

1.0 Introduction

This program environmental impact report (Program EIR) is an evaluation of the environmental effects associated with the adoption and implementation of the updated San Jacinto General Plan by the City of San Jacinto (State Clearing House Number 2001111165). The City completed a Draft General Plan in June 2005. The adoption and implementation of a General Plan constitutes a project for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines.

1.1 Legal Requirements

This Program EIR has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970 (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.), and the Guidelines for Implementation of CEQA published by the Resources Agency of the State of California (California Administrative Code Section 15000 et seq.).

The report was prepared by professional environmental consultants under contract to the City of San Jacinto. The City of San Jacinto is the lead agency for the preparation of this EIR as defined by CEQA (Public Resources Code Section 21067), and the content of the document reflects the independent judgment of the City.

1.2 Purposes of the Program EIR

This Program EIR is intended to provide information to public agencies, the general public and decision makers regarding potential environmental impacts related to adoption and implementation of the San Jacinto General Plan. The purpose of an EIR, under the provisions of CEQA, is "to identify the significant effects on the environment of a project, to identify alternatives to the project, and to indicate the manner in which those significant effects can be mitigated or avoided." (Public Resources Code Section 21002.1(a))

According to CEQA Guidelines (Section 15168), a Program EIR may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project, are related geographically, and are logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions in connection with issuance of rules, regulations or plans. The Program EIR allows for a more exhaustive consideration of effects and alternatives than would be practical in an EIR on separate individual actions, and ensures consideration of cumulative impacts that might be slighted on a case-by-case basis.

This Program EIR provides an analysis of the environmental effects of the San Jacinto General Plan. Section 15152 of the CEQA Guidelines indicates that tiering is appropriate when the sequence of analysis is from an EIR prepared for a general plan, policy or program to an EIR or negative declaration for another plan, policy or program of lesser scope, or to a site specific EIR or negative declaration. Subsequent activities in accordance with the San Jacinto General Plan that are subject to CEQA must be examined in light of this Program EIR to determine whether an additional environmental document must be prepared. If a subsequent project or later activity would have effects that were not examined in this Program EIR, or not examined at an appropriate level of detail to be used for the later

activity, an initial study would need to be prepared, leading to a negative declaration or an EIR. If the City finds that pursuant to Section 15152 of the CEQA Guidelines, no new effects could occur or new mitigation measures would be required on a subsequent project, the City can approve the activity as being within the scope of the project covered by this Program EIR, and no new environmental documentation would be required.

This EIR serves as an information document for use by public agencies, the general public and decision makers. This EIR is not a City of San Jacinto policy document; it does, however, discuss the impacts of development pursuant to the proposed General Plan and related components, and analyzes project alternatives. This Program EIR will be used by the City of San Jacinto Planning Commission and City Council in assessing impacts of the proposed project prior to adoption of the General Plan.

1.3 Background

In order to define the scope of the investigation of the Program EIR, the City of San Jacinto distributed a Notice of Preparation (NOP) to: city, county and state agencies; other public agencies; and interested private organizations and individuals. The purpose of the NOP was to identify agency and public concerns regarding potential impacts of the proposed project. A scoping meeting was also held on August 11, 2005. About 20 public agencies were directly invited along with the general public. A few public agency representatives and members of the public attended and provided verbal comments for consideration in the EIR.

1.4 Availability of Draft EIR

The Draft Program EIR, as well as the updated General Plan, were made available for public inspection at the City Clerk's Office at City Hall - 201 East Main Street and the San Jacinto Library - 500 Idyllwild Drive. Documents may be reviewed during regular business hours.

1.5 Comments Requested

Comments of all agencies and individuals were invited regarding the information contained in the Draft Program EIR. Where possible, those responding were encouraged to provide the information they believe to be lacking in the Draft Program EIR, or indicate where the information may be found. The City of San Jacinto requested that all comments on the Draft Program EIR be sent to the following City of San Jacinto contact:

Tim Hults, Community Development Director
City of San Jacinto
248 East Main Street
San Jacinto, CA 92583

Following a 45-day period of circulation and review of the Draft Program EIR, all comments received on the Draft Program EIR and the City's responses to the comments were incorporated into this Final Program EIR prior to certification of the document by the City of San Jacinto.

1.6 Structure of this EIR

This Final EIR (FEIR) is organized into eight sections. Section 1.0 is this Introduction. The Executive Summary, provided in Section 2.0 includes a brief project description and summarizes project impacts and mitigation measures. Section 3.0 provides a detailed description of the proposed General Plan. The general environmental setting is provided in Section 4.0. Section 5.0 analyzes project impacts and identifies mitigation measures designed to reduce significant impacts. Section 6.0 provides an analysis of alternatives to the proposed project. An analysis of cumulative impacts, growth inducing impacts, significant irreversible environmental impacts and areas of no significant impact is provided in Section 7.0. Section 8.0 contains reference information. Section 9.0 provides the written comments received on the Draft Program EIR and responses to those comments.

The Appendices consist of the Notice of Preparation and Responses to the Notice of Preparation and technical documents included as supporting information to the EIR. In compliance with Public Resources Section 21081.6, a mitigation monitoring and reporting program will be prepared as a separately bound document that will be adopted in conjunction with the certification of the Final EIR and project approval.

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