

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) is to analyze and disclose the potential environmental consequences of the Crystal View Terrace/Green Orchard Place/Overlook Parkway Project (Project).

Environmental impact reports are informational documents “which will inform public agency decision makers and the public generally of the significant environmental effects of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project” (14 California Code of Regulations [CCR] Section 15121). The purpose of this DEIR is to present the evaluation of the anticipated environmental effects of the proposed Project. This DEIR is intended for use by both decision makers (i.e., City Council) and the general public. It provides relevant information concerning the potential environmental effects associated with the Project.

The Project involves the local roadway system in the eastern portion of the City of Riverside (City). Specifically, Crystal View Terrace, Green Orchard Place, and Overlook Parkway are all located south of State Route 91 (SR-91) and west of Interstate 215 (I-215). The Project vicinity comprises a large area generally bounded by John F Kennedy Drive and Hermosa Drive to the south, Adams Street and SR-91 to the west, Arlington Avenue to the north, and Alessandro Boulevard and Trautwein Road to the east.

The Project analyzed in this DEIR includes four different scenarios, each of which represents an alternative set of actions intended to help resolve potential vehicular circulation issues associated with the gates on Crystal View Terrace and Green Orchard Place; address the connection of Overlook Parkway easterly to Alessandro Boulevard; and potentially provide for a connection to SR-91. The DEIR will fully analyze all four circulation scenarios in an equal level of detail to ensure that decision makers have sufficient information in the DEIR necessary to select a preferred scenario.

1.2 Compliance with CEQA

1.2.1 Format

The Executive Summary chapter of this DEIR covers the summary requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as required by Section 15123 of the CEQA Guidelines. The Executive Summary and Project Description chapters also cover the

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Project description requirements of CEQA by discussing the Project location, the Project objectives, and a statement of document purpose and intended use.

This DEIR has been formatted to address the issues found to be potentially significant in the Initial Study. For the issue areas found to be potentially significant in the Initial Study, there is a corresponding DEIR section. Each DEIR section includes an existing setting discussion that describes the physical environmental conditions within the Project vicinity, as they exist at the time the Notice of Preparation (NOP) was prepared (initially distributed February 2011 and reissued November 2011), which is considered the baseline physical condition by which the City determines whether an impact is considered to be significant (Section 15125(a) of the CEQA Guidelines). Section 15125(d) of the CEQA Guidelines require that a DEIR “discuss any inconsistencies between the proposed Project and applicable general plans and regional plans” which will be addressed in any applicable DEIR section. Each DEIR section also includes an analysis performed to determine the amount and degree of impact that is associated with the Project. For all significant environmental impacts, mitigation measures, where feasible, are proposed in order to reduce the impact to a level below significant.

The analysis of impacts and identification of mitigation measures are derived in part from technical reports that are included as technical appendices to this document and from other informational resources as listed in the references section of this document.

1.2.2 Environmental Procedures

The basic purposes of CEQA are to:

1. Inform governmental decision makers and the public about the potential, significant environmental effects of proposed activities;
2. Identify the ways that environmental damage can be avoided or significantly reduced;
3. Prevent significant, avoidable damage to the environment by requiring changes in projects through the use of alternatives or mitigation measures when the governmental agency finds the changes to be feasible;
4. Disclose to the public the reasons why a governmental agency approved the project in the manner the agency chose if significant environmental effects are involved (14 CCR Section 15002).

The EIR process includes (1) the NOP, (2) a DEIR released for public review, and (3) a Final EIR (FEIR). The NOP was intended to encourage interagency communication concerning the proposed action and provide sufficient background information about the proposed action so that agencies, organizations, and individuals could respond with specific

comments and questions on the scope and content of the DEIR. The NOP is included as Appendix A. Pursuant to Section 15063 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the City prepared an Initial Study Checklist for the proposed Project in order to determine if the Project would have a significant effect on the environment. The Initial Study Checklist is included as Appendix B.

The City concluded that an EIR should be prepared. On February 9, 2011, the City issued the initial NOP to the State Clearinghouse, responsible agencies, and other interested parties for this Project with a comment period that ended on March 25, 2011. On November 2, 2011, the City reissued the NOP to the State Clearinghouse, responsible agencies, and other interested parties for this Project with a comment period that ended on December 1, 2011. The Project remained the same, except the level of analysis for Scenario 4 changed from a programmatic-level analysis to a project-level analysis. By addressing all four scenarios in an approximately equal level of detail, decision makers will have sufficient information in the DEIR necessary to select a preferred scenario.

Pursuant to Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, recipients of the NOP were requested to provide responses within 30 days after their receipt of the NOP. During the public review period of the initial NOP, the City held a public scoping meeting on March 9, 2011 to gather additional public input on the Project. Copies of each NOP and each NOP distribution list are located in Appendix A. All comments received during each of the NOP public notice periods and at the public scoping meeting were considered during the preparation of this DEIR. Written comments received on both NOPs are included in Appendix A of this DEIR.

Based on the scope of analysis for this DEIR, including comments received during the NOP public scoping period, the following issues were determined to be potentially significant and are therefore addressed in Sections 3.0–Section 3.11 of this document:

- 3.1 Agricultural Resources
- 3.2 Air Quality
- 3.3 Biological Resources
- 3.4 Cultural/Paleontological Resources
- 3.5 Drainage/Hydrology/Water Quality
- 3.6 Energy Use and Conservation
- 3.7 Geology and Soils
- 3.8 Greenhouse Gases
- 3.9 Land Use and Aesthetics
- 3.10 Noise
- 3.11 Transportation/Traffic

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Other CEQA-mandated environmental topics, such as hazards and hazardous materials, mineral resources, population and housing, public services, recreation, and utilities and service systems, were not found to be significant based on the results of the Initial Study. These issues are addressed in Section 7.0 of this DEIR.

In accordance with Sections 15085 and 15087(a)(1) of the CEQA Guidelines, upon completion of the DEIR, a Notice of Completion (NOC) is filed with the State Office of Planning and Research, and a Notice of Availability (NOA) of the DEIR is published in a newspaper of general circulation in the area and also released to interested parties.

The DEIR is distributed for review to the public and interested and affected agencies for the purpose of providing comments “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” (Section 15204, CEQA Guidelines).

The DEIR and all related technical studies are available for review during the public review period at the offices of the City of Riverside Community Development Department/Planning Division located at 3900 Main Street, 3rd Floor, Riverside, California 92522. Copies of the DEIR are also available at the City of Riverside libraries: 1) Main (Downtown) Library, 3581 Mission Inn Avenue, Riverside, California 92501; 2) Casa Blanca Branch Library, 2985 Madison Street, Riverside, California 92504; and 3) Orange Terrace Branch Library, 20010-A Orange Terrace Parkway, Riverside, California 92508. Finally, an electronic version of this DEIR and the technical appendixes will be available on the City of Riverside's Crystal View Terrace/Green Orchard/Overlook Parkway Project website at <http://www.riversideca.gov/planning/eir.asp>.

Information provided in several documents was reviewed in order to assist environmental review of the proposed Project. Accordingly, these documents are incorporated by reference (CEQA Guidelines Section 15150):

- City of Riverside General Plan 2025;
- Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the City of Riverside General Plan 2025 (State Clearinghouse Number 2004021108; certified by the City in November 2007) (General Plan 2025 Final EIR);
- Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations (SOC) for the General Plan 2025 Final EIR;
- Addendum to the General Plan 2025 FEIR;
- Second Addendum to the General Plan 2025 FEIR;
- Third Addendum to the General Plan 2025 FEIR;
- Fourth Addendum to the General Plan 2025 FEIR; and
- Fifth Addendum to the General Plan 2025 FEIR.

These documents are available for review at Riverside City Hall Community Development Department/Planning Division, 3900 Main Street, 3rd Floor Riverside, California 92522; the City of Riverside Main (Downtown) Library, 3581 Mission Inn Avenue, Riverside, California 92501, Casa Blanca Branch Library, 2985 Madison Street, Riverside, California 92504; and Orange Terrace Branch Library, 20010-A Orange Terrace Parkway, Riverside, California 92508; as well as on the City's website at <http://www.riversideca.gov/planning/gp2025program/>.

1.2.3 EIR Legal Authority

As the designated Lead Agency, the City has assumed responsibility for preparing this document. The decision whether to implement one of the four scenarios within this DEIR is within the purview of the City Council. The City will use the information included in this DEIR to consider potential impacts to the physical environment associated with each scenario when making the decision to implement any of the four scenarios. As set forth in Section 15021 of the CEQA Guidelines, the City, as Lead Agency, has the duty to avoid or minimize environmental damage where feasible. Furthermore, Section 15021(d) states that: "CEQA recognizes that in determining whether and how a project (i.e., scenario) should be approved, a public agency has an obligation to balance a variety of public objectives, including economic, environmental, and social factors and in particular the goal of providing a decent home and satisfying living environment for every Californian. An agency shall prepare a SOC as described in Section 15093 to reflect the ultimate balancing of competing public objectives when the agency decides to approve a project that will cause one or more significant effects on the environment."

In accordance with CEQA, the City will be required to make findings for each environmental impact of the Project that cannot be mitigated to below a level of less than significant for the selected scenario. If the Lead Agency determines that the benefits of the proposed Project outweigh unmitigated, significant environmental effects, the agency will be required to adopt SOC's stating the reasons supporting their action notwithstanding the Project's significant environmental effects.

State law requires that an EIR be reviewed by responsible and trustee agencies when applicable. A Responsible Agency, defined pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15381, includes all public agencies other than the Lead Agency which have discretionary approval power over the proposed project. A Trustee Agency is defined in Section 15386 of the CEQA Guidelines as a state agency having jurisdiction by law over natural resources affected by a project that are held in trust for the people of the state of California. Responsible/Trustee Agencies for the proposed Project include, but are not limited to, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board (SARWQCB), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB).

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The SCAQMD is an agency that regulates sources of air pollution within the region. A fugitive dust control plan submitted to the SCAQMD for approval will be required prior to the commencement of construction activities (SCAQMD Rule 403). In accordance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, the ACOE regulates the discharge of dredged and/or fill material into waters of the U.S. Within areas delineated as jurisdictional waters of the U.S. and adjacent wetlands, all activities resulting in the discharge of fill material require a permit from ACOE. The RWQCB regulates water quality through monitoring of compliance with the regional water quality general permit in accordance with the Clean Water Act Section 401 certification process. The RWQCB would have the responsibility of approving the Notice of Intent (NOI) to comply with the terms of the general permit to discharge storm water associated with future construction activities. The RWQCB would also be a Trustee Agency as it holds regional water quality in its trust through the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) compliance review process. The CDFG regulates activities that would divert or obstruct the natural flow or substantially change the bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake that supports fish or wildlife. A Streambed Alteration Agreement is required for a project that impacts CDFG jurisdictional resources. Finally, the California Water Code authorizes the SWRCB to implement the provisions of the federal Clean Water Act and oversee implementation and permitting related to discharges of storm water associated with construction activities.