

SECTION 2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 PURPOSE AND TYPE OF THIS EIR

This Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) has been prepared to evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with the *City of Rancho Cucamonga 2010 General Plan Update*, as required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended (*California Public Resources Code*, Section 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14, *California Code of Regulations* [CCR], Chapter 3, Section 15000 et seq.).

Sections 65300 et seq. of the *California Government Code* requires that each city and county adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of land within its jurisdiction and sphere of influence. The City of Rancho Cucamonga last updated its General Plan in 2001, with the Housing Element updated in 2000. The current proposal is a comprehensive update that revisits the goals, approaches, strategies and implementation programs in the 2001 General Plan, including revisions to the Land Use Plan. This update is intended (1) to address changing conditions in the City and the region and (2) to make the revised General Plan better reflect the desired vision for the City's future.

An action that has the potential for causing a physical change in the environment is considered a "Project" under Section 21065 of CEQA and Section 15378 of the CEQA Guidelines. A "Project" is required to go through an environmental review process in accordance CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines. While the revision/update of a policy document (such as the Rancho Cucamonga General Plan) does not directly lead to environmental impacts or changes to the environment, future development in the City of Rancho Cucamonga, as regulated by the updated General Plan, would potentially result in environmental impacts. Also, the implementation of some programs in the updated or revised General Plan may lead to environmental impacts. Thus, the proposed update is considered a "Project" and subject to the provisions of CEQA.

Since the 2010 General Plan Update has the potential for indirect environmental impacts, this EIR has been prepared as a Program EIR (PEIR), as defined under Section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines as:

15168. Program EIR

(a) General. A program EIR is an EIR which may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related either:

- (1) Geographically,
- (2) A logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions,
- (3) In connection with issuance of rules, regulations, plans, or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program, or
- (4) As individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar environmental effects which can be mitigated in similar ways.

(b) Advantages. Use of a program EIR can provide the following advantages. The program EIR can:

- (1) Provide an occasion for a more exhaustive consideration of effects and alternatives than would be practical in an EIR on an individual action,
 - (2) Ensure consideration of cumulative impacts that might be slighted in a case-by-case analysis,
 - (3) Avoid duplicative reconsideration of basic policy considerations,
 - (4) Allow the Lead Agency to consider broad policy alternatives and program-wide mitigation measures at an early time when the agency has greater flexibility to deal with basic problems or cumulative impacts, and
 - (5) Allow reduction in paperwork.
- (c) Use with Later Activities. Subsequent activities in the program must be examined in the light of the program EIR to determine whether an additional environmental document must be prepared.
- (1) If a later activity would have effects that were not examined in the program EIR, a new Initial Study would need to be prepared leading to either an EIR or a Negative Declaration.
 - (2) If the agency finds that pursuant to Section 15162, no new effects could occur or no new mitigation measures would be required, the agency can approve the activity as being within the scope of the project covered by the program EIR, and no new environmental document would be required.
 - (3) An agency shall incorporate feasible mitigation measures and alternatives developed in the program EIR into subsequent actions in the program.
 - (4) Where the subsequent activities involve site specific operations, the agency should use a written checklist or similar device to document the evaluation of the site and the activity to determine whether the environmental effects of the operation were covered in the program EIR.
 - (5) A program EIR will be most helpful in dealing with subsequent activities if it deals with the effects of the program as specifically and comprehensively as possible. With a good and detailed analysis of the program, many subsequent activities could be found to be within the scope of the project described in the program EIR, and no further environmental documents would be required.

The purpose of this PEIR is to inform the City, trustee and responsible agencies, decision makers, and the general public of the environmental effects anticipated with the approval and implementation of the updated Plan, as well as environmental effects associated with future development and redevelopment that would be allowed under the 2010 General Plan Update. This PEIR: (1) discloses information regarding potential significant adverse environmental impacts; (2) identifies measures that would be effective in reducing or avoiding any identified significant adverse impacts; (3) analyzes feasible alternatives to the 2010 General Plan Update and to future development and redevelopment in the City; and (4) fosters interagency coordination and public review.

This PEIR analyzes potential impacts from implementation of the City's 2010 General Plan Update and not any particular development project. As such and with the absence of more detailed information regarding future development projects as they may be proposed, this PEIR cannot and therefore does not evaluate detailed, site-specific and/or project-specific impacts associated with the development or redevelopment of each parcel in the City. Thus, the environmental analysis in this PEIR is broader in scope than found in Project EIRs and seeks to identify the general and cumulative impacts of development and buildout, which allows the City to develop areawide mitigation and programs to address these impacts.

As defined in Section 21094 of CEQA and Section 15152 of the CEQA Guidelines, this PEIR can be used by future development proposals as part of individual and subsequent environmental reviews for proposed development projects in the City, as part of a tiered approach to the environmental review process.

Thus, this PEIR will facilitate the environmental review of programs and development proposals that are approved, constructed, or implemented in the City. The PEIR is intended to serve as the primary environmental document for all future entitlements associated with implementation of the 2010 General Plan Update, including all programs required to implement the General Plan. Upon adoption, future development and redevelopment, as allowed under the 2010 General Plan Update, and implementation programs called out in the 2010 General Plan Update, will be reviewed as required by Section 21166 of CEQA and Section 15162 of the CEQA Guidelines.

2.1.1 AGENCIES HAVING JURISDICTION

State law requires that all EIRs be reviewed by trustee and responsible agencies. A "Trustee Agency" is defined in Section 15386 of the CEQA Guidelines as "a State agency having jurisdiction by law over natural resources affected by a project, which are held in trust for the people of the State of California." Per Section 15381 of the CEQA Guidelines, "the term 'Responsible Agency' includes all public agencies other than the Lead Agency which have discretionary approval power".

The City of Rancho Cucamonga is the Lead Agency for the proposed 2010 General Plan Update. The PEIR will be used by the Rancho Cucamonga City Council in deciding whether to adopt and implement the proposed General Plan Update.

The California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) are Trustee Agencies for sensitive wildlife resources that may be present in the City and that could be disturbed as part of General Plan implementation and future development and redevelopment. These trustee agencies may use this PEIR in their review and approval of discretionary permits needed for future development and redevelopment in the City.

The Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) is a Responsible Agency for discretionary permits needed for storm water discharges from implementation programs and future development and redevelopment in the City.

Other public agencies may also review or use the EIR in considering non-discretionary permits needed for implementation programs and future development proposals. These agencies may use the EIR (1) to evaluate the impacts of projects or developments on their facilities or public service levels during the processing of development and building permits; (2) in conjunction with changes in services that may occur with future development and redevelopment; and (3) to assist other agencies in planning for future facility expansions and service level upgrades needed to serve buildout of the City. These agencies include:

- Rancho Cucamonga Fire Protection District
- San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department
- Inland Empire Utilities Agency
- Alta Loma School District
- Etiwanda School District
- Chaffey Joint Union High School District
- Cucamonga School District
- Chaffey Community College District
- California Department of Transportation
- San Bernardino County (all departments)
- South Coast Air Quality Management District
- Southern California Association of Governments
- San Bernardino Associated Governments
- Cucamonga Valley Water District

In accordance with Section 21081 of CEQA and Section 15091 of the CEQA Guidelines, public agencies are required to make written findings for each environmental impact identified in the PEIR. If the lead agency and responsible agencies decide that the benefits of the 2010 General Plan Update outweigh any identified unmitigated significant environmental effects, they will be required to adopt a statement of overriding considerations supporting their actions. Future discretionary actions that would occur upon the City's adoption of the 2010 General Plan Update as well as those of responsible and trustee agencies, are described in Section 3.5, Intended Uses of the PEIR.

2.1.2 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

As permitted by Section 15150 of the CEQA Guidelines, this PEIR has referenced several technical studies, analyses, and reports. Information from the documents, which have been incorporated by reference into this PEIR, has been briefly summarized in the appropriate sections and the relationship between the incorporated part of the referenced document and the PEIR has been described.

In addition, documents and other sources that have been used in the preparation of this PEIR are identified in Section 8.0, References.

2.2 EIR FOCUS

2.2.1 SCOPING PROCESS

The City of Rancho Cucamonga has provided numerous opportunities for public participation during the planning process for updating its General Plan. These have included: (1) meetings with the GPAC, (2) community workshops, (3) stakeholder interviews, (4) Planning Commission and City Council study sessions, and (5) various community group outreach efforts. In addition, the City has complied with the CEQA Guidelines by providing opportunities for public participation in the environmental review process. Specifically, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) was distributed on November 16, 2009, to Federal, State, regional, and local government agencies and interested parties for a 30-day public review period to solicit comments and to inform agencies and the public of the proposed 2010 General Plan Update. The proposed revisions to the General Plan were described in the NOP, potential environmental effects associated with General Plan implementation were identified, and agencies and the public were invited to review and comment on the NOP. A copy of the NOP is provided in Appendix A.

Responses on the NOP were received from 8 agencies, which raised concerns on the following issues (the section of the EIR where each issue is addressed is identified in parentheses):

- Hazards (Section 4.8, Hazardous Materials);
- Water conservation through recycled water facilities (Section 4.17, Utilities and Service Systems);
- Heavy truck volumes on 4th Street and Milliken Avenue (Section 4.16, Transportation and Traffic);
- Modification of the Vineyard Avenue interchange at the Interstate 10 Freeway (Section 4.16, Transportation and Traffic);
- Hydraulic and water quality impacts to the City of Ontario (Section 4.9, Hydrology and Water Quality);
- Impacts to City of Ontario (Sections 4.1 through 4.17);
- Consistency with the Regional Transportation Plan and Compass Growth Visioning (Section 4.10, Land Use and Planning); and
- Air quality impacts (Section 4.3, Air Quality).

Comments received in response to the NOP are provided in Appendix A.

Additionally, the City of Rancho Cucamonga held a scoping meeting for the 2010 General Plan Update EIR at 2:00 PM on November 23, 2009, at the City of Rancho Cucamonga Tri-Communities Room. The purpose of the scoping meeting was to receive input on the environmental issues that should be addressed in the PEIR.

One private land owner representative attended the scoping meeting. The following environmental issue was raised at the scoping meeting (the section of the PEIR where the issue is addressed is identified in parentheses):

- Land use changes (Section 3.0, Project Description, and Section 4.10, Land Use and Planning).

Additionally, a question was raised at the scoping meeting that did not address environmental issues and is not addressed in this PEIR. This question involved a CEQA-related issue regarding thresholds of significance for the PEIR. It should be noted that this issue was addressed through discussion at the scoping meeting.

The NOP comments and the comment received from the public at the scoping meeting were used to focus the analysis in this PEIR. However, the City determined that all environmental issues should be addressed due to the citywide scope of the 2010 General Plan Update. These environmental issues include:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Climate Change
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation and Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems

2.2.2 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

To facilitate analysis, a standard format was developed to analyze each environmental issue discussed in Section 4.0. This format is presented below, with a brief discussion of the information included within each topic. Please note that references to the City include its Sphere of Influence, unless otherwise expressly qualified.

Relevant Policies and Regulations

This section includes a summary of the existing Federal, State, regional, County, and local laws, regulations, and ordinances that directly relate to the environmental issue being analyzed. These are summarized to provide background information about ongoing policies and programs that are in place and to set the regulatory setting under which projects and development occurs.

Existing Conditions

This section describes the existing environmental conditions and environmental setting related to each environmental issue analyzed in the PEIR. In accordance with Section 15125 of the State CEQA Guidelines, both the existing local and regional settings are discussed as they existed when the NOP was circulated in November 2009. This section provides the baseline conditions with which environmental changes associated with the updated 2010 General Plan Update would be compared and analyzed.

Thresholds of Significance

Section 15126.2 of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR “identify and focus on the significant environmental effects of the proposed project”. “Effects” and “impacts” mean the same under CEQA and are used interchangeably in this PEIR. A “significant effect” or “significant impact” on the environment is “a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project” (14 CCR 15382 [CEQA Guidelines]).

In determining whether an impact is “significant”, Section 15064.7 of the CEQA Guidelines encourages each public agency to develop and publish thresholds of significance to use in determining the significance of an environmental impact. These thresholds may consist of identifiable quantitative, qualitative, or performance level criteria used to determine non-compliance or compliance. Non-compliance would mean the effect would be significant, and compliance with the thresholds would mean the effect normally would be less than significant.

The City of Rancho Cucamonga has not adopted thresholds of significance. Thus, the significance criteria used in the analysis in Section 4.0, Environmental Setting, Thresholds of Significance, Environmental Impacts, Mitigation Measures, Cumulative Impacts, and Level of Significance after Mitigation of this PEIR are derived from Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. In addition, City policies and standards, as well as thresholds adopted by other public agencies with jurisdiction over select environmental issues, are used as thresholds of significance. Also, accepted technical and scientific data are used in some instances to determine if an impact would be considered significant. An effort has been made to avoid overly subjective significance criteria, which are not based in specific CEQA policies, and to use generally accepted thresholds upon which significance can be determined. These thresholds are identified under each environmental issue and have been used in analyzing the potential impacts of the updated General Plan.

General Plan Goals and Policies

While the Rancho Cucamonga 2010 General Plan Update allows future development and redevelopment that could adversely affect the environment, it also seeks to preserve and protect the existing environment and resources in the Study Area. Thus, before an analysis of the potential impacts of the proposed 2010 General Plan Update is provided, components of the updated 2010 General Plan Update related to the environmental topic being analyzed and that would reduce or avoid potential adverse impacts on the environment are called out.

The proposed goals and policies in the Rancho Cucamonga 2010 General Plan Update that relate to each environmental issue are listed in this section, as they may serve to prevent or reduce the significance of potential adverse environmental effects.

Because goals, policies and implementation actions are part of the 2010 General Plan Update and will be implemented over the life of the General Plan, when adopted, they allow the General Plan to be self-mitigating to a large extent. However, these goals, policies, and implementation actions do not constitute mitigation measures as defined by CEQA.

Standard Conditions of Approval

Existing regulations and standard conditions include local, State, or Federal regulations, laws, and ordinances that serve to avoid or reduce potential environmental impacts and are required for all development proposals independent of CEQA review. Also, a number of ongoing programs and practices reduce or avoid environmental impacts. Since all new development and redevelopment would have to comply with these regulations and standard conditions, they are not listed as mitigation measures but are listed in this section as the regulatory framework under which implementation of the updated General Plan would occur.

Environmental Impacts

The analysis of environmental impacts presented in this PEIR identifies specific program-level, direct and indirect, short-term and long-term, and unavoidable impacts of the 2010 General Plan Update. While approval of the 2010 General Plan Update itself would not result in direct or immediate changes to the environment, implementation of the 2010 General Plan Update programs and future development that would be allowed pursuant to the 2010 General Plan Update could result in environmental changes or impacts. These impacts are indirectly attributable to the 2010 General Plan Update and thus are analyzed in this PEIR as “impacts”.

The 2010 General Plan Update goals and policies and other programs are not expected to result in environmental impacts, but are intended to avoid or reduce them.

The thresholds of significance (discussed above) provide the basis for distinguishing between impacts that are determined to be significant (i.e., impact exceeds the threshold of significance) and those that are considered less than significant. The analysis is structured to address each threshold, while considering the residual impact after implementing the proposed 2010 General Plan Update goals and policies and the Standard Conditions (SCs).

Where the investigation of a potential effect concludes that the effect is too speculative or subjective for evaluation, that conclusion is noted and the discussion of that effect is ended. Where the investigation demonstrates that a potential effect does or may (without undue speculation) occur, but is beneficial, that conclusion is noted. Where the investigation demonstrates that a potential effect is not significant or not adverse, that conclusion is noted.

Where the impact analysis demonstrates that a potential effect does or may (without undue speculation) occur and is found to have a substantial or potentially substantial **and** adverse impact on existing physical conditions within the City, that conclusion is noted.

A discussion of mitigation is then provided, along with a summary of the analysis for each threshold.

Cumulative Impacts

While the extent of environmental changes that would occur with individual projects that are proposed, planned, or under construction in the City may not be significant, the sum of the impacts of these cumulative projects and the 2010 General Plan Update may be cumulatively considerable, as defined in Section 15065(c) of the CEQA Guidelines. A discussion of the anticipated environmental changes resulting from the cumulative projects, from implementation of 2010 General Plan Update programs, and from the anticipated development under the 2010 General Plan Update on a cumulative level are addressed in this section. Section 4.0, Environmental Setting, Thresholds of Significance, Environmental Impacts, Mitigation Program, Cumulative Impacts, and Level of Significance after Mitigation contains a more detailed discussion of the cumulative impact analysis methodology.

Mitigation Measures

The mitigation measures (MMs) under each topical issue have been developed, when necessary, to reduce potentially significant adverse impacts after relevant goals and policies of the 2010 General Plan Update and existing regulations and standard conditions (SCs) are implemented.

Where a potentially significant adverse environmental effect has been identified and is not reduced to a level considered less than significant through the application of goals and policies in the 2010 General Plan Update and standard conditions and regulations, mitigation measures have been required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

This section identifies the level of significance of the identified impacts after the implementation of the 2010 General Plan Update goals and policies, standard conditions and existing regulations, and the required mitigation measures. Unavoidable significant adverse impacts are those effects that either cannot be mitigated or that remain significant even after mitigation.

2.2.3 PROJECT SPONSOR AND CONTACT PERSON

The 2010 General Plan Update is a City-sponsored endeavor. The City of Rancho Cucamonga will approve the Update, adopt the General Plan, and implement the General Plan. All inquiries regarding the 2010 General Plan Update and this PEIR should be directed to:

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City of Rancho Cucamonga
Planning Department
10500 Civic Center Drive
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2.3 PUBLIC REVIEW OF THE DRAFT EIR

The Draft Program EIR for the Rancho Cucamonga 2010 General Plan Update is being distributed to responsible and trustee agencies, other affected agencies, surrounding cities, interested parties, and all parties who requested a copy of the PEIR in accordance with CEQA. During the 45-day public review period, this Draft Program EIR, including the technical appendices, is available for review at the following locations:

- City of Rancho Cucamonga
Planning Department
10500 Civic Center Drive
Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730
(909) 477-2750
- Archibald Library
7368 Archibald Avenue
Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730
- Paul A. Biane Library
12505 Cultural Center Drive
Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91739

and

- <http://www.rcgeneralplan.com>

Comments on the Draft PEIR from public agencies and interested individuals will be accepted during the 45-day public review period from February 16, 2010 to April 1, 2010. Comments on the Draft PEIR should be sent to the Lead Agency contact identified above. Upon completion of the 45-day public review period, written responses will be prepared for all significant environmental issues raised in the comment letters and the comments and responses included into the Final Program EIR. All responses to comments submitted on this Draft Program EIR by agencies will also be provided to those agencies at least ten days prior to final action on the proposed General Plan update.