans, or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program. This EIR has been prepared to analyze environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Sustainable Santee Plan and to also address appropriate and feasible mitigation measures or project alternatives that would minimize or eliminate these impacts. This document is intended to serve as an informational document. Additionally, this EIR would provide the primary source of environmental information for the Lead Agency to consider when exercising any permitting authority or approval power directly related to implementation of the proposed project.

This PEIR is intended to provide decision-makers and the public with information that enables them to consider the environmental consequences of the proposed action. This EIR identifies significant or potentially significant environmental effects, as well as ways in which those impacts can be reduced to less than-significant levels, whether through the imposition of mitigation measures or through the implementation of specific alternatives to the proposed project.

This Draft PEIR analyzes the proposed project under CEQA at a program level. The proposed project includes the adoption of the proposed Sustainable Santee Plan, which is intended to guide the City and future development in achieving sustainability by utilizing resources effectively and reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, as well as prepare for potential climate-related impacts through the implementation of goals, measures, actions, and strategies. This PEIR has been prepared as a Program EIR for the following reasons:

- The Sustainable Santee Plan would be implemented over a large geographic area, which is defined as the total area within the City limits (approximately 16.5 square miles).
- The Sustainable Santee Plan itself does not propose any specific, individual development project. It is a policy-level document that outlines an ongoing program to reduce citywide GHG levels.
- GHG analyses for future discretionary projects can be evaluated against the Sustainable Santee Plan, providing tiering opportunities to streamline future environmental review that is consistent with this Program EIR.

Because this PEIR analyzes the Sustainable Santee Plan at a program level, and no specific, individual development projects are, at this time, known, this programmatic analysis is based on an analysis of anticipated growth of the City of Santee.

2.1.1 Tiering and Analysis of Subsequent Projects

CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5, Tiering and Streamlining the Analysis of GHG Emissions, was added to the *CEQA Guidelines* and describes the criteria needed in a greenhouse gas reduction plan that would allow for the tiering and streamlining of CEQA analysis for subsequent development projects. The following quote is from the *CEQA Guidelines*:

Section 15183.5. Tiering and Streamlining the Analysis of Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

- (a) Lead agencies may analyze and mitigate the significant effects of greenhouse gas emissions at a programmatic level, such as in a general plan, a long range development plan, or a separate plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Later project-specific environmental documents may tier from and/or incorporate by reference that existing programmatic review. Project specific environmental documents may rely on an EIR containing a programmatic analysis of greenhouse gas emissions as provided in section 15152 (tiering), 15167 (staged EIRs) 15168 (program EIRs), 15175-15179.5 (Master EIRs), 15182 (EIRs Prepared for Specific Plans), and 15183 (EIRs Prepared for General Plans, Community Plans, or Zoning).
- (b) **Plans for the Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions.** Public agencies may choose to analyze and mitigate significant greenhouse gas emissions in a plan for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions or similar document. A plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions may be used in a cumulative impacts analysis as set forth below. Pursuant to Sections 15064(h)(3) and 15130(d), a lead agency may determine that a project’s incremental contribution to a cumulative effect is not cumulatively considerable if the project complies

with the requirements in a previously adopted plan or mitigation program under specified circumstances.

(1) Plan Elements: A plan for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions should:

- (A) *Quantify greenhouse gas emissions, both existing and projected over a specified time period, resulting from activities within a defined geographic area;*
- (B) *Establish a level, based on substantial evidence, below which the contribution to greenhouse gas emissions from activities covered by the plan would not be cumulatively considerable;*
- (C) *Identify and analyze the greenhouse gas emissions resulting from specific actions or categories of actions anticipated within the geographic area;*
- (D) *Specify measures or a group of measures, including performance standards, that substantial evidence demonstrates, if implemented on a project-by-project basis, would collectively achieve the specified emissions level;*
- (E) *Establish a mechanism to monitor the plan's progress toward achieving the level and to require amendment if the plan is not achieving specified levels; and*
- (F) *Be adopted in a public process following environmental review.*

(2) **Use with Later Activities.** A plan for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, once adopted following certification of an EIR or adoption of an environmental document, may be used in the cumulative impacts analysis of later projects. An environmental document that relies on a greenhouse gas reduction plan for a cumulative impacts analysis must identify those requirements specified in the plan that apply to the project, and, if those requirements are not otherwise binding and enforceable, incorporate those requirements as mitigation measures applicable to the project. If there is substantial evidence that the effects of a particular project may be cumulatively considerable notwithstanding the project's compliance with the specified requirements in the plan for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, an EIR must be prepared for the project.

Later activities in the program subject to CEQA review must be examined in light of this Program EIR to determine whether additional environmental documentation must be prepared. Specifically, as discretionary activities associated with implementation of and consistent with the Sustainable Santee Plan are proposed, the environmental impacts of implementing those activities will be compared against the analysis set forth in this Program EIR. To the extent that those impacts are within the scope of the Program EIR's comprehensive analysis, no further CEQA documentation would be required. If impacts of later activities are not within the scope of this Program EIR, however, or if individual projects require project-specific analysis of certain impacts, subsequent CEQA review would be required. For additional information, see Chapter 4.0, Existing Environmental Setting, Environmental Analysis Impacts, and Mitigation Measures, of this EIR.

2.2 PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS

In compliance with the *CEQA Guidelines*, the City has taken steps to maximize opportunities for the public and public agencies to participate in the environmental review process. The City conducted the scoping process, issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) and IS for the proposed project, and

determined that an EIR was required to evaluate the potentially significant environmental effects of the proposed project and related actions. Additionally, a public scoping session was conducted, as discussed below.

2.2.1 Notice of Preparation

On August 17, 2017, an NOP for the proposed project was distributed by the City via the California State Clearinghouse (SCH). The SCH issued a project number for the PEIR (SCH No. 2017081030). In accordance with *State CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15082, the NOP was circulated to the agencies and individuals who had requested notification for a period of 30 days (later extended to 46 days), during which time written comments were solicited pertaining to environmental issues/topics that the EIR should evaluate. Comments received regarding the NOP were used to identify additional analysis and potential impacts that could result from implementation of the proposed project. The City received 15 comment letters in response to the NOP. These comment letters are included in Appendix A of this Draft PEIR.

2.2.2 Scoping Meeting and Areas of Controversy

The City held a public scoping meeting on August 31, 2017, to present the proposed project and to solicit input from interested individuals regarding environmental issues that should be addressed in this PEIR. Members of the public attended the meeting. No agency representatives attended the meeting.

2.2.3 AB-52 Consultation

Pursuant to the California Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1, subdivision (b) of CEQA, the City of Santee as Lead Agency initiated consultation with three California Native American tribes that had requested consultation under AB-52 on January 16, 2019. The City received no requests for consultation during the 30-day period provided for such requests.

2.2.4 Public Review Period

This Draft PEIR is being distributed to numerous public agencies and other interested parties for review and comment. The PEIR is also available at the following locations throughout the City and on the City's website.¹

City of Santee
Office of the City Clerk
10601 Magnolia Avenue, Building #2
Santee, California 92071

City of Santee
Development Services Department
10601 Magnolia Avenue, Building #4
Santee, California 92071

¹ <http://www.cityofsanteeca.gov/>

Santee Public Library
9225 Carlton Hills Boulevard, Suite 17
Santee, California 92071

All comments received from agencies and individuals regarding the Draft PEIR will be accepted during the public review period, which will not be less than 45 days, in compliance with CEQA. All comments on the PEIR should be sent to the following City contact person:

John O'Donnell, Principal Planner
City of Santee, Development Services Department
10601 Magnolia Avenue, Building #4
Santee, California 92071
Phone: (619) 258-4100, Ext. 182
Email: jodonnell@CityofSanteeCa.gov

Review Period: March 15, 2019 through April 29, 2019

Following the close of the review period, the City will prepare responses to all comments and will compile these comments and responses into an FEIR. All responses to comments submitted on the PEIR by agencies will be provided to those agencies at least 10 days prior to final action on the project. The City will make findings regarding the extent and nature of the impacts as presented in the FEIR. The FEIR will need to be certified as complete by the City prior to making a decision to approve or deny the project. Public input is encouraged at all public hearings before the City.

2.3 SCOPE OF THIS EIR

As required by *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15128, this PEIR must identify the effects of the proposed project determined not to be significant. The scoping process for this PEIR included the preparation of an IS. Per *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15063, the City prepared an IS to determine whether the project could have a significant effect on the environment. The City determined that the proposed project may have a significant impact on the environment for the issues of Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Global Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, and Land Use and Planning and these issues are therefore discussed in Chapter 4.0 of this document.

In addition to identifying potentially significant impacts of the project that required additional study, the IS also identified effects determined not to be significant consistent with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15063(c)(3)(B). Impacts that were determined to be less than significant were discussed and evaluated in this PEIR in Appendix A, which includes the IS. The analysis determined that the proposed project would result in no impact or less than significant impact to Agricultural Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology/Soils, Hydrology/Water Quality, Mineral Resources, Noise, Population/Housing, Public Services and Recreation, Transportation/Traffic, and Tribal Cultural Resources. For this reason, potential impacts related to the resources listed above are discussed solely in Appendix A of this PEIR.

2.4 FORMAT OF THE EIR

Pursuant to *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15120(c), this PEIR contains the information and analysis required by Sections 15122 through 15131. Each of the required elements is covered in one of the EIR chapters described below.

2.4.1 Chapter 1.0: Executive Summary

Chapter 1.0 contains the Executive Summary of the PEIR document, listing all significant project impacts, mitigation measures that have been recommended to reduce any significant impacts of the proposed project, and the level of significance of each impact following mitigation. The summary is presented in a matrix (tabular) format.

2.4.2 Chapter 2.0: Introduction

Chapter 2.0 contains a discussion of the purpose and intended use of the PEIR, background on project initiation and the NOP, and areas of controversy known to the Lead Agency, including issues raised by the public during its review on the NOP.

2.4.3 Chapter 3.0: Project Description

Chapter 3.0 includes a discussion of the project’s objectives, characteristics, and relationship to land use plans.

2.4.4 Chapter 4.0: Existing Environmental Setting, Environmental Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

Chapter 4.0 includes an analysis of the project’s environmental impacts. It is organized into the following topical sections: Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Global Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, and Land Use/Planning. The environmental setting discussions describe the “existing conditions” of the environment in the City at the time the NOP was prepared and in the vicinity of the City as they pertain to the environmental issues being analyzed (Section 15125 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*).

The project impact discussions identify and focus on the significant environmental effects of the proposed project. The direct and indirect significant effects of the project on the environment are identified and described, giving due consideration to both the short-term and long-term effects, as necessary (Section 15126.2[a] of the *State CEQA Guidelines*).

Chapter 4.0 also includes within each environmental impact analyzed a discussion of the cumulative effects of the project when considered in combination with other projects, causing related impacts, as required by Section 15130 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*.

The discussions of mitigation measures identify and describe feasible measures that could minimize or lessen significant adverse impacts for each significant environmental effect identified in the EIR (Section 15126[e] of the *State CEQA Guidelines*). The level of significance before and after mitigation is reported in each section. Unavoidable adverse effects are identified where mitigation is not expected to reduce the effects to less than significant levels.

2.4.5 Chapter 5.0: Alternatives to the Proposed Project

In accordance with CEQA (Section 15126.6 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*), the alternatives discussion in Chapter 5.0 describes a reasonable range of alternatives that could feasibly attain the basic objectives of the project and are capable of eliminating any significant adverse environmental effects or reducing them to a less than significant level. The alternatives analyzed in Chapter 5.0 include Alternative 1: No Project/No Plan, and Alternative 2: Accelerated Reduction Program.

2.4.6 Chapter 6.0: Long-Term Implications of the Project

Chapter 6.0 includes CEQA-mandated discussions on the following topics as required by Section 15126 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*: (1) significant irreversible environmental changes that would result from implementation of the proposed project; (2) significant adverse environmental impacts for which either no mitigation or only partial mitigation is feasible, and (3) growth-inducing impacts of the proposed project.

2.4.7 Chapter 7.0: Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

PRC Section 21081.6 requires that agencies adopt a mitigation monitoring and reporting program for any project for which findings have been made pursuant to PRC Section 21081. Chapter 7.0 provides a list of all proposed project mitigation measures, defines the parties responsible for implementation and review/approval, and identifies the timing for implementation of each control measure.

2.4.8 Chapter 8.0: List of Preparers, Chapter 9.0: References, and Chapter 10.0: Acronyms and Abbreviations

Chapters 8.0 and 9.0 provide the list of the EIR preparers and technical report authors, and other experts included in the preparation of the EIR; and the references used in this EIR, respectively. Chapter 10.0 provides definitions for acronyms and abbreviations used in the EIR.

2.5 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

As permitted in Section 15150 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, an EIR may reference all or portions of another document that is a matter of public record or is generally available to the public. Information from the documents that have been incorporated by reference has been briefly summarized in the appropriate sections of this EIR, along with a description of how the public may obtain and review these documents. These documents include:

- City of Santee General Plan Elements (as amended); and
- City of Santee Municipal Code and other titles referenced herein

Documents that are incorporated by reference are available for review at the City of Santee, Development Services, located at the address provided above.

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