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1.0 Introduction

1.1 PURPOSE FOR PREPARING THE EIR

Monterey County, acting as the lead agency, has determined that the River View at Las Palmas Assisted Living Senior Facility (hereinafter “proposed project”) could possibly result in significant adverse environmental impacts. After discussions with the County, the Project Applicants voluntarily offered to prepare an environmental impact report (EIR) to evaluate these possible significant adverse environmental impacts and to identify appropriate mitigations.

An Administrative Draft (ADEIR) was prepared by EMC Planning Group (EMC) and submitted to the County of Monterey, using available information from private and public sources noted herein, as well as information generated by EMC through field investigation.

Upon submittal of the ADEIR from EMC, Monterey County assumed control of the processing and content of the EIR and the subsequent EIR represents the independent judgment of Monterey County. This EIR has been prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended, to inform public decision makers and their constituents of the environmental impacts of the proposed project. In accordance with CEQA guidelines, this report describes both beneficial and adverse impacts generated by the proposed project and suggests measures for mitigating significant adverse environmental impacts resulting from the proposed project.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

General

This EIR has been prepared by Monterey County in accordance with CEQA and its implementing guidelines, using an interdisciplinary approach. The county has the discretionary authority to review and approve the proposed project. This EIR is an informational document that is intended to inform the decision makers and their constituents, as well as responsible and trustee agencies of the environmental impacts of the proposed project and to identify feasible mitigation measures that would avoid or reduce the severity of the impacts. The lead agency is required to consider the information contained in this EIR prior to taking any discretionary action to approve the proposed project.

This EIR has been prepared using available information from private and public sources noted herein, as well as information generated through field investigation by EMC Planning Group and other technical experts.

The purpose of an EIR is to identify a project's significant environmental effects, to indicate the manner in which those significant effects can be mitigated or avoided, and to identify alternatives to the proposed project.

An EIR is an objective public disclosure document that takes no position on the merits of the proposed project. Therefore, the findings of this EIR do not advocate a position "for" or "against" the proposed project. Instead, the EIR provides information on which decisions about the proposed project can be based. This EIR has been prepared according to professional standards and in conformance with legal requirements.

Subsequent EIR

In accordance with the Las Palmas Ranch Specific Plan (Chapter III, The Regulation Function, A. CEQA Compliance), this EIR is a subsequent EIR that is required for the project to explore mitigation alternatives in detail. The original Las Palmas Ranch Specific Plan and Final EIR are hereby incorporated by reference and are included in Appendix A of this EIR.

Emphasis

This draft EIR focuses on the significant effects on the environment in accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15143. The significant effects are discussed with emphasis in proportion to their severity and probability of occurrence.

Forecasting

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15144, preparing this draft EIR necessarily involved some degree of forecasting. While foreseeing the unforeseeable is not possible, the report preparers and technical experts used best available efforts to find out and disclose all information that reasonably and foreseeably can be disclosed.

Speculation

If, after thorough investigation, the report preparers in consultation with the lead agency determined that a particular impact is too speculative for evaluation, the conclusion is noted, and the rationale for how the conclusion was reached, and the issue is not discussed further (CEQA Guidelines section 15145).

Degree of Specificity

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15146, the degree of specificity in this draft EIR corresponds to the degree of specificity involved in the proposed project. An EIR on a construction project will necessarily be more detailed in the specific effects of the project than

will be an EIR on the adoption of a local general plan or comprehensive zoning ordinance because the effects of the construction can be predicted with greater accuracy. The proposed project is a construction project and therefore, the analysis in this draft EIR provides a high degree of specificity.

Technical Detail

The information contained in this draft EIR includes summarized technical data, maps, plans, diagrams, and similar relevant information sufficient to permit full assessment of significant environmental impacts by reviewing agencies and members of the public, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15147. Placement of highly technical and specialized analysis and data is included as appendices to the main body of the draft EIR. Appendices to this draft EIR are included on a CD on the inside, back cover.

Citation

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15148, preparation of this draft EIR was dependent upon information from many sources, including engineering reports and scientific documents relating to environmental features. If the document was prepared specifically for the proposed project, the document is included in the technical appendices discussed above. Documents that were not prepared specifically for the proposed project, but contain information relevant to the environmental analysis of the proposed project, are cited but not included in this draft EIR. This draft EIR cites all documents used in its preparation including, where appropriate, the page and section number of any technical reports that were used as the basis for any statements in the draft EIR.

1.3 EIR PROCESS

There are several steps required in an EIR process. The major steps are briefly discussed below.

Notice of Preparation

CEQA Guidelines section 15082 describes the purpose, content and process for preparing, circulating and facilitating early public and public agency input on the scope of an EIR. CEQA Guidelines section 15375 defines a notice of preparation as:

...a brief notice sent by the Lead Agency to notify the Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, the Office of Planning and Research, and involved federal agencies that the Lead Agency plans to prepare an EIR for the project. The purpose of the notice is to solicit guidance from those agencies as to the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIR.

A notice of preparation was prepared for the proposed project and circulated for 30 days March 7, 2017 to April 7, 2017, as required by CEQA. The notice of preparation, as well as comments received from agencies, organizations, and private individuals, are included in Appendix B.

Draft EIR

Contents

This EIR is an informational document which will inform public agency decision makers and the public generally of the significant environmental effect of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project. The public agency is required to consider the information in the EIR along with other information which may be presented to the agency. CEQA Guidelines Article 9 requires a draft EIR contain the following information:

- Table of Contents;
- Summary;
- Project Description;
- Environmental Setting;
- Consideration and Discussion of Environmental Impacts;
- Consideration and Discussion of Mitigation Measures Proposed to Minimize Significant Effects;
- Consideration and Discussion of Alternatives to the Proposed Project;
- Effects not found to be Significant;
- Organization and Persons Consulted; and
- Discussion of Cumulative Impacts.

The detailed contents of this draft EIR are outlined in the table of contents.

Public Review

This draft EIR will be circulated for a 45-day public review period. All comments addressing environmental issues received on the draft EIR will be addressed in the final EIR. CEQA Guidelines section 15024(a) states that in reviewing a draft EIR, persons and public agencies should focus on the sufficiency of the document in identifying and analyzing the possible impacts on the environment and ways in which the significant effects of the project might be avoided or mitigated. Comments are most helpful when they suggest additional specific alternatives or mitigation measures that would provide better ways to avoid or mitigate the significant environmental effects. At the same time, reviewers should be aware that the

adequacy of an EIR is determined in terms of what is reasonably feasible, in light of factors such as the magnitude of the project at issue, the severity of its likely environmental impacts, and the geographic scope of the project.

CEQA does not require a lead agency to conduct every test or perform all research, study, and experimentation recommended or demanded by commenters.

CEQA Guidelines section 15024(d) states that reviewers should explain the basis for their comments, and should submit data or references offering facts, reasonable assumptions based on facts, or expert opinion supported by facts in support of the comments. Pursuant to section 15064, an effect shall not be considered significant in the absence of substantial evidence.

Final EIR

Contents

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15132, the final EIR will provide the following:

- List of persons, organizations, and public agencies commenting on the draft EIR;
- Comments received on the draft EIR;
- Responses to significant environmental points raised in comments; and
- Revisions that may be necessary to the draft EIR based upon the comments and responses.

According to CEQA Guidelines section 15024(a), when responding to comments, lead agencies need only respond to significant environmental issues and do not need to provide all information requested by reviewers, as long as a good faith effort at full disclosure is made in the EIR. The final EIR and the draft EIR will constitute the entire EIR.

Certification

CEQA Guidelines section 15088 requires the lead agency to provide a written proposed response to a public agency on comments made by that public agency at least 10 days prior to certifying an EIR.

CEQA Guidelines section 15090 requires lead agencies to certify the final EIR prior to approving a project. The lead agency shall certify that the final EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA, the final EIR was presented to the decision-making body of the lead agency and that the decision-making body reviewed and considered the information contained in the final EIR prior to approving the project, and that the final EIR reflects the lead agency's independent judgment and analysis.

1.4 TERMINOLOGY

Characterization of Impacts

This EIR uses the following terminology to denote the significance of environmental impacts.

No Impact

“No impact” means that no change from existing conditions is expected to occur.

Adverse Impact

A “less-than-significant impact” is an adverse impact, but would not cause a substantial adverse change in the physical environment, and no mitigation is required.

A “significant impact” or “potentially significant impact” would, or would potentially, cause a substantial adverse change in the physical environment, and mitigation is required.

A “less-than-significant impact with implementation of mitigation measures” means that the impact would cause no substantial adverse change in the physical environment if identified mitigation measures are implemented.

A “significant and unavoidable impact” would cause a substantial change in the physical environment and cannot be avoided if the project is implemented; mitigation may be recommended, but will not reduce the impact to less-than-significant levels.

Beneficial Impact

A “beneficial impact” is an impact that would result in a decrease in existing adverse conditions in the physical environment if the project is implemented.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Numerous acronyms are used in this EIR. The following list is provided as a quick reference to assist readers.

AB	Assembly Bill
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AF	Acre-feet
AFY	Acre-feet per year
AMBAG	Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments
BMPs	Best Management Practices
CalEEMod	California Emissions Estimator Model

CAPCOA	California Air Pollution Control Officers Association
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CNDDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CRHR	California Register of Historic Places
CRLF	California Red-legged Frog
CTS	California Tiger Salamander
CUPA	Certified Unified Program Agencies
DTSC	Department of Toxic Substances Control
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EMFAC	Emission Factors Modeling Program
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIRMS	Flood Insurance Rate Map
GCC	Global Climate Change
GHG	Greenhouse Gas Emissions
HazMat	Hazardous Materials
LAFCO	Local Agency Formation Commission
LOS	Level of Service
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act

1.0 Introduction

MGD	Million Gallons per Day
MMT	Million Metric Tons
MT	Metric Tons
MWh	Megawatt Hours
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NWP	Nationwide Permit
OCEN	Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation
PCBMPs	Post-Construction Best Management Practices
PG&E	Pacific Gas and Electric Company
RoadMod	Road Construction Emissions Model
RPS	California Renewable Portfolio Standard Program
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SB	Senate Bill
SGMA	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
SR	California State Route
SVGB	Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin
SWDS	Storm Water Design Standards
SWMP	Storm Water Management Plan
SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TAMC	Transportation Agency for Monterey County
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey