

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The County of San Luis Obispo (County), serving as the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA), has prepared this Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to assess the impacts that may result from development of the Nipomo Community Park Master Plan (project). The project would result in the phased construction of recreation facilities and related infrastructure over a 20-year timeframe. The project site is located in the unincorporated community of Nipomo, within San Luis Obispo County, California. The proposed project consists of two connected park areas, Nipomo Community Park (NCP), including the Nipomo Native Garden, and Mesa Meadows. The project site is located northwest of the Pomeroy Road/West Tefft Street intersection, approximately 1 mile west of U.S. Highway 101 (US 101).

1.1 PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

This document was prepared in accordance with CEQA (Public Resources Code [PRC] §21000 et seq.) and the “CEQA Guidelines” (California Code of Regulations [CCR] Title 14, §15000 et seq.). This Program EIR addresses the environmental impacts associated with construction and operation of the project elements, which comprise the proposed project. A Program EIR was determined to be the appropriate level of environmental analysis because the document provides a framework for future, more detailed environmental analyses on a set of related and individual actions that can be characterized as one project. This is often called “tiering” of the environmental analysis and documentation. As described in the CEQA Guidelines (§15168), a program-level document can be incorporated into future project-level documents to:

- Provide a basis for determining whether subsequent phases may have significant environmental effects;
- Help address regional influences, secondary effects, cumulative impacts, broad alternatives, and other elements that apply to the program as a whole; and,
- Focus the subsequent evaluation on new effects that had not been considered before.

After the Final Program EIR is certified by the County Board of Supervisors, some minor elements of the Master Plan could be carried out without further environmental review. For other major elements of the Master Plan, this EIR serves as program level (first tier) analysis (CEQA Guidelines §§15152, 15168). Elements addressed at a program level would require further, focused environmental review prior to implementation. Subsequent analysis would build upon the first tier analysis presented in this Program EIR, and will include additional information, such as design and site-specific data, that is not yet available. Program-level mitigation measures would guide the development of more specific mitigation measures at the time of project-specific environmental analysis.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE EIR

The purpose of this EIR is to identify the proposed project's significant impacts on the environment, indicate the manner in which such significant impacts would be mitigated or avoided, and identify alternatives to the proposed project that avoid or reduce these impacts. This EIR is intended to serve as an informational document for use by the County, the other responsible agencies, and the general public in their consideration and evaluation of the environmental consequences associated with the implementation of the proposed project. This document is provided to the public and decision-makers for their review and comment as required by CEQA.

Under the CEQA process, an EIR must serve as a full disclosure document that enables the lead and responsible agencies to fully evaluate potential environmental impacts and the consequences of their decision on a proposed project. This EIR has been written to comply with the requirements of CEQA for the analysis of both the proposed project and alternatives.

1.3 SCOPING AND NOTICE OF PREPARATION PROCESS

In compliance with State CEQA Guidelines, the County has taken steps to provide opportunities to participate in the environmental process. During the environmental determination process, an effort was made to contact various federal, state, regional, and local governmental agencies and other interested parties to solicit comments and inform the public of the proposed project. This included the distribution of the Notice of Preparation (NOP) on November 17, 2009, to various agencies, organizations, and interested persons throughout the community of Nipomo, San Luis Obispo County, and surrounding areas. The proposed project was described, the scope of the environmental review was identified, and agencies and the public were invited to review and comment on the NOP. The close of the NOP review period was December 23, 2009. Agencies, organizations, and interested parties not contacted or who did not respond to the request for comments about the project during the preparation of the Draft EIR had the opportunity to comment during the 45-day public review period for the Draft EIR. In addition, a scoping meeting was held on December 1, 2009, at the Nipomo Community Services District (NCS D) Boardroom. There were approximately 17 attendees and 39 verbal questions and/or comments were received.

1.4 EIR CONTENTS

The scope of the EIR includes issues identified by the lead agency during the preparation of the NOP for the proposed project, as well as environmental issues raised by agencies and the general public in response to the NOP and at the scoping meeting. The EIR is divided into the following major sections:

Executive Summary. Provides a brief summary of the project background, description, impacts and mitigation measures, and alternatives.

Introduction. Provides the purpose of an EIR, as well as scope, content, and the use of the document.

Project Description. Provides the general background of the project, objectives, a detailed description of the project characteristics, and a listing of necessary permits and government approvals.

Environmental Setting. Describes the physical setting and surrounding land uses.

Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures. Discusses the environmental setting as it relates to the various issue areas, regulatory settings, thresholds of significance, impact assessment and methodology, project-specific impacts and mitigation measures, cumulative impacts, and secondary impacts. The EIR analyzes the potentially significant impacts to the following resource areas, as identified during the preparation of the NOP:

- Aesthetic Resources
- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality/Climate Change
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology, Soils and Drainage
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services/Utilities
- Recreation
- Transportation and Circulation
- Wastewater
- Water
- Land Use

Alternatives. Summarizes the environmental advantages and disadvantages associated with the project and alternatives. As required, the “No Project” alternative is included among the alternatives considered. An “Environmentally Superior Alternative” is identified.

Environmental Analysis. Identifies growth inducing impact and a discussion of long-term/short-term productivity and irreversible environmental changes.

Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan. This section contains a matrix of all mitigation measures contained in the EIR, the requirements of the mitigation measures, the applicant’s responsibility and timing for implementation of these measures, the party responsible for verification, the method of verification, and verification timing.

1.5 PROJECT SPONSORS

Lead Agency: County of San Luis Obispo
 Department of Planning and Building
 976 Osos Street, Room 300
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93408
 Mr. Steve McMasters, Environmental Resource Specialist

Project Applicant: County of San Luis Obispo, General Services Agency
 1087 Santa Rosa Street
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93408
 Mr. Shaun Cooper, Parks Planner

Environmental Consultant: SWCA Environmental Consultants
1422 Monterey Street, Suite C200
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
Ms. Shawna Scott, Project Manager

1.6 REVIEW OF THE DRAFT EIR

This Draft EIR was distributed to responsible and trustee agencies, other affected agencies, surrounding cities, interested parties, and all parties requesting a copy of the Draft EIR in accordance with PRC §21092(b)(3). The Notice of Completion of the Draft EIR was also distributed as required by CEQA. The 45-day public review period began on Monday, February 27, 2012 and ended on April 30, 2012. A public meeting to present the Draft EIR, verbally respond to questions from the public, and collect comment note cards was held at the Nipomo High School on March 8, 2012. During this period, the EIR, including technical appendices, was available for review at the following locations:

County of San Luis Obispo	San Luis Obispo City/County Library
Environmental Coordinator's Office	995 Palm Street
County Government Center Room 200	San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408	

Comments on the Draft EIR were addressed to:

County of San Luis Obispo
Department of Planning and Building
Attention: Mr. Steven McMasters
Division of Environmental and Resource Management
976 Osos Street, Room 300
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

Written responses to all significant environmental issues raised were prepared and are included as part of the Final EIR and the environmental record for consideration by decision-makers for the project. All changes to the EIR resulting from the responses to comments are marked by a vertical line in the left margin, and changed text is underlined.

1.7 COMMONLY USED ACRONYMS

1.7.1 Acronyms

The following acronyms are used extensively in the EIR. The acronyms are spelled out the first time they are used in a chapter, but are also provided in Table 1-1 below.

Table 1-1. Commonly Used Acronyms

Acronym	Term
AB	Assembly Bill
ARB	California Air Resources Board
BMP	Best Management Practice
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection/County Fire
CalEPA	California Environmental Protection Agency
CalRecycle	California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (formerly CIWMB)
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CAP	Clean Air Plan
CAPCOA	California Air Pollution Control Officers Association
CAT	Climate Action Team
CCCP	California Climate Change Portal
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CDFG	California Department of Fish and Game
GEC	California Energy Commission
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act of 1970
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CH ₄	Methane
CHP	California Highway Patrol
CHRIS	California Historical Resources Information System
CIWMB	California Integrated Waste Management Board

Table 1-1. Commonly Used Acronyms

Acronym	Term
CNDDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CNEL	Community Noise Exposure Level
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CO ₂	carbon dioxide
County	County of San Luis Obispo
CPUC	California Public Utilities Commission
CRHR	California Register of Historical Resources
dB	Decibel
dBA	A-weighted decibel
DD	doubling of distance
DHS	California Department of Health Services
DTSC	Department of Toxic Substances Control
DWR	California Department of Water Resources
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Federal Endangered Species Act
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GSA	Geologic Study Area
HFCs	Hydrofluorocarbons
HRP	Habitat Restoration Plan
HSC	Health and Safety Code

Table 1-1. Commonly Used Acronyms

Acronym	Term
KVA	Key Viewing Area
LCFS	Low Carbon Fuel Standard
Ldn	Day/Night Sound Level
Leq	average sound level
LID	Low Impact Development
LOS	Level of Severity
LUO	County Land Use Ordinance
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
min/inch	minute per inch
MMtCO ₂ e	million metric tons of CO ₂ equivalent
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
N ₂ O	nitrous oxide
NCP	Nipomo Community Park
NCSD	Nipomo Community Services District
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act of 1966
NMMA	Nipomo Mesa Management Area
NOAA Fisheries	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Marine Fisheries Service
NOP	Notice of Preparation
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
OES	Office of Emergency Services

Table 1-1. Commonly Used Acronyms

Acronym	Term
OHP	Office of Historic Preservation
OHWM	Ordinary High Water Mark
OPR	Office of Planning and Research
PFCs	Perfluorocarbons
ppmv	parts per million by volume
PRC	Public Resources Code
Qs	Quaternary sand dune deposits
RCRA	Resources Conservation and Recovery Act of 1986
RPS	Renewable Portfolio Standard
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SARA	Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986
SB	Senate Bill
SCWC	Southern California Water Company
SEMS	Standardized Emergency Management System
SF ₆	sulfur hexafluoride
SLOAPCD	San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District
SSC	California Species of Special Concern
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TCP	Transportation Choices Program

Table 1-1. Commonly Used Acronyms

Acronym	Term
UBC	Uniform Building Code
UNIPCC	United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
URL	Urban Reserve Line
US 101	U.S. Highway 101
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USC	United States Code
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
WDR	report of waste discharge
WWTF	Wastewater Treatment Facility
WWTP	Wastewater Treatment Plant

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