

1.0 INTRODUCTION

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1.1 PURPOSE OF EIR

This EIR has been prepared for the City of Santa Cruz (City), which is the lead agency for the project. This EIR has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code, section 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines, which are found in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, commencing with section 15000. CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines were most recently amended in 2009, and the amendments became effective in 2010.

As stated in the CEQA Guidelines section 15002, the basic purposes of CEQA are to:

- Inform governmental decision-makers and the public about the potential, significant environmental effects of proposed activities.
- Identify the ways that environmental damage can be avoided or significantly reduced.
- Prevent significant, avoidable damage to the environment by requiring changes in projects through the use of alternatives or mitigation measures when the governmental agency finds the changes to be feasible.
- Disclose to the public the reasons why a governmental agency approved the project in the manner the agency chose if significant environmental effects are involved.

Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines section 15121, an EIR is an informational document which will inform public agency decision-makers and the public generally of the significant environmental effects of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project. The public agency shall consider the information in the EIR along with other information which may be presented to the agency. While the information in the EIR does not control the ultimate decision on the project, the agency must consider the information in the EIR and respond to each significant effect identified in the EIR by making findings pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081.

This EIR is being prepared as a “Program EIR” pursuant to section 15168 of the State CEQA Guidelines. A program EIR is an EIR which may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project, such as a General Plan, and are related geographically. A program EIR can provide a more exhaustive consideration of effects and alternatives than would be practical in an EIR on an individual action and can ensure consideration of cumulative

impacts that might be slighted in a case-by-case analysis. A program EIR can be used as part of the environmental review for later individual projects to be carried out pursuant to the project previously analyzed in the program EIR, where impacts have been adequately addressed in the program EIR. This is referred to as “tiering” as set forth in section 15152 of the State CEQA Guidelines. “Tiering” uses the analysis of general matters contained in a broader EIR (such as one prepared for a general plan) with later EIRs and negative declarations on narrower projects, incorporating by reference the general discussions from the broader EIR and concentrating the later EIR or negative declaration solely on the issues specific to the later project. The State CEQA Guidelines encourage agencies to tier the environmental analyses which they prepare for separate but related projects, including general plans, zoning changes, and development projects.

As a program EIR, this document focuses on the overall effect of the *General Plan 2030*. The analysis in this EIR does not examine the effects of site-specific projects that may occur within the overall umbrella of the *General Plan 2030* in the future. The nature of general plans is such that many proposed policies are intended to be general, with details to be worked out during implementation. Thus, many of the impacts and mitigation measures can only be described in general or qualitative terms.

1.2 PROJECT OVERVIEW

This Environmental Impact Report (EIR) addresses the potential environmental effects of the proposed City of Santa Cruz Draft *General Plan 2030* (dated February 27, 2009), which is an update of the City’s existing *General Plan and Local Coastal Plan 1990- 2005* that was adopted in 1992 and subsequently amended. As its title indicates, the draft *General Plan 2030* extends to the year 2030. The proposed General Plan, when adopted, will supersede the 1990-2005 General Plan and its several amendments.

Pursuant to State law, the proposed General Plan includes the following elements required by state law: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Safety, and Noise, and also includes optional subjects set forth in the State General Plan Guidelines prepared by the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research related to community design and economic development. Goals, policies and actions are provided for each element.

The General Plan also includes a Land Use Map as required by State law, which identifies land use designations and graphically depicts the arrangement and location of land uses throughout the City. The *General Plan 2030* Land Use Map and land use designations are largely unchanged from the 1990-2005 General Plan and Local Coastal Program, except for new mixed-use designations along segments of Mission Street, Ocean Street, Soquel Avenue and Water Street. Additionally, land use designations for two sites (“Golf Club Drive” and “Swenson” properties) have been changed.

To aid the environmental analysis, a “buildout” projection was developed, which considers the development potential under the proposed General Plan that is estimated to occur in Santa Cruz by the year 2030. In summary the estimates forecast the following new development by year 2030:

- ❑ 3,350 residential units
- ❑ 1,087,983 square feet of commercial development and 311 hotel rooms
- ❑ 1,273,913 square feet of office space; and
- ❑ 776,926 square feet of industrial development.

1.3 EIR PROCESS

An Initial Study was not prepared for the project in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines section 15060(d) because the City determined that an EIR was required to assess the potential environmental impacts of the project. A Notice of Preparation (NOP) for this EIR was circulated on March 2, 2009 (see Appendix A). The NOP was circulated to the State Clearinghouse and local, regional and federal agencies, as well as organizations and interested citizens. Additionally, an agency scoping meeting and a public scoping meeting were each held on March 16, 2009 to take public comments on the proper scope of the EIR's analysis and project alternatives.

The Draft EIR was published and circulated for review and comment by the public and other interested parties, agencies and organizations for a 60-day review period from September 13, 2011 through November 14, 2011. The State Clearinghouse public review period ended October 27, 2012. This "Final EIR" document includes comments, responses to comments, and revisions to the Draft EIR that were deemed necessary or appropriate after consideration of public comments. This document, in conjunction with the Draft EIR document, dated September 2011, constitutes the Final EIR for the project. Section 15088(b) of the State CEQA Guidelines requires a lead agency to provide a written response to a public agency on comments made by that public agency at least 10 days prior to certifying an EIR. This document has been provided to all agencies, organizations and individuals who commented on the Draft EIR prior to the City Planning Commission hearing. The document also is posted on the City's website.

The Final EIR will be presented to the City Planning Commission and City Council. The City Council must ultimately certify that it has reviewed and considered the information in the EIR, that the EIR has been completed in conformity with the requirements of CEQA, and that the document reflects the City's independent judgment. (See CEQA Guidelines, § 15090, subd. (a).)

Pursuant to sections 21002, 21002.1 and 21081 of CEQA and sections 15091 and 15093 of the State CEQA Guidelines, no public agency shall approve or carry out a project for which an EIR has been certified which identifies one or more significant effects unless both of the following occur:

- (a) The public agency makes one or more of the following findings with respect to each significant effect:
 1. Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effects on the environment.
 2. Those changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and have been or can and should be, adopted by such other agency.

3. Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including considerations for the provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or alternatives identified in the environmental impact report.

(b) With respect to significant effects which were subject to a finding under paragraph (3) of subdivision (a), the public agency finds that specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits of the project outweigh the significant effects on the environment.

Although these determinations (especially regarding feasibility) are made by the public agency's final decision-making body (here, the City Council) based on the entirety of the agency's administrative record as it exists after completion of a final EIR, the draft EIR must provide information regarding the significant effects of the proposed project and must identify the potentially feasible mitigation measures and alternatives to be considered by that decision-making body.

1.4 COMMENTS RECEIVED ON DRAFT EIR

Agencies, organizations and individuals that submitted written comments on the draft EIR are outlined below.

AGENCIES

1. California State Clearinghouse
2. California Native American Heritage Commission
3. LAFCO of Santa Cruz County
4. Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District
5. City of Santa Cruz Water Department
6. United States Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service
7. California Department of Fish and Game (sent to Water Department with comments regarding Urban Water Management Plan and Water Supply Assessment for General Plan 2030)

ORGANIZATIONS

8. Rick Longinotti, Santa Cruz Desal Alternatives
9. Don Stevens, President, Habitat and Watershed Caretakers

INDIVIDUALS

10. Jean Brocklebank
11. John Golder
12. Rick Longinotti (Personal Comments)
13. Andy Schiffrin
14. John Swift

1.5 REPORT ORGANIZATION

The Final EIR is organized with the following sections.

- ❑ **INTRODUCTION**
- ❑ **SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:** This section provides a summary of all impacts, level of significance, and mitigation measures identified for the project, as well as a summary of alternatives. Changes made since circulation of the public review Draft EIR are shown in underlined typeface for additions and ~~striketrough~~-typeface for deletions.
- ❑ **CHANGES TO DRAFT EIR:** This section outlines revisions to the Draft EIR text as a result of review of comments and responses as may be needed. As previously indicated, this document in conjunction with the Draft EIR, dated November 2009, constitutes the Final EIR for the project. This document contains responses to comments received on the Draft EIR.
- ❑ **PUBLIC COMMENTS AND RESPONSES:** Responses to comments immediately follow each comment letter.

A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program is included in Appendix A.