

2. Introduction

2.1 PURPOSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The California Environmental Quality Act 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 EIR has been prepared to satisfy CEQA, as set forth in the Public Resources Code Section 21000, et seq., and the State CEQA Guidelines, 14 California Code of Regulations, Section 15000, et seq. The 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 damage 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 San Bernardino has the principal responsibility for approval of the General Plan Update and Associated Specific Plans project. For this reason, the City of San Bernardino is the CEQA Lead Agency for this project.

The intent of the EIR is to provide sufficient information on the potential environmental impacts of the proposed General Plan Update and Associated Specific Plans to allow the City to make an informed decision regarding approval of the project. Specific discretionary actions to be reviewed by the City are described later in Section 3.4, *Intended Uses of the EIR*.

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

- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.)
- State Guidelines for the Implementation of the CEQA of 1970 (herein referenced as CEQA Guidelines), as amended (California Code of Regulations Sections 15000 et seq.)

The overall purpose of this EIR 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 San Bernardino General Plan Update and Associated Specific Plans. This EIR 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.

2.2 NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND INITIAL STUDY

The City of San Bernardino determined that an EIR would be required for this project and issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) and Initial Study on November 29, 2004 (See Appendix A, Volume II). Comments received during the public review period, which extended from November 29, 2004, to December 28, 2004, are contained in Appendix B, Volume II.

The NOP process is used to help determine the scope of the environmental issues to be addressed in the EIR. 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 EIR. Issues identified as less than significant or having no impact are not addressed beyond the discussion contained in the Initial Study. Refer to the Initial Study in Volume II, Appendix A, Volume II for discussion of how these initial determinations have been made.



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2.3 SCOPE OF THIS EIR

Based upon the Initial Study and the Environmental Checklist Form, the City of San Bernardino staff determined that an EIR should be prepared for the proposed project. The scope of the DEIR was determined based upon the Initial Study and comments received in response to the NOP/Initial Study. As required by CEQA Statutes Section 21083.9, a scoping meeting was held on December 14, 2004. Pursuant to Sections 15126.2 and 15126.4 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the EIR should identify any potentially significant adverse impacts and recommend mitigation that would reduce or eliminate these impacts to less than significant levels.

The information contained in the 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 proposed General Plan Update including Specific Plans for Arrowhead Springs and the University District. General Plan Goals, Policies and Programs, Existing Regulations and Standard Conditions and Mitigation Measures have been identified to either reduce or eliminate potentially significant impacts. The DEIR distinguishes the impacts of the Arrowhead Springs Specific Plan separately and provides information pertaining to the Arrowhead Springs Specific Plan in all sections where appropriate. For purposes of environmental analysis in this DEIR, the focus of the environmental impact analysis is on those areas in which physical changes to the existing environment are proposed that may result in environmental impacts (i.e. areas where land use changes are proposed), and to ensure that development and improvement activities are consistent with the General Plan Update. In addition, the DEIR describes a range of reasonable alternatives to the project which 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

One environmental impact category is identified here as not being significantly affected by, or affecting the proposed project and as such is not discussed in detail in this DEIR. This determination was made by the City of San Bernardino in its preparation of the Initial Study. The following topical issue is not addressed in the DEIR:

- Agricultural Resources

2.3.2 Potentially Significant Adverse Impacts

Based on the results of the Initial Study and consideration of the comments received during the scoping process, a number of environmental issues were identified as requiring more detailed review in this EIR. The following is a list of these broad categories.

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology/Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology/Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources

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- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation/Circulation
- Utilities

Refer to the Initial Study in Volume II, Appendix A for the specific issues within each of these categories that were determined to require further review. Other specific issues within these categories were dismissed in the Initial Study and have not been reviewed in this EIR.

2.3.3 Unavoidable Significant Adverse Impacts

This DEIR identifies 3 unavoidable adverse impacts for the General Plan update and 3 unavoidable adverse impacts for the Arrowhead Springs Specific Plan, 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 will 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 area:

San Bernardino General Plan

- Air Quality
- Noise
- Traffic

Arrowhead Springs Specific Plan

- Air Quality
- Cultural Resources
- Noise

2.4 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

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

City of San Bernardino, *Draft Environmental Impact Report for City of San Bernardino General Plan-SCH# 89021308*, prepared by Envicom Corporation, et al., March 24, 1989.

City of San Bernardino, *Technical Background Report for City of San Bernardino General Plan Update*, prepared by Envicom Corporation, et. al., February 1988.

Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, *Inland Feeder Project environmental Impact Report and Environmental Assessment, Addendum No.4 for Minor Project Modifications*, May 1996.



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2.5 FINAL EIR CERTIFICATION

This Draft EIR 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 Draft EIR to the City address shown on the title page of this document, or by e-mail to generalplan@sbcity.org.

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

- City of San Bernardino Development Services Department
- City of San Bernardino Public Library, Main Branch, located at 555 W. 6th Street, San Bernardino, CA 92401
- Web page, www.sbcity.org

Upon completion of the 45-day review period, the City of San Bernardino will review all written comments received and prepare written responses for each comment. A final EIR will then be prepared incorporating all of the comments received, responses to the comments and any changes to the Draft EIR that result from the comments received. This Final EIR will then be presented to the City Council of San Bernardino for potential certification as the environmental document for the project. All persons who commented on the Draft EIR will be notified of the availability of the Final EIR and the date of the public hearing before the Mayor and Common Council.

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 Negative Declaration.

Two independent Mitigation Monitoring Programs, one for the General Plan Update and one for the Arrowhead Springs Specific Plan will be prepared as part of the Final EIR and will be completed prior to consideration of the project by the City Council.