

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The applicant has requested that the City of Camarillo approve the development of up to 300 residential units on 44.80 acres of the 88.45-acre proposed St. John's Seminary Residential Community Project site (project site). Within the 44.80-acre development envelope, implementation of the proposed St. John's Seminary Residential Community Project (proposed project) would permit a mix of residential, open space, and recreational land uses. The focus of the proposed project is a senior citizen housing development of up to 300 residential units. These residential units would be comprised of a mix of traditional single family detached dwelling units, clustered single family detached units, and clustered duplex units. Residential units would generally be developed in clusters separated by areas of landscaped open space (see **Figure 3.0-3, Conceptual Site Plan in Project Description**). The proposed project would also include a new 0.26 acre (11,297 square foot) trailhead located off of Upland Road, along the southern boundary of the project site. The new trailhead site would provide 16 parking spaces (15 standard and one ADA complaint), along with picnicking facilities, landscaping, lighting and way-finding signage.

The preparation of an environmental impact report (EIR) is required to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The City of Camarillo initiated the environmental review process as outlined in the City's local CEQA Guidelines.

The approximately 88.45-acre project site is part of the 134-acre property historically known as St. John's Seminary Site, located on the south and east banks of Calleguas Creek within the corporate boundary of the City of Camarillo (refer to **Figure 3.0-2, Regional Location Map**). Within the project site is the closed St. John's Seminary College site, which was constructed from 1961 to 1963. This portion of the site housed a four-year undergraduate program until the Archdiocese stopped enrolling new students in 2003 due to declining enrollment and permanently closed the College in 2005 following the graduation of the last students. The St. John's campus also includes the Carrie Estelle Doheny Memorial Library (Doheny Library), which was constructed in 1963. The Doheny Library is within the St. John's Seminary Site but is outside of the proposed project site. Also within the proposed project site are citrus and avocado groves, which continue to be cultivated.

Adjacent to the project site is the existing St. John's Graduate Seminary (also referred to as St. John's Major Seminary), which opened in 1939 and includes a number of buildings and structures to house and train seminarians. To the east and south of the project site are existing single-family residential

subdivisions; north and west of the site are predominantly agricultural uses. Calleguas Creek runs along the northern boundary of the proposed residential portion (See **Figure 3.01**).

Emergency access to the project site would be provided using an existing St. John's Major Seminary roadway that connects to Upland Road.

2.2 PURPOSE OF THE DRAFT EIR AND LEGAL AUTHORITY

All projects within the State of California are required to undergo environmental review to analyze the environmental impacts associated with implementation of the project in accordance with CEQA.¹ An EIR provides information to assist a lead agency in making decisions on the project but does not control the lead agency's exercise of discretion. Specifically, as noted in the *State CEQA Guidelines*:²³

- (a) *An EIR is an informational document which will inform public agency decision-makers and the public generally of the significant environmental effect 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.*
- (b) *While the information in the EIR does not control the agency's ultimate discretion on the project, the agency must respond to each significant effect identified in the EIR by making findings under Section 15091 and if necessary by making a statement of overriding consideration under Section 15093.*
- (c) *The information in an EIR may constitute substantial evidence in the record to support the agency's action on the project if its decision is later challenged in court.*

Shea Homes, the project applicant, is requesting that the City of Camarillo approve the proposed St. John's Seminary Residential Community Project. The project site is generally located east of Lewis Road and north of Upland Road.

The proposed project would provide for residential planned development plan for approximately 88.45 acres of land consisting of a variety of residential, open space, and recreational uses. This draft environmental impact report evaluates the potential environmental effects of this proposed project.

CEQA notes that, to the extent possible, the EIR process should be combined with the planning, review and approval process. As provided for in CEQA, the EIR for this effort is considered a project EIR.⁴ This

¹ California Public Resources Code, Section 21000 et seq., California Environmental Quality Act.

² 14 Cal. Code of Regs. § 15100 et seq. (CEQA Guidelines).

³ *State CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15121.

⁴ *State CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15161.

type of EIR should focus primarily on the changes in the environment that would result from the development project. The EIR shall examine all phases of the project including planning, construction, and operation.

Upon completion of the Draft EIR, CEQA requires that the lead agency provide the public and agencies the opportunity to review and comment on the document. As provided for by CEQA, the City will provide a 45-day period to review and comment on the Draft EIR. Upon completion of the public and agency review period, the City, as lead agency, will evaluate comments on environmental issues received from persons who reviewed the Draft EIR and shall prepare a written response. The City will respond to comments received during the noticed comment period and complete a final EIR that documents the responses and changes to the EIR prior to certification by the City Council.

On July 11, 2016, the City of Camarillo circulated a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an environmental impact report (EIR) for review and comment by the public and responsible and reviewing agencies. The NOP is provided in **Appendix 2.0**.

The purpose of public and agency review of the NOP is to assist in the identification of the potential environmental effects of the project as proposed to assist the lead agency in:

1. focusing the EIR on the effects determined to be potentially significant;
2. identifying the effects determined not to be significant;
3. explaining the reasons for determining that potentially significant effects would not be significant; and
4. identifying whether a program EIR, tiering, or another appropriate process can be used for analysis of the project's environmental effects.

A public Scoping Meeting was held on August 4, 2016, at Camarillo City Hall in the City Council Chambers at 601 Carmen Drive in the City of Camarillo. During the comment period, written comments were received from two individuals. Copies of these written comments and the sign-in sheets from the Scoping Meeting are provided in **Appendix 2.0**.

2.3 AVAILABILITY OF THE DRAFT EIR

The Draft EIR for the proposed project will be directly distributed to numerous agencies, organizations, and interested groups and persons for comment during the 45-day public review and comment period. The Draft EIR is also available for review at the following locations:

City of Camarillo
Department of Community Development
601 Carmen Drive
Camarillo, California 93010

City of Camarillo Public Library
4101 Las Posas Road
Camarillo, California 93010

In addition, the Draft EIR is available on the City's website at <http://www.ci.camarillo.ca.us/>.

2.4 PUBLIC AND AGENCY REVIEW OF THE DRAFT EIR

This Draft EIR is subject to a 45-day public review period starting from the date of the Notice of Availability. Copies of this Draft EIR have been sent to the State Clearinghouse, Responsible Agencies, agencies that have commented on the NOP, and all other interested parties that have requested notice and copies of the Draft EIR. A complete distribution list is included in **Appendix 2.0** of this Draft EIR.

Interested individuals, organizations, responsible agencies, and other agencies can provide written comments to:

City of Camarillo
Department of Community Development
601 Carmen Drive
Camarillo, CA 93010
Contact: David Moe, Assistance Director of Community Development

Comments may also be sent by fax to (805) 388-5388 or by e-mail to dmoe@ci.camarillo.ca.us. Please put "St. John's Seminary Residential Community EIR" in the subject line.

Agency responses should include the name of a contact person within the commenting agency.

2.5 ORGANIZATION OF THE EIR

A principal objective of CEQA is that the environmental review process be a public one. In meeting this objective, the EIR must inform members of the general public, decision makers, and reviewers of the physical impacts associated with a proposed project.

A description of the organization of this EIR and the content of each section is provided below to assist the reader in using this EIR as a source of information about the proposed project. Sections of the Draft EIR following this introduction are organized as follows.

Volume I

Section 1.0, Executive Summary, presents a concise summary of the environmental information, conclusions, and analysis in this EIR.

Section 2.0, Introduction, provides information on the CEQA process and organization of the EIR.

Section 3.0, Project Description, presents a detailed description of the proposed project, including identification of all discretionary approvals required to allow the implementation of the proposed project.

Section 4.0, Environmental Setting, describes the environmental setting of the project site and surrounding areas including a brief description of existing land uses and zoning.

Section 5. Cumulative Scenario, describes the basis for cumulative analyses and lists the related projects considered.

Section 6.0, Considerations and Discussions of Environmental Impacts, contains a project-level and a cumulative analysis of each of the environmental topics identified.

Section 7.0, Alternatives, discusses alternatives to the proposed project that have been developed and analyzed to provide additional information on ways to avoid or lessen the impacts of the proposed project. The alternatives include the “No Project Alternative,” along with other alternatives.

Section 8.0, Effects Found Not To Be Significant, briefly discusses those environmental topics for which the City has determined the proposed project would not result in a significant impact.

Section 9.0, Other CEQA Considerations, contains a discussion of the potential for the proposed project to remove impediments to growth, foster economic growth, result in a precedent-setting action and develop or encroach an isolated open space.

Section 10.0, List of Preparers, Organizations, and Persons Consulted, lists persons involved in the preparation of this Draft EIR or who contributed information incorporated into this Draft EIR.

Section 11.0, References, lists the principal documents, reports, maps and other information sources reviewed or referenced in the preparation of this EIR.

Volume II

Appendices to this EIR include technical information and other materials used in the preparation of this EIR.