

2. Introduction

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 before taking action on those projects. This draft environmental impact report (DEIR) has been prepared to satisfy CEQA and the 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 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.

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” (Guidelines § 21067). The City of Westminster has the principal responsibility for approval of the General Plan Update. For this reason, the City 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 Westminster to make an informed decision regarding approval of the project. Specific discretionary actions to be reviewed by the City are described in Section 3.4, *Intended Uses of the EIR*.

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

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

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

2. Introduction

2.2 NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND INITIAL STUDY

The City of Westminster determined that an EIR would be required for this project and issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) and Initial Study on December 17, 2015 (see Appendix A). Comments received during the public review period, which extended from December 17, 2015 to January 15, 2016, are in Appendix B and summarized in Subsection 1.7 of Chapter 1, *Introduction*, of this DEIR.

The NOP process helps 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 with less than significant or no impacts are not addressed beyond the discussion 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

The scope of the DEIR was determined based on the City's Initial Study, comments received in response to the NOP (see Subsection 1.7 of Chapter 1 of this DEIR), and comments received at the scoping meeting conducted by the City on January 6, 2016. Pursuant to Sections 15126.2 and 15126.4 of the 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.

Pursuant to Sections 15126.2 and 15126.4 of the CEQA Guidelines, the DEIR should identify any potentially significant adverse impacts and recommend mitigation that would reduce or eliminate these impacts to less than significant levels.

This is a program EIR. Pursuant to Section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines, a program EIR may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and related in connection with a plan or regulation, such as a general plan. Program EIRs focus the analysis on big-picture issues affecting the entire plan area. The information in the project description (see Chapter 3) 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 following approval of the General Plan Update.

This DEIR has been prepared to evaluate potentially significant impacts associated with implementation of the proposed General Plan Update. The Westminster General Plan Update'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 where land use or physical changes are proposed 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 General Plan. In addition, the DEIR describes a range of reasonable alternatives to the project that could feasibly attain the project's basic objectives while substantially avoiding or lessening significant impacts and evaluates the comparative merits of the alternatives and the proposed project.

2. Introduction

2.3.1 Impacts Considered Less Than Significant

During preparation of the Initial Study, the City of Westminster determined that three environmental impact categories were not significantly affected by or did not affect the proposed General Plan. These topical issues are not discussed in detail in this DEIR.

- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Biological Resources
- Geology and Soils (only one impact relating to soil erosion was determined to be potentially significant, which will be analyzed under Water Quality)
- Mineral Resources

2.3.2 Potentially Significant Adverse Impacts

Thirteen environmental factors have been identified as potentially significant impacts of the proposed project:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Cultural Resources
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality (including Soil Erosion)
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation and Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems

2.3.3 Unavoidable Significant Adverse Impacts

This DEIR significant and unavoidable adverse impacts, as defined by CEQA, in four environmental topic areas, 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. The City must prepare a “statement of overriding considerations” before it can approve the project, attesting 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 outweigh the adverse effects, and

2. Introduction

therefore the adverse effects are considered acceptable. The environmental topic areas that were found in the DEIR to have significant and unavoidable impacts are:

- Air Quality
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Noise
- Transportation and Traffic

2.4 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

The following document is incorporated by reference into this DEIR, consistent with Section 15150 of the CEQA Guidelines, and is available for review at the City of Westminster.

- *City of Westminster Consolidated General Plan and Environmental Impact Report*, adopted in 1996 by the City of Westminster (SCH #92071051; General Plan as amended).

This DEIR also relies on previously adopted regional and statewide plans and programs, agency standards, and background studies in its analysis, such as:

- South Coast Air Quality Management District, Air Quality Management Plan
- Southern California Association of Governments, Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategies (RTP/SCS)
- South Coast Air Quality Management District, *CEQA Air Quality Handbook*
- Westminster Municipal Code

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 they specifically relate to the proposed project and that the information has been confirmed. These documents and other referenced source material in this DEIR will be made available to the public for inspection upon request at the City of Westminster Community Development Department at 8200 Westminster Boulevard, Westminster, CA 92683.

2.5 FINAL EIR CERTIFICATION

This DEIR is being circulated for public review for 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 Westminster will review all written comments received and prepare written responses for each. A Final EIR (FEIR) will incorporate the received comments, responses to the comments, and any changes to the DEIR that result from comments. The FEIR

2. Introduction

will be presented to the City of Westminster for potential certification as the environmental document for the project. All persons who comment 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 Westminster Community Development Department, Planning Division, 8200 Westminster Boulevard, Westminster, CA 92683. Between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- Westminster Branch Library, 8180 13th Street, Westminster, CA 92683. Library Hours: Monday through Thursday, 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. This branch is closed on Sundays.

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 Section 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.

The Mitigation Monitoring Program for the General Plan Update will be completed as part of the Final EIR, prior to consideration of the project by the Westminster City Council.

2. Introduction

This page intentionally left blank.