

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the EIR

The City of Oceanside (City) is proposing to modify an approximately 3.5-mile-long segment of the Coast Highway corridor that runs through the city to encourage redevelopment and revitalization of the area. Proposed modifications include lane conversions, Complete Streets improvements, intersection roundabouts, and increased parking and bicycle facilities, as well as an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to create a Coast Highway Incentive District (hereafter referred to as the Incentive District). The Incentive District would provide optional regulations and standards that a developer or property owner may choose in lieu of the existing zoning for development and redevelopment projects within the Incentive District. To implement the Incentive District, amendments to the General Plan, Local Coastal Plan, and Zoning Ordinance would be required. The City, as the lead agency, has prepared this Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to provide the public, trustee agencies, and responsible agencies with information about the potential effects on the local environment associated with the implementation of the proposed Coast Highway Corridor Study Project (proposed project, or project).

1.2 Intended Use of This EIR

This EIR is an informational document that is intended to inform public agency decision makers and the public of the environmental effects of the proposed project and potential mitigation for those effects. This EIR analyzes the environmental effects of the proposed project both at a programmatic level and a project level. In addition, this EIR describes a reasonable range of alternatives to the project. As described in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15168(a), a program EIR is used to provide a means of evaluating a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and that are related to each other: (1) geographically; (2) as 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 continuing programs; or (4) as individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar environmental effects that can be mitigated in similar ways. A joint program- and project-level EIR was determined to be the appropriate CEQA document for the proposed project since the Incentive District would result in issuance of a set of regulations that could be applied to future development in the project area (programmatic), and changes to the configuration and design of Coast Highway have been specified at a level of detail that allows for a more specific project-focused review. Subsequent

activities and components of the project must be compared to this EIR to determine whether additional environmental documentation is required.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15168(c) provides criteria to determine whether actions are adequately addressed in a previously completed program EIR. If a future action is determined to be adequately addressed in this program EIR, no additional CEQA review would be necessary. CEQA Guidelines Section 15168(c)(5) specifies that: “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.” This EIR is as specific as possible regarding both the Complete Streets improvements and Incentive District project components and it is anticipated that the majority of the project would not require additional environmental review as project-level analysis is provided in this EIR.

Future development and redevelopment projects that might occur within the Incentive District would be required to undergo the City’s development review process, where the City would determine if a project is consistent with this EIR pursuant to CEQA requirements. Where specified in this EIR, future development and redevelopment projects would be required to implement all applicable mitigation measures. Once the City has determined a project has demonstrated compliance with this EIR, no subsequent actions would be necessary to fulfill the requirements of CEQA.

1.3 CEQA Environmental Review Process

1.3.1 CEQA Process Overview

This Draft EIR has been prepared in compliance with CEQA (as amended), codified at California Public Resources Code Sections 21000 et seq. and the State CEQA Guidelines in the Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3. The basic purposes of CEQA are to: (1) inform decision makers and the public about the potential, significant environmental effects of proposed activities, (2) identify the ways that environmental effects can be avoided or significantly reduced, (3) prevent significant, avoidable environmental effects by requiring changes in projects through the use of alternatives or mitigation measures when feasible, and (4) disclose to the public the reasons why an implementing agency may approve a project even if significant unavoidable environmental effects are involved.

An EIR uses a multidisciplinary approach, applying social and natural sciences to make a qualitative and quantitative analysis of all the foreseeable environmental impacts that a proposed project would exert on the surrounding area. As stated in CEQA Guidelines Section 15151:

An EIR should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision makers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences. An evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in the light of what is reasonably feasible.

As described in Section 15121(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, this Draft EIR is intended to serve as an informational document for public agency decision makers. Accordingly, this Draft EIR has been prepared to identify and disclose the significant environmental effects of the proposed project, identify mitigation measures to minimize significant effects, and consider reasonable project alternatives. The environmental impact analyses in this Draft EIR are based on a variety of sources, including agency consultation, technical studies, and field surveys. The City will consider the information presented in this Draft EIR, along with other factors, prior to approving the proposed project.

1.3.2 Notice of Preparation and Public Scoping

Pursuant to Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, the lead agency is required to send a Notice of Preparation (NOP) stating that a Draft EIR will be prepared to the state Office of Planning and Research (OPR), responsible and trustee agencies, and federal agencies involved in funding or approving the project. The NOP must provide sufficient information for responsible agencies to make a meaningful response. At a minimum, the NOP must include a description of the project, location of the project, and probable environmental effects of the project (CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(a)(1)). Within 30 days after receiving the NOP, responsible and trustee agencies and the OPR shall provide the lead agency with specific detail about the scope and content of the environmental information related to that agency's area of statutory responsibility that must be included in the Draft EIR (CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(b)).

On June 1, 2016, in accordance with Sections 15063 and 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, the City published a NOP for the Draft EIR and circulated it to governmental agencies, organizations, and persons who may be interested in the proposed project, including nearby landowners, homeowners, and tenants. The NOP requested comments on the scope of the Draft EIR and asked that those agencies with regulatory authority over any aspect of the project to describe that authority. The comment period extended through July 1, 2016. The NOP provided a general description of the proposed actions, a description of the project area, and a preliminary list of potential environmental impacts. Copies of the NOP were made available for public review on the City's website (<http://www.ci.oceanside.ca.us/gov/dev/planning/agendas.asp>) and at the Oceanside City Hall located at 300 North Coast Highway, Oceanside, CA 92054.

On June 23, 2016, in accordance with CEQA Section 21083.9,¹ the City sponsored a public meeting to obtain comments from interested parties on the scope of the Draft EIR. The purpose of the meeting was to present the project to the public through use of display maps, diagrams, and a presentation describing the project components and potential environmental impacts. City staff and members of the local community attended the scoping meeting. Attendees were provided an opportunity to voice comments or concerns regarding potential effects of the project. The issues addressed by participants are summarized and included in this Draft EIR as part of **Appendix A**.

¹ CEQA Section 21083.9 requires that a lead agency call at least one scoping meeting for a project of statewide, regional, or areawide significance.

1.3.3 Draft EIR

The Draft EIR has been prepared pursuant to the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15126. The environmental issues addressed in this Draft EIR were established through review of environmental documentation developed for the project, environmental documentation for nearby projects, and public and agency responses to the NOP. This Draft EIR provides an analysis of reasonably foreseeable impacts associated with the construction and operation of the proposed project. The environmental baseline for determining potential impacts is the date of publication of the NOP for the proposed project (CEQA Guidelines Section 15125(a)). Unless otherwise indicated, the environmental setting for each resource assessed in this Draft EIR describes the existing conditions as of June 2016. The impact analysis is based on changes to existing conditions that would result from implementation of the proposed project.

In accordance with the CEQA Guidelines Section 15126, this Draft EIR describes the proposed project and the existing environmental setting, identifies environmental impacts associated with project implementation, identifies mitigation measures for significant impacts, and provides an analysis of alternatives. Significance criteria have been developed for each environmental resource analyzed in this Draft EIR. The significance criteria are defined at the beginning of each impact analysis section.

1.3.4 Public Review

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15105, this Draft EIR is being circulated and made available to local, state, and federal agencies, and to interested organizations and individuals who may wish to review and comment on the during the 45-day review period. All written comments should be directed to:

City of Oceanside
Engineering Division
c/o John Amberson, Transportation Planner
300 N. Coast Highway
Oceanside, California 92054
JAmberson@ci.oceanside.ca.us

Comments on the EIR must be received by close of business on the last day of the 45-day review period unless the City grants an extension.

1.3.5 Final EIR Publication and Certification

Written and oral comments received in response to the Draft EIR will be addressed in a Response to Comments document that, together with the Draft EIR, will constitute the Final EIR. The City will then consider EIR certification (CEQA Guidelines Section 15090). If the EIR is certified, the City may consider project approval. Prior to approving the project, the City must make written findings with respect to each significant and unavoidable environmental effect identified in the Draft EIR in accordance with Section 15091 of the CEQA Guidelines. In addition, the City must adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations concerning each unmitigated significant

environmental effect identified in the Final EIR (if any). The Statement of Overriding Considerations will be included in the record of the project’s approval and mentioned in the Notice of Determination following CEQA Guidelines Section 15093(c). Pursuant to Section 15094 of the CEQA Guidelines, the City will file a Notice of Determination with the State Clearinghouse and San Diego County Clerk within 5 working days after project approval.

1.3.6 Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

CEQA requires lead agencies to “adopt a reporting and mitigation monitoring program for the changes to the project which it has adopted or made a condition of project approval in order to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment” (CEQA Guidelines Section 15097). The mitigation monitoring program will be available to the public at the same time as the Final EIR.

1.4 Organization of the Draft EIR

This Draft EIR is organized into the following chapters and appendices:

- S. Summary.** The summary provides a synopsis of the project’s potential impacts. It identifies, in an overview fashion, the project under consideration and its objectives. The section also summarizes the project’s impacts and mitigation measures and contains a summary analysis of the alternatives to the project.
- 1. Introduction.** The introduction includes the purpose of an EIR and procedural information.
- 2. Project Description.** The project description includes the project background, project location and setting, site characteristics, project objectives, and the characteristics of the project. The section also includes a summary of the necessary permits and approvals for the project.
- 3. Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures.** This chapter describes the environmental setting and identifies impacts of the proposed project for each of the following environmental resource areas: Aesthetics; Air Quality; Biological Resources; Cultural Resources; Geology, Soils, and Seismicity; Greenhouse Gas Emissions; Hazards and Hazardous Materials; Hydrology and Water Quality; Land Use and Planning; Noise and Vibration; Population and Housing; Public Services; Recreation and Parks; Traffic and Transportation; and Utilities and Service Systems. Mitigation measures to reduce significant impacts of the proposed project to the lowest level feasible are presented for each resource area.
- 4. Cumulative Impacts.** This chapter includes a discussion of the past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects and activities in the surrounding areas. This section also provides an analysis of the cumulative impacts for each issue area analyzed in the Draft EIR.
- 5. Alternatives Analysis.** This chapter presents an overview of the alternatives development process and describes and analyzes the alternatives to the project, including the No Project Alternative.

- 6. Other CEQA Considerations.** This chapter provides an analysis of the extent to which the project's primary and secondary effects would commit resources to uses that future generations would probably be unable to reverse. This chapter also discusses the resource areas determined to have no impact with implementation of the project.
- 7. Acronyms, References, and List of Preparers.** This chapter provides a list of acronyms used throughout the Draft EIR, the resources referenced in the Draft EIR, and a list of the individuals who contributed to the preparation of the Draft EIR.
- 8. Appendices.** The appendices contain important information used to support the analyses and conclusions made in the EIR. Appendices are provided documenting the scoping process, air emissions modeling results, biological resources assessment, cultural resources assessment, greenhouse gas emissions estimate, noise and vibration assessment, traffic modeling results, and energy consumption modeling results.