

## 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 Section 21000, et seq., and the State CEQA Guidelines, 14 California Code of Regulations, Section 15000, et seq. 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 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 Torrance has the principal responsibility for approval of the general plan update project. For this reason, the City of Torrance 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 general plan update to allow the City of Torrance to make an informed decision regarding approval of the project. Specific discretionary actions to be reviewed by the City are described later in Section 4.3.3 (Project Approvals).

This DEIR 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 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 general plan update project. 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.

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

The City of Torrance determined that an EIR would be required for this project and issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) and Initial Study on November 12, 2008 (See Appendix A). Comments received during the public review period, which extended from November 12, 2008, to December 11, 2008, are contained in Appendix B.



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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 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 have been made.

Table 2-1 summarizes the comments on the NOP from agencies that sent letters during the 30-day public review period. The location of the response in the DEIR is also indicated.

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**Table 2.1  
Torrance General Plan NOP Comments**

<b>Commenting Agency</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>EIR Section Where Comment Addressed</b>
<b>County Sanitation District of Los Angeles County</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The District owns, operates, and maintains large trunk sewers that form the backbone of the County system.</li> <li>The District asks to review development and redevelopment projects within the City.</li> <li>Design capacity for the District is determined by SCAG projections.</li> </ul>	Section 5.16, <i>Utilities and Sewer Systems</i>
<b>South Coast Air Quality Management District</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate air quality impacts from construction and operation of the project.</li> <li>Perform a localized significance analysis.</li> <li>For projects generating or attracting heavy-duty diesel-fueled vehicles, perform a mobile-source health risk assessment.</li> <li>If the project generates significant adverse air quality impacts, all feasible mitigation measures that go beyond what is required by law are required to minimize significant air quality impacts.</li> </ul>	Section 5.2, <i>Air Quality</i>
<b>California Department of Transportation, District 7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traffic impacts at general plan buildout, including cumulative impacts, should be identified and analyzed.</li> <li>Mitigation measures should be implemented for cumulative impacts.</li> <li>Freeway off-ramp traffic should be analyzed.</li> <li>Vehicular demand-reducing strategies should be examined.</li> <li>Jobs-housing balance and smart growth strategies should be encouraged.</li> </ul>	Section 5.15, <i>Transportation/Traffic</i>
<b>Governor's Office of Emergency Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hazards issues within the community should be addressed and analyzed in the general plan and the DEIR.</li> </ul>	Section 5.7, <i>Hazards and Hazardous Materials</i>
<b>Public Utilities Commission</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan any future development near or adjacent to the railroad right-of-way with the safety of the rail corridor in mind.</li> </ul>	Section 5.7, <i>Hazards and Hazardous Materials</i>
<b>Dale Lincoln</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerned about biological protection and conservation throughout Torrance.</li> </ul>	Section 5.3, <i>Biological Resources</i>



### 2.3 SCOPE OF THIS DEIR

Based upon the initial study and environmental checklist form, the City of Torrance staff determined that a DEIR should be prepared for the proposed project. The scope of the DEIR was determined based upon 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

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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 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.

### **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 general plan update project and is therefore not discussed in detail in this DEIR. This determination was made by the City of Torrance 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**

Sixteen environmental factors have been identified as potentially significant impacts if the proposed project is implemented. These factors are:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- 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

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

This DEIR identifies two 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. If the City of Torrance, 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 are:

- Air Quality
- Noise

### **2.4 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE**

Per Section 15150 of the State CEQA Guidelines, an EIR may incorporate by reference all or portions of another document which is a matter of public record or is generally available to the public. One previously prepared EIR that is related to the proposed project in the City of Torrance was relied upon or consulted in the preparation of this DEIR. This document is the *City of Torrance General Plan EIR*, adopted October 1992.

This DEIR also relies upon previously adopted regional and statewide plans and programs, agency standards, and background studies in its analysis, such as the City's general plan and municipal code, the South Coast Air Quality Management District's (SCAQMD) Air Quality Management Plan, and the 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 upon previously adopted plans, programs, environmental documentation, and background studies notes how they specifically relate 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.

### **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 of Torrance address shown on the title page of this document. Upon completion of the 45-day review period, the City of Torrance 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 Torrance 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 the following locations:

- City of Torrance  
Community Development Department and City Clerk Office  
3031 Torrance Boulevard  
Torrance, CA 90503
- Civic Center Library  
3301 Torrance Boulevard  
Torrance, CA 90503

### **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.

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The mitigation monitoring program for the general plan Update will be completed as part of the final EIR and will be completed prior to consideration of the project by the Torrance City Council.