

## 2. *Introduction*

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### **2.1 PURPOSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT**

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that all state and local governmental agencies consider the environmental consequences of projects over which they have discretionary authority prior to taking action on those projects. This Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) has been prepared to satisfy CEQA, as set forth in the Public Resources Code Sections 21000 et seq., the State CEQA Guidelines, 14 California Code of Regulations, Sections 15000 et seq, and the City's Local CEQA Guidelines. The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is the public document designed to provide decision makers and the public with an analysis of the environmental effects of the proposed project, to indicate possible ways to reduce or avoid environmental impacts, and to identify alternatives to the project. The EIR must also disclose significant environmental impacts that cannot be avoided; growth-inducing impacts; effects not found to be significant; and significant cumulative impacts of all past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects.

Pursuant to CEQA Section 21067, the lead agency means “the public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project which may have a significant effect upon the environment.” The City of Ontario has the principal responsibility for approval of The Ontario Plan and is the CEQA lead agency for this project.

The intent of the DEIR is to provide sufficient information on the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Ontario Plan to allow the City of Ontario to make an informed decision regarding approval of the project. Specific discretionary actions to be reviewed by the City are described in Section 4.3.3, *Project Approvals*.

This DEIR has been prepared in accordance with requirements of the:

- California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, as amended (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.)
- State Guidelines for the Implementation of the CEQA of 1970 (CEQA Guidelines), as amended (California Code of Regulations Sections 15000 et seq.)
- City of Ontario Local Guidelines for Implementing the California Environmental Quality Act (2005; Local CEQA Guidelines)

The overall purpose of this DEIR is to inform the lead agency, responsible agencies, decision makers, and the general public of the environmental effects of the development and operation of the proposed Ontario Plan. This DEIR addresses the potential environmental effects of the project, including effects that may be significant and adverse; evaluates a number of alternatives to the project; and identifies mitigation measures to reduce or avoid adverse effects.



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### **2.2 NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND INITIAL STUDY**

The City of Ontario determined that an EIR would be required for this project and issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) and Initial Study on October 28, 2008 (see Appendix A). Comments received during the public review period, which extended from October 28, 2008, to December 1, 2008, are contained in Appendix B.

The NOP process is used to help determine the scope of the environmental issues to be addressed in the DEIR. Based on this process and the Initial Study for the project, certain environmental categories were identified as having the potential to result in significant impacts. Issues considered potentially significant are addressed in this DEIR. Issues identified as less than significant or of no impact are not addressed beyond the discussion contained in the Initial Study. Refer to the Initial Study in Appendix A for discussion of how these initial determinations were made.

### **2.3 SCOPE OF THIS DEIR**

Based upon the Initial Study and Environmental Checklist Form, the City of Ontario staff determined that an EIR should be prepared for the proposed project. The scope of the DEIR was determined based on the City's Initial Study, comments received in response to the NOP, and comments received at the scoping meeting conducted by the City. Pursuant to Sections 15126.2 and 15126.4 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the DEIR should identify any potentially significant adverse impacts and recommend mitigation that would reduce or eliminate these impacts to levels of insignificance.

The information contained in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, establishes the basis for analyzing future project-related environmental impacts. However, further environmental review by the City may be required as more detailed information and plans are submitted on a project-by-project basis.

This DEIR has been prepared to evaluate potentially significant impacts associated with implementation of The Ontario Plan. The Ontario Policy Plan's policies and programs, existing regulations and standard conditions, and mitigation measures have been identified to either reduce or eliminate potentially significant impacts. The focus of the impact analysis is on areas that propose physical changes to the existing environment that may result in environmental impacts (e.g., areas where land use changes are proposed), and on ensuring that development and improvement activities are consistent with The Ontario Plan. In addition, the DEIR describes a range of reasonable alternatives to the project that could feasibly attain the basic objectives of the project, while substantially avoiding or lessening any of the significant impacts of the proposed project, and evaluates the comparative merits of the alternatives and the proposed project.

#### **2.3.1 Impacts Considered Less Than Significant**

In its preparation of the Initial Study, the City of Ontario determined that no environmental categories could be eliminated. The topical issues addressed in the DEIR are discussed in the following section.

#### **2.3.2 Potentially Significant Adverse Impacts**

The Initial Study identified 16 environmental factors as having potentially significant impacts if the proposed project is implemented. These factors are:

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality

- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards and 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

In addition, Global Climate Change is addressed, although it is not specifically identified in the Initial Study.

### **2.3.3 Unavoidable Significant Adverse Impacts**

This DEIR identifies four significant and unavoidable adverse impacts, as defined by CEQA, that would result from implementation of the proposed project. Unavoidable adverse impacts may be considered significant on a project-specific basis, cumulatively significant, and/or potentially significant. Potentially significant impacts are those that fall within the responsibility of another agency and implementation of the mitigation measures cannot feasibly be assured by the City. If the City, as the Lead Agency, determines that unavoidable significant adverse impacts would result from the project, the City must prepare a "Statement of Overriding Considerations" before it can approve the project. A Statement of Overriding Considerations states that the decision-making body has balanced the benefits of the proposed project against its unavoidable significant environmental effects and has determined that the benefits of the project outweigh the adverse effects and, therefore, the adverse effects are considered to be acceptable. The impacts that were found in the DEIR to be significant and unavoidable are:

- Agriculture Resources
- Air Quality
- Cultural Resources
- Global Climate Change
- Noise
- Transportation and Traffic

### **2.4 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE**

The following documents are incorporated by reference in this DEIR, consistent with Section 15150 of the State CEQA Guidelines, and are available for review at the City of Ontario.

- *City of Ontario General Plan. 1992.*
- *City of Ontario Sphere of Influence Final Environmental Impact Report (SCH No. 97-061035). 1997.*
- *City of Ontario New Model Colony General Plan Amendment. 1999.*
- *City of Ontario Existing Conditions Report. 2006.*



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This DEIR also relies on previously adopted regional and statewide plans and programs, agency standards, and background studies in its analysis, such as the City's Municipal Code, the South Coast Air Quality Management District's (SCAQMD) Air Quality Management Plan, and SCAQMD's CEQA Air Quality Handbook. Whenever existing environmental documentation or previously prepared documents and studies are used in the preparation of this DEIR, the information is summarized for the convenience of the reader and incorporated by reference. In addition, each section that relies on previously adopted plans, programs, environmental documentation, and background studies notes how it specifically relates to the proposed project and that the information has been reconfirmed. These documents and other referenced source material in this DEIR will be made available to the public for inspection at the City upon request, at the City of Ontario, 303 East B Street, Ontario, CA 91764.

### **2.5 FINAL EIR CERTIFICATION**

This DEIR is being circulated for public review for a period of 45 days. Interested agencies and members of the public are invited to provide written comments on the DEIR to the City address shown on the title page of this document. Upon completion of the 45-day review period, the City of Ontario will review all written comments received and prepare written responses for each comment. A Final EIR (FEIR) will then be prepared incorporating all of the comments received, responses to the comments, and any changes to the DEIR that result from the comments received. This FEIR will then be presented to the City of Ontario for potential certification as the environmental document for the project. All persons who commented on the DEIR will be notified of the availability of the FEIR and the date of the public hearing before the City.

The DEIR is available to the general public for review at:

- City Hall, Planning Department, 303 East "B" Street, City of Ontario, CA 91764
- Ontario Main Library, 215 East "C" Street, City of Ontario, CA 91764

### **2.6 MITIGATION MONITORING**

Public Resources Code Section 21081.6 requires that agencies adopt a monitoring or reporting program for any project for which it has made findings pursuant to Public Resources Code 21081 or adopted a Negative Declaration pursuant to 21080(c). Such a program is intended to ensure the implementation of all mitigation measures adopted through the preparation of an EIR or Mitigated Negative Declaration. The Mitigation Monitoring Program for The Ontario Plan will be completed as part of the FEIR and will be completed prior to consideration of the project by the City of Ontario City Council.