
SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs) are informational documents intended to inform stakeholders, decision-makers, responsible agencies, and the general public of the environmental effects of a proposed project. The City of El Centro (City) has prepared this EIR to evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with the construction and development of a residential subdivision on 40+ acres of fallow farmland currently zoned by Imperial County as A2U, a storm ~~retention~~-detention basin, and public park. The project proposes: a Change of Zone from A2U by the County of Imperial to single family residential (R1) by the City of El Centro, a Tentative Subdivision Map to allow the development of a residential subdivision consisting of approximately ~~150~~148 single-family dwelling units, and approval by LAFCO for the annexation of the site to the City of El Centro. This EIR describes the objectives and components of the proposed project and identifies appropriate feasible mitigation measures and alternatives that may be adopted to reduce or eliminate these impacts.

The City of El Centro Planning Department, in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has circulated a Notice of Preparation (NOP) to all interested parties and potential stakeholders via individual letters and public notice in the Imperial Valley Press. All comments received during the 30-day NOP review period were incorporated and/or considered during the preparation of the Draft EIR. The NOP and the comments associated with the release of the NOP are included in Appendix E of the Draft EIR.

The City of El Centro and the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) will act as co-lead agencies pursuant to Section 15051 of the State CEQA Guidelines. This EIR has been prepared in conformance with the requirements of CEQA (Public Resources Code 21000 et seq.), the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Section 15000 et seq.), and the rules, regulations and procedures for implementation of CEQA adopted by the CEQA. The City's Planning Department and LAFCO will review and consider all comments to the Draft EIR prior to the completion of the Final EIR. The Draft EIR is made available for review by individuals, public, and private agencies for 45 days. Written comments are due to the Planning Department within the 45-day review period. Responses to comments will be prepared and included as a part of the Final EIR, which City Council will review and consider prior to making a decision to approve, revise, or deny the proposed project.

This EIR is further intended to serve as the primary environmental document for all future entitlements associated with the proposed project, including all discretionary approvals requested or required to implement the project. In addition, this EIR is the primary reference document in the assessment and implementation of mitigation measures and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) for the proposed project.

1.1 REGULATORY DOCUMENTS

In addition to State guidelines, two regulatory land use plans are referenced in this report and are relevant to the future development of the proposed project. These include:

- City of El Centro General Plan and Zoning Ordinance (2004)
- County of Imperial General Plan (Updated January 2004)

1.2 REQUESTED ACTIONS

A Tentative Subdivision Map is requested for the proposed project. This EIR document provides analysis of the environmental impacts associated with:

- The Change of Zone from A2U by the County of Imperial to Single-Family residential (R1) by the City of El Centro;
- A Tentative Subdivision Map to accommodate the residential development, public park, and detention basin; and
- The annexation of land from the County of Imperial to the City of El Centro in coordination with LAFCO.

Some future actions evaluated in this EIR may require more detailed project design plans and additional environmental analysis prior to implementation. Any future ministerial or discretionary approvals that are required will be subject to environmental regulations and policies in effect at the time approvals are requested.

1.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT ORGANIZATION

The reader is advised that the EIR is organized into sections as mandated by CEQA. These sections describe the project and setting, provide analysis based on potential issues, and evaluate other issues such as the potential for the project to induce growth or contribute to cumulative impacts. Sections are listed in the table of contents. A partial description is included below:

- Section 2 contains a description of the project, Change of Zone and development as proposed by the Tentative Subdivision Map. The project description includes the project location, objectives, project characteristics, and discretionary actions/required approvals to implement the project.
- Section 3 describes the project's Environmental Setting.
- Section 4, Environmental Analysis, addresses in detail each of the issues identified during an environmental scoping process conducted by the City of El Centro Planning Department .

The environmental analysis section discusses the existing conditions at the project site as they relate to each issue and discusses the direct, indirect, short-term, long-term, and unavoidable consequences of the action that would occur with development. The issues include potential direct impacts to agricultural lands, air quality, biological resources, geology and soils, public safety, public services, and transportation/traffic. Mitigation measures are also identified to reduce or eliminate significant impacts where possible.

- Section 5, Alternatives to the proposed project, describes the two alternatives to the proposed project considered, including the (1) Reduced Project Alternative and (2) No Project Alternative. Additionally, the Environmentally Superior alternative is identified in this section.
- Section 6, Growth Inducement, addresses the potential for the project to spur additional growth as a result of development.

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- Section 7, Cumulative Impacts, provides an overview of other development projects in the vicinity of the proposed project. The purpose of this discussion is to provide an overview of environmental impacts that might occur if this project is added to all of the projects that are proposed, planned, under development, or completed.
 - Section 8, Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes, addresses irreversible environmental changes, limitations on future uses of non-renewable resources and impacts which commit future generations to similar uses.
 - Section 9, Effects Found Not to Be Significant, lists the impact categories found not to be significant after either the Initial Study or the EIR analyses.
 - Section 10, References, Persons and Agencies Consulted, contains the sources and references used in preparation of this document.
 - Section 11, Certification, provides the disclosure of the independent analysis and a list of the contributing preparers.

A list of acronyms is provided immediately following the list of tables in the Table of Contents for the reader's reference. The preceding Summary section is a requirement of the State Guidelines to provide a synopsis of the information and conclusions presented in this document.

This document conforms to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA; Public Resources Code § 21000 *et se.*) and the State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14 § 15000 *et seq.*) for the implementation of CEQA.

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