

I Introduction

This program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared on behalf of the City of Pacifica in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This EIR analyzes the potential significant impacts of the adoption and implementation of the proposed Pacifica General Plan.

I.1 Purpose of the EIR

This environmental assessment of the proposed Pacifica General Plan fulfills the requirements of CEQA and is designed to inform decision-makers, responsible and trustee agencies, and the general public of the proposed action and the range of potential environmental impacts of that action. The EIR process provides an opportunity to identify environmental benefits of the proposed Plan that might balance some potentially significant adverse environmental impacts. Mitigation measures needed to reduce significant adverse impacts are included as policies in the proposed Plan. As the lead agency for preparing this EIR, the City of Pacifica will use it in its review of the proposed Pacifica General Plan prior to taking action on the Plan.

This EIR represents the best effort to evaluate the potential environmental effects of the proposed Pacifica General Plan given its long-term planning horizon. It can be anticipated that conditions will change; however, the assumptions used are the best available at the time of preparation and reflect existing knowledge of patterns of physical and economic development, travel, and technological factors.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER EIRS

As a program EIR, the preparation of this document does not relieve the sponsors of specific projects from the responsibility of complying with the requirements of CEQA (and/or NEPA for projects requiring federal funding or approvals). As noted, individual projects are required to prepare a more precise, project-level analysis to fulfill CEQA and/or NEPA requirements. The lead agency responsible for reviewing these projects shall determine the level of review needed, and the scope of that analysis will depend on the specifics of the particular project. These projects may, however, use the discussion of impacts in this EIR as a basis of their assessment of these regional, citywide, or cumulative impacts.

APPROVALS FOR WHICH THIS EIR WILL BE USED

This EIR is being prepared for use by the City of Pacifica in its review and approval of the proposed Pacifica General Plan. The EIR is intended to be used solely for the approval of the proposed Plan and should not be used for the approval of individual projects undertaken subsequent to the General Plan's adoption. Information in this document can be referenced as applicable.

1.2 General Plan Process and Public Involvement

The General Plan update process began with a visioning phase, initiated by the City of Pacifica in the spring of 2009. At different stages of the plan-making process, residents, property and business owners, organizations, and public agencies were invited to interviews, workshops and open houses to provide input. The initial stage of community involvement included the following elements:

- **General Plan Outreach Committee (GPOC).** The City convened a committee with the responsibility of stimulating broader community involvement in the process. Committee members were expected to attend all community workshops and bring others to join them, and to raise awareness about the General Plan update.
- **Community Interviews.** Consultants met with 35 members of the community selected to represent a broad range of interests and provide local knowledge. The interviews took place in April 2009, and were conducted one-on-one or in small groups of up to four people. A summary report on the interviews is available.
- **Community Forums.** Two community forums were held at Ingrid B. Lacy Middle School, to help define a common vision and key issues for the General Plan to address. The first workshop took place April 25, 2009, with the theme "Community Vision." At this workshop, the approximately 125 attendees were asked what they liked most about Pacifica today and what they would like to see change. Community members were asked to describe a positive vision of Pacifica in 20 years and identify things that would be accomplished. A second community forum was held on May 30, 2009 and drew about 120 community members. At this meeting, a list of broad key issues and draft guiding policies for the General Plan were presented. Working in small groups, participants considered the proposed statements in voted on their level of agreement with them. The results of these workshops are summarized in separate reports available through the City of Pacifica. They were critical in establishing the key themes and initiatives of the General Plan.
- **Joint City Council/Planning Commission Workshops.** The results of the community-building phase, along with the results of the existing conditions analysis (see below) were presented at a workshop for City Council and the Planning Commission on September 1, 2010. Council and Commission members and members of the public were given the opportunity to provide feedback.
- **Newsletter.** An initial newsletter was mailed to Pacifica residents and businesses to introduce the process and its goals.

- **Media and Press Releases.** The City has provided press releases to generate local media coverage of the General Plan update in advance of each opportunity for community involvement.
- **City Website.** Frequent updates and interim documents have been made available from the City's website throughout the planning process.

Analysis of Existing Conditions

The plan-making process involved City staff working closely with land use, traffic, market demand, and other consultants to analyze existing conditions and development opportunities. Interim reports were prepared to document findings of technical analysis. These findings were integrated in the *Existing Conditions and Key Issues* report, published in July 2010 and presented to a joint City Council/Planning Commission workshop in September 2010. In response to questions from Council and Commission members, the report on traffic conditions and the transportation chapter of the Existing Conditions report were revised and released in May 2011.

Evaluating Choices

The next phase of the update process involved development and discussion of alternative land use plans and key policy issues. The alternative land use concepts illustrate a range of choices—visions of the city in 2035—inspired by the priorities articulated during the community-building phase and informed by the existing conditions analysis. These were presented for discussion at a third community forum, held January 29, 2011, at Ingrid B. Lacy Middle School. The meeting featured presentations on alternative concepts for future residential and commercial development, and key issues of sustainability and open parks and open space, followed by small-group discussion periods. The ideas and community feedback were published as the *Land Use Alternatives and Key Policy Issues* report, released in May 2011, and presented at public meetings of the Planning Commission and City Council in August and September of 2011. There was not a single, agreed-upon choice; groups had different feelings about the land use alternatives.

Based on projected growth, the consulting team offered recommendations for each land use choice, and for how to proceed with key policy issues. For a few issues, options were identified. Planning Commission and City Council heard testimony from members of the public, and registered their agreement or disagreement with each choice. This guidance from elected officials resulted in Preferred Plan concept maps, finalized in January 2012. The Preferred Plan combines the most desirable aspects of the alternatives, with some modifications based on community feedback. The adopted Preferred Plan Concept, together with draft General Plan outlines and key policies, provided the basis for the General Plan.

Draft and Final Documents

The final phase of the update process includes the preparation of the Draft Pacifica 2035 General Plan and the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for public review and adoption. The phase began with an opportunity for community members and resource agency

representatives to comment on the proposed project at a scoping meeting for the EIR, held on March 7, 2012. Drafting the General Plan involved establishing detailed policies to help the City achieve its goals for development, conservation, public facilities and services, and other issues, over the next 20 years. Population and development projections were finalized and used as a basis for future traffic assessment and the evaluation of environmental impacts.

The Draft General Plan and EIR will be presented at a Planning Commission Public Hearing. A newsletter will be sent to summarize the draft General Plan and to publicize a community “open house,” where additional comments will be taken. Meanwhile, public comments will be received on the EIR during a legally-required 45-day comment period.

Final versions of the General Plan and EIR will be prepared, and presented at a series of public hearings, to be adopted by City Council. Documents, maps, and meeting agendas will be made available for public download via the City website (http://www.cityofpacifica.org/depts/planning/general_plan_update_project/default.asp).

1.3 Notice of Preparation

A Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the EIR on the proposed City of Pacifica General Plan was circulated in February 2012 (received at the State Clearinghouse on February 15, 2012) and the City received comments during a 30-day review period. NOP comments, along with input received during public workshops and meetings, helped to identify the major planning and environmental issues and concerns and establish the framework of this EIR. The NOP and comments are included as Appendix A.

1.4 EIR Approach and Issues Addressed

The Pacifica General Plan EIR is a program EIR, defined in Section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines as: “[An EIR addressing a] series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related either: (1) Geographically; (2) A[s] logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions; (3) In connection with the issuance of rules, regulations, plans, or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program; or (4) As individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar environmental impacts which can be mitigated in similar ways.”

A program EIR can be used as the basic general environmental assessment for an overall program of projects such as the Pacifica General Plan intended to be developed over a 22-year planning horizon. A program EIR has several advantages. First, it provides a basic reference document to avoid unnecessary repetition of facts or analysis in subsequent project-specific assessments. Second, it allows the lead agency to look at the broad, regional impacts of a program of actions before its adoption and eliminates redundant or contradictory approaches to the consideration of regional and cumulative effects.

As a programmatic document, this EIR presents a citywide assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed Pacifica General Plan. It does not separately evaluate subcomponents

of the proposed Plans nor does it assess project-specific impacts of potential future projects under the proposed Plans, all of which are required to comply with CEQA and/or NEPA as applicable.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE AREAS

As provided for in the CEQA Guidelines, the focus of this EIR is on those environmental issues and concerns identified as possibly significant by the City of Pacifica in its Notice of Preparation (see Appendix A). These issue areas of concern include:

- **Land Use and Housing:** *Would the Pacifica General Plan:* Conflict with applicable area land use plans, including the County Plan and specific plans? Result in community residential or business disruption or displacement of substantial numbers of existing population and housing? Result in permanent alterations to the characteristics and qualities of an existing neighborhood or community?
- **Transportation:** *Would the Pacifica General Plan:* Cause an increase in congestion or traffic operations that cause level of service (LOS) to deteriorate from an acceptable level to an unacceptable level? Result in inadequate emergency access? Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bikeways, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise substantially decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?
- **Air Quality:** *Would the Pacifica General Plan:* Cause the rate of increase in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) or vehicle trips to exceed the rate of increase in population for the years covered by the proposed Plan? Be inconsistent with or fail to implement the 2010 Bay Area Clean Air Plan's Transportation Control Measures? Fail to identify or establish goals, policies, objectives, and/or overlay or buffer zones for existing and proposed land uses that would emit odors or toxic air contaminants in order to minimize potential impacts of these emissions on sensitive receptors?
- **Energy and Greenhouse Gases:** *Would the Pacifica General Plan:* Result in a wasteful, inefficient, and unnecessary consumption of energy? Be inconsistent with any applicable adopted greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction strategy?
- **Hydrology and Flooding:** *Would the Pacifica General Plan:* Violate any water quality standards, or wastewater or stormwater discharge requirements? Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge? Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the area causing flooding or erosion? Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage, or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff? Place housing or structures within a 100-year flood hazard area? Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding?
- **Geology and Seismicity:** *Would the Pacifica General Plan:* Increase exposure of people or structures to the risk of property loss, injury, or death involving earthquake ground shaking, rupture of a known earthquake fault, seismic-related ground failure, liquefaction, or landslides? Result in substantial soil erosion or topsoil loss? Locate

structures on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable or that would become unstable as a result of the project? Locate structures on expansive soil?

- **Biological Resources:** *Would the Pacifica General Plan:* Have an adverse effect on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species? Have an adverse effect on riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community? Have an adverse effect on federally protected wetlands? Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nurseries? Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources?
- **Cultural Resources:** *Would the Pacifica General Plan:* Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historic resource? Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a unique archaeological resource? Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries? Destroy, directly or indirectly, a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?
- **Visual Resources:** *Would the Pacifica General Plan:* Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista? Substantially damage scenic resources visible from state- or county-designated or eligible scenic highways? Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the Planning Area and its surroundings? Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?
- **Noise:** *Would the Pacifica General Plan:* Result in a substantial increase in ambient noise levels? Generate or expose persons to excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels? Generate or expose persons to outdoor noise levels in excess of existing standards? Expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels as identified in an airport land use plan?
- **Hazardous Materials and Fire Hazards:** *Would the Pacifica General Plan:* Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials, or through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions resulting in the release of hazardous materials? Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school? Allow development on a site included on a list of hazardous materials sites? Result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area? Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires?
- **Public Parks, Services, and Facilities:** *Would the Pacifica General Plan:* Result in the substantial physical deterioration of existing parks and recreational facilities? Result in the need for development of new parks and recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment. Result in the need to provide appropriate increases in school staffing or facilities, which could cause adverse environmental effects? Result in the need to provide increased staffing, facilities, and

equipment necessary to maintain acceptable levels of fire and police service, which could cause adverse environmental effects?

- **Utilities:** *Would the Pacifica General Plan:* Not provide sufficient water supplies to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or require new or expanded entitlements? Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that it does not have adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments? Require or result in the construction of new or expanded water or wastewater treatment facilities, which could cause adverse environmental effects?

TYPES OF IMPACTS

According to CEQA Guidelines, the following general types of environmental impacts need to be considered:

- **Direct or primary impacts**, which are caused by the project and occur at the same time and place as the project.
- **Indirect or secondary impacts**, which are caused by the project and occur later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect or secondary impacts may include growth-inducing impacts and other impacts that would induce changes in the pattern of land use, population density, or growth rate, as well as related impacts on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems. Indirect or secondary impacts may also include cumulative impacts.
- **Short-term impacts**, which are those of a limited duration, such as the impacts that would occur during the construction phase of a project.
- **Long-term impacts**, which are those of greater duration, including those that would endure for the life of a project and beyond.
- **Significant unavoidable impacts**, which cannot be mitigated to a level that is less than significant.
- **Irreversible environmental changes**, which may include current or future irretrievable commitments to using non-renewable resources, or growth-inducing impacts that commit future generations to similar irretrievable commitments of resources. Also, irreversible change can result from risks of accidents and injury associated with the project.
- **Cumulative impacts**, which include two or more individual impacts that when considered together are considerable or which compound or increase other adverse environmental effects. The individual impacts may be changes resulting from a single project or a program of projects. The cumulative effect from several projects is the change in the environment that results from the incremental effect of the proposed project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor, but collectively significant, projects taking place over a period of time.

TIMEFRAME

For analytic purposes in this EIR, the year 2010 is the base year (existing conditions), while the year 2035 is the horizon year (future conditions) when the proposed Pacifica General Plan will be fully implemented. In cases where current data is not available, the default is to use the latest known data to depict the baseline (i.e., existing conditions). The proposed Plan covers approximately a 20-year planning period, and the year 2035 represents the last year of the plan when projects/programs are anticipated to be fully implemented.

ALTERNATIVES

CEQA requires EIRs to evaluate a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed Projects that could feasibly attain most of the basic project objectives and would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant environmental impacts. This EIR evaluates two alternatives, namely **Alternative 1:** Strong Center at Quarry Site; **Alternative 2:** Conservation and Redevelopment; and the **No Project Alternative**.

See Chapter 4 for more details about the alternatives.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS ASSUMPTIONS

Due to the size of planning area, this EIR uses a regional projections approach to assess the cumulative impacts of the proposed Pacifica General Plan. The EIR attempts to distinguish between the impacts of the proposed Plan and the independent impacts of forecasted future population and employment growth in nearby communities, together with assumptions about where this growth will occur. Projections for the proposed Plan are based on the regional growth projections prepared by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG). The most recent adopted ABAG forecast is used in this EIR: *Projections 2009*. Transportation, air quality, energy and greenhouse gases, and noise analyses are largely cumulative impact analyses.

1.5 EIR Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This EIR begins with an executive summary of the environmental analysis, which includes a review of the potentially significant adverse regional environmental impacts of the proposed Pacifica General Plan, and the measures recommended to mitigate those impacts. The executive summary also indicates whether or not those measures mitigate the significant impacts to a less than significant level. Finally, the executive summary describes the alternatives and their merits as compared to the proposed Plan, and identifies the environmentally superior alternative among them.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 (this chapter) describes the relationship between the proposed Pacifica General Plan and the EIR. It describes the organization of the EIR, and the basic legal requirements of a program level EIR. It discusses the level of analysis and the alternatives considered, how this EIR is related to other environmental documents, and the EIR's intended uses.

CHAPTER 2: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Chapter 2 introduces the purpose and objectives of the proposed Pacifica General Plan, and summarizes specific information describing the proposed Plan that will be used to complete the EIR analysis. This includes a description of the existing project setting; an outline of the projected population and employment growth rate; development patterns through the 2035 planning horizon year; and land use maps, tables, and key policy directions.

CHAPTER 3: SETTINGS, IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Chapter 3 describes the existing physical and regulatory settings for each of the environmental issue areas analyzed in the EIR, the potential impacts of the proposed Pacifica General Plan on these environmental issue areas, policies from the proposed Plans that help to reduce those impacts, and, if necessary, measures to mitigate the potential impacts identified. Each issue area is analyzed in a separate numbered subsection of the chapter. Each subsection is organized as follows:

- Environmental Setting
 - Physical Setting
 - Regulatory Setting
- Impact Analysis
 - Significance Criteria
 - Methodology and Assumptions
 - Impact Summary
 - Impacts and Mitigation Measures

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES

Chapter 4 includes a description of alternatives to the proposed Pacifica General Plan, and an assessment of their potential to achieve the objectives of the proposed Plan while reducing potentially significant adverse environmental effects. As required by CEQA, an environmentally superior alternative is identified.

CHAPTER 5: CEQA-REQUIRED CONCLUSIONS

Chapter 5 provides the assessment of impacts of the proposed Plan in several subject areas required by CEQA, including:

- Significant irreversible environmental changes;
- Significant unavoidable impacts;
- Growth-inducing impacts;
- Cumulative impacts; and
- Effects found to be not significant.

CHAPTERS 6, 7, 8, AND 9: BIBLIOGRAPHY, PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS CONSULTED, REPORT AUTHORS, AND GLOSSARY

Chapter 6 is a bibliography with the resources used in this EIR. Chapter 7 is a list of the persons and organizations consulted for the EIR and Chapter 8 is a list of authors. Chapter 9 includes the glossary and list of acronyms. Chapter 10 is

APPENDICES

Appendix A, which is comprised of the Notice of Preparation (NOP) of this EIR and the comments received on the NOP. Appendix B includes transportation volume figures and modeling results, while Appendix C shows a list of special status species potentially occurring in and adjacent to the Planning Area.