

INTRODUCTION

This introduction is intended to provide the reader with general information regarding the subject of this Environmental Impact Report (EIR), the purpose for an EIR, standards for EIR adequacy, an introduction to the scope and content of this EIR, and the opportunities that will be provided for public participation in the project and EIR review process.

SUBJECT OF THIS EIR

Proposed Project

The project applicant is requesting approval from the City of Camarillo to develop a 14-acre project site with a new hotel and conference center. The current site plan envisions the development of a 153-room Embassy Suites hotel with 17,500 square feet of conference facility space, a 122-room Home2 Suites hotel, and up to 15,500 square feet of restaurant space and 10,450 square feet of retail space provided in four smaller buildings. The Embassy Suites hotel would provide approximately 165,422 of space (including the 17,500 square feet of conference facility space) in one four story building. The Home2 Suites hotel would provide approximately 69,356 square feet of building space in one four story building. The proposed uses are consistent with the existing General Plan (General Commercial) and zoning (CPD - Commercial Planned Development) designations for the site. Approval of the project would also include an agreement between the City of Camarillo and the project applicant for the Sale and Development of Real Property.

PURPOSE OF AN EIR

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was enacted in 1970 with the objective to inform the public and decision-makers of the potential environmental impacts of a proposed project. CEQA requires agencies to consider the significant effects of a project and to reduce the significant environmental effects of a project by implementing feasible mitigation measures or alternatives to the project as proposed. The public agencies shall consider the information in the EIR along with other information which may be presented to the agency when deciding whether to approve or deny a project. An EIR is also intended to be the primary reference document in the formulation and implementation of a mitigation monitoring and reporting program for an approved project.

CEQA applies to all discretionary actions proposed to be carried out or approved by California public agencies, including state, regional, county, and local agencies. The proposed project requires discretionary approval for the City of Camarillo and is, therefore, subject to CEQA. For the purpose of CEQA compliance, the City of Camarillo is the "Lead Agency" for the proposed project. The Lead Agency is

responsible for preparing the EIR in accordance with CEQA and the Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA Guidelines). As mandated by the CEQA Guidelines, this EIR has been subject to the City's internal review process and reflects the City's independent judgement and objectivity with regard to the scope, content, and adequacy of analysis.

Although the City of Camarillo is the Lead Agency for the proposed project and the City has sole authority to approve or deny the project, development and operation of the proposed land uses may also be subject to permit approval by other federal, state, or regional agencies. Such responsible and trustee agencies may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
- Ventura County Watershed Protection District
- Ventura County Environmental Health Division

EIR ADEQUACY

The principle use of an EIR is to enable the Lead Agency and other responsible agencies to examine the overall effects of projects that could have one or more significant effects on the environment. The CEQA Guidelines require no particular level of detail for such a document; instead, Section 15151 of the CEQA Guidelines states that an EIR, regardless of the type:

...should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision makers with information that enables them to make a decision that 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. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR should summarize the main points of disagreement among the experts. The courts have looked not for perfection but for adequacy, completeness, and good faith effort at full disclosure.

The critical factor is that an environmental analysis discloses all environmental consequences associated with the project implementation, while avoiding unnecessary, redundant environmental analysis.

EIR SCOPE AND CONTENT

Before beginning the preparation of a Draft EIR, the Lead Agency must decide which specific issues should be evaluated in the document. CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines identify various steps that lead agencies must take to define the scope and contents of an EIR, and also give lead agencies discretion to use additional "scoping" methods.

To determine the environmental issues that should be addressed in the Draft EIR, City of Camarillo Department of Community Development conducted a preliminary evaluation in an Initial Study of the potential environmental impacts that could occur with implementation of the proposed project. Based on this review, the City concluded that the project could have potentially significant impacts associated with the following environmental issues:

- Traffic and Circulation
- Water Supply
- Aircraft Hazards

The Initial Study is provided as Appendix A to this EIR. A summary of the analyses and conclusions of the Initial Study are provided in the Impacts Found to be Less Than Significant section of this EIR.

Input as to the scope of the Draft EIR was then obtained from interested public agencies and private parties through a Notice of Preparation of a Draft EIR (NOP) review process and public Draft EIR scoping meeting. The NOP was circulated for a 30-day review period beginning on July 17, 2017 and ending on August 16, 2017. The NOP is included as Appendix B to this Draft EIR and the letters received by the City of Camarillo in response to the NOP are included as Appendix C.

The input provided through the NOP review period did not change the City's proposed scope of the Draft EIR.

TOPICS OF KNOWN CONCERN

A summary of the concerns identified in the letters submitted to the Department of Community Development in response to the NOP is provided in Table 1.

ORGANIZATION OF THE EIR

This EIR has been formatted for ease of use and reference. To help the reader locate information of particular interest, a brief summary of the contents of each section of the EIR is provided. The following sections are contained within the EIR:

Introduction — This section introduces the subject of this EIR, the purpose for an EIR, standards for EIR adequacy, an introduction to the scope and content of this Draft EIR, and the opportunities that will be provided for public participation in the project and EIR review process.

Summary — This section provides a summary of the analyses and conclusions presented in the body of this EIR, including the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project, the recommended mitigation measures, the level of significance after mitigation, and the unavoidable impacts of the project.

Also contained within this section is a summary of alternatives to the proposed and their ability to reduce the significant impacts of the project.

TABLE 1: ISSUES OF KNOWN CONCERN

Commenting Agency	Issues of Concern
California Department of Transportation	The City should integrate transportation and land use in a way that reduces vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gas emissions. The traffic analysis should evaluate project-related VMT.
California Native American Heritage Commission	The City should be aware of the amendments to CEQA that created a separate tribal cultural resources category. The requirements for consultation with California Native American tribes are listed. The City should consider mitigation for inadvertently discovered archaeological resources should be included.
Ventura County Environmental Health Division	Project-related food facilities are subject to plan review and permitting by the Ventura County Environmental Health Division Community Services Section.
Ventura County Air Pollution Control District	The EIR should evaluate all potent tail air quality impacts that may result from the project.

Environmental Setting — This section describes the physical environment that currently exists at, and in the vicinity of, the project site. This section also summarizes the approach for addressing cumulative impacts in this EIR.

Project Description — This section describes the project as proposed by the project applicant, outlines the objectives for the project, and identifies the approvals required by the City of Camarillo and other agencies for project implementation.

Environmental Impact Analysis — The Environmental Impact Analysis is the primary focus of the EIR. Separate discussions are provided to address the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project. Each section provides a discussion of existing conditions (environmental setting), identification of the thresholds of significance for that topic, an assessment of the impacts of the project in relation to the thresholds of significance, recommended mitigation measures, cumulative impacts, and a residual impact statement as to the effectiveness of the recommended mitigation measures.

Alternatives to the Proposed Project — This section identifies alternatives to the proposed project that have been considered by the City to reduce and/or minimize significant project impacts, including a “no project” alternative.

Preparers of the EIR — This section identifies the individuals responsible for the preparation of this EIR.

References — This section identifies all references used and cited in the preparation of this EIR.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation is an essential part of the CEQA process. To provide full public disclosure of the potential environmental impacts that may occur as a result of the proposed project, CEQA requires that the Draft EIR be circulated for a 45-day public review period. During this review period, public agencies and interested organizations and individuals are encouraged to provide written comments addressing their concerns regarding the adequacy and completeness of the Draft EIR. When providing written comments on the subject matter of the Draft EIR, the readers are referred to Section 15204(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, which states:

In reviewing draft EIRs, persons and public agencies should focus on the sufficiency of the document in identifying and analyzing the possible impacts on the environment and ways in which the significant effects of the project might be avoided or mitigated. Comments are most helpful when they suggest additional specific alternatives or mitigation measures that would provide better ways to avoid or mitigate the significant environmental effects. At the same time, reviewers should be aware that the adequacy of an EIR is determined in terms of what is reasonably feasible, in light of factors such as the magnitude of the project at issue, the severity of its likely environmental impacts, and the geographic scope of the project. CEQA does not require a lead agency to conduct every test or perform all research, study, and experimentation recommended or demanded by commenters. When responding to comments, lead agencies need only respond to significant environmental issues and do not need to provide all information requested by reviewers, as long as a good faith effort at full disclosure is made in the EIR.

All comments or questions regarding the Draft EIR should be addressed to:

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A copy of the Draft EIR will also be made available for public review on the City's website (http://www.cityofcamarillo.org/departments/community_development/index.php) and at the counter for the City of Camarillo Department of Community Development at the address listed above.

Following the Draft EIR public review period and receipt of all written comments, the City of Camarillo will prepare a Final EIR. The Final EIR will provide additions and revisions to the Draft EIR as applicable, written responses to the written comments received by the City during the Draft EIR review period, and a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program. Members of the public will also have additional opportunities to participate in the review of the proposed project through attendance at the public hearings before the City of Camarillo Planning Commission and City Council.

ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED

Issues to be resolved by the City of Camarillo include the determination that the EIR adequately evaluates the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project, the determination that the recommended mitigation measures reduce the significant impacts of the project to a less than significant level or to the maximum extent feasible, and the determination as to whether to approve or deny the project as proposed or one of the alternatives evaluated in the EIR.