

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) has been prepared to evaluate the specific and cumulative environmental impacts associated with the General Plan Amendment and Zone Change of the proposed Peninsula Village Overlay Zone (proposed Overlay Zone or PVOZ). The City of Rolling Hills Estates (City) is the Lead Agency with authority to prepare this PEIR and, after completion of the public comment/response process, is the Certifying Agency for the Final PEIR (FPEIR). The City's planning application number is No. 42-05 (PA-42-05). This PEIR is intended to serve as an informational document to be considered by the City and the Responsible Agencies during deliberations on the proposed project. The project approvals associated with the proposed project are described in Section 3.0, Project Description.

An Initial Study prepared by the City indicated that the proposed project may have a significant effect on the environment and that a PEIR would be required to more fully evaluate potentially adverse environmental impacts that may result from development of the project. As a result, this PEIR has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA), as amended (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.), and the State CEQA Guidelines for Implementation of CEQA (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15000 et seq.). This Draft PEIR also complies with the procedures established by the City for implementation of CEQA.

### 2.2 PURPOSE OF THE PEIR

The purpose of this Draft PEIR is to inform decision makers and the general public of any significant adverse environmental effects associated with the proposed actions and to identify appropriate and feasible mitigation measures and alternatives that may be adopted to minimize or eliminate any significant project or cumulative effects. The Draft PEIR also includes consideration of alternatives to the proposed project that avoid or minimize identified potentially significant impacts.

The approach of this PEIR is consistent with Section 15168 of the State CEQA Guidelines. A PEIR is an EIR which may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related either (1) geographically; (2) as logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions; (3) in connection with issuance of rules, regulations, plans, or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program; or (4) as individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar environmental effects that can be mitigated in similar ways.

Pursuant to Section 15105 of the State CEQA Guidelines, this Draft PEIR will be circulated for public review for a period of 60 days.

## **2.3 INITIAL STUDY/NOTICE OF PREPARATION**

On December 9, 2005, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the proposed General Plan Amendment and Zone Change was distributed by the City to the State Clearinghouse, local and regional agencies, and interested groups and persons. The State Clearinghouse issued a project number for the PEIR (SCH No. 2005121054). In accordance with State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15082, the NOP was circulated to the potential Responsible and Trustee Agencies and interested parties for a period of 40 days, during which time written comments were solicited pertaining to environmental issues/topics that the Draft PEIR should evaluate. The NOP and distribution list is provided in Appendix A. Comment letters were received from public agencies and interested parties and are provided in Appendix A.

Key issues raised by these commentators include (1) increased traffic; (2) possible historic resource impacts; (3) adequate fire protection; (4) streetscape plan compatibility with adjacent cities; and (5) local agency compatibility.

The City held a public scoping meeting on January 10, 2006, to present the proposed General Plan Amendment and Zone Change and to solicit input from interested individuals regarding environmental issues that should be addressed in this Draft PEIR. Key environmental issues and concerns raised at the scoping meeting included (1) slope stability concerns regarding the hillsides within and adjacent to the project area; (2) possible obstruction of private views; (3) lack of adequate parking; (4) increased traffic congestion; and (5) security at construction sites.

The Draft PEIR addresses each of these areas of concern or controversy in detail, examines project-related and cumulative environmental impacts, identifies significant adverse environmental impacts, and proposes mitigation measures designed to reduce or eliminate potentially significant impacts. Appendix A includes the NOP and copies of written comments received.

## **2.4 EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT**

As required by State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15128, this Draft PEIR must identify effects of the proposed project determined to be significant. The Initial Study prepared by the City determined that the following environmental effects of the proposed project will not be significant. These issues are briefly discussed below along with reasons they were determined not to be significant. For further information and additional discussion, please refer to the Initial Study and NOP in Appendix A of this Draft PEIR.

### **Agricultural Resources**

The project site is located in an urbanized area and is not used for agricultural purposes. The project is not designated by the California Department of Conservation as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Since agricultural uses are not present and the site is not zoned for agricultural use, the proposed project does not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural uses or any use protected by a Williamson Act contract. The proposed project would not convert farmland to a nonagricultural use. Likewise, the proposed project site would not contribute to environmental changes that could result in the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use.

### **Mineral Resources**

The proposed project site is not a mineral resource recovery site designated on the City's General Plan, Specific Plan, or other land use plan. The project site contains no known mineral resources that would be of value to the region or to the residents of the State.

### **Established Communities**

The project study area is in an established commercial core, and the proposed uses will integrate rather than divide this existing community.

### **New Land Use**

The project area is currently designated as Commercial General by the Land Use Element of the General Plan. The project area is also located within the Mixed-Use Overlay designation. This Mixed-Use Overlay designation permits residential uses (22 dwelling units per acre) to be located above or adjacent to commercial retail and offices. The proposed project addresses residential development and does not introduce a land use that is not currently permitted by the General Plan designation.

Similarly, the proposed project is currently within the existing Mixed-Use Overlay District, which permits residential and commercial uses. The proposed project will modify the amount of residential development and would not introduce a new land use that is not permitted by the existing zoning.

### **Habitat Conservation Plan or Natural Communities Conservation Plan**

The General Plan Land Use Element does not indicate any Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) or Natural Communities Conservation Plans (NCCPs) within the City, nor have any been adopted since adoption of the General Plan. Therefore, the proposed project is not anticipated to conflict with any applicable HCPs or NCCPs.

### **Horse Overlay Zone/Recreational Trails**

The proposed project is not located within a Horse Overlay Zone nor are there any City-designated hiking or biking trails according to the General Plan Open Space and Recreation Element. However, a portion of Crenshaw Boulevard located south of the project site is a City-designated equestrian trail.

### **Flag Lots**

There are no changes to the existing lot configuration with approval of the proposed project. Any subsequent subdivisions of land that generate flag lots would be processed separately by the City.

### **Alternative Transportation**

The proposed Overlay Zone will not conflict with existing program plans or policies related to alternative modes of transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks). By providing residences within the commercial core and creating a pedestrian-friendly district, vehicle trips within the district potentially could be reduced.

### **Objectionable Odors**

The increase in residential density within the proposed project would not introduce additional land uses that would create objectionable odors greater than existing conditions. Residential land uses generate odors typical of other urban uses generally related to trash disposal.

### **Septic Tanks**

The project site is currently utilizing the local sewer system. Septic tanks are not necessary.

### **Transport, Use, or Disposal of Hazardous Materials**

Routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials currently occurs within the project area. The proposed project would allow an increase in residential density. It is not anticipated that the introduction of residential uses would substantially increase the use, transport, or disposal of hazardous materials beyond existing conditions.

### **Accidental Release of Hazardous Materials**

The proposed project would increase the residential density to the proposed Peninsula Village Overlay Zone. The increase in residential density would not introduce land uses that would result in activities that would create a significant hazard to the public or the environment. The proposed project is within 0.25 mile of the Palos Verdes Peninsula High School. The proposed project would allow an increase in residential density. These types of land uses do not generate emissions of or require handling of petroleum or other hazardous materials. It is not anticipated that the increase in residential density would result in emissions/handling of hazardous materials beyond existing conditions.

### **Aircraft Hazards**

The Torrance Municipal Airport, which is a public airport owned by the City of Torrance, is located approximately 1.5 nautical miles north of the project site. According to the City of Torrance, Community Development Department, Rolling Hills Estates is not within the Torrance Municipal Airport Land Use Plan.<sup>1</sup> Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) is located approximately 12.3 nautical miles to the northwest. According to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/EIR for the

---

<sup>1</sup> City of Torrance, Community Development Department. Personal Communication. September 6, 2005.

Los Angeles International Airport Proposed Master Plan Improvements (January 2001), the project is not located within the airport land use plan. The project site is not located within a designated aircraft crash zone, nor will it involve any improvements that would otherwise affect airport operations. As a result, the proposed project will not present a safety hazard related to aircraft or airport operations.

The project area is not located within the vicinity of a private air strip (Eagle Aerial 2005). The project site is not located along a roadway designated as an emergency response route in the Public Safety Element of the General Plan. Crenshaw Boulevard is a Los Angeles County-designated evacuation route, and Silver Spur Road and Indian Peak Road are proposed City-designated disaster routes. This topic will not be discussed further in the Draft PEIR.

### **100-Year Flood Hazard**

The City has been registered in the National Flood Insurance Program since 1979. The Federal Emergency Management Agency, the administering agency for the insurance program, indicates that there are no widespread flooding problems in the City and, therefore, 100-year flood maps are not available or required. Participation in the program ensures coverage from any “flash flood,” “mudflow,” or “earth movement” so long as it can be directly tied to heavy rainfall caused by seasonal conditions.

### **Flooding**

The proposed Peninsula Village Overlay is not anticipated to expose people or structures to a risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding because there are no natural drainages within the project area and no designated floodplains. According to the Generalized Risk Assessment in the Public Safety Element, the project area is not located within a Flood Hazard area.

### **Seiche, Tsunami, or Mudflow**

The project site is not located near any lakes, is uphill of the Palos Verdes Reservoir, and has no potential for a seiche. According to the City of Rancho Palos Verdes and City of Rolling Hills Estates Joint Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan, the project site is not located on a coastal bluff, which would expose it to the potential impact of a Pacific-wide tsunami. The project site is not located near any major open space areas that would expose the site to the potential of mudflow.

## **2.5 FORMAT OF THE PEIR**

Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15120(c), this Draft PEIR contains the information and analysis required by Sections 15122 through 15131. Each of the required elements is covered in one of the Draft PEIR chapters described below.

### **Chapter 1.0: Executive Summary**

Chapter 1.0 contains the Executive Summary of the Draft PEIR document, which lists all significant project impacts, mitigation measures that have been recommended to reduce any significant impacts

of the proposed project, and the level of significance of each impact following mitigation. The summary is presented in a matrix (tabular) format.

## **Chapter 2.0: Introduction**

Chapter 2.0 contains (1) a discussion of the purpose and intended use of the Draft PEIR; (2) background on project initiation and the NOP; (3) intended uses of the PEIR; and (4) areas of controversy known to the Lead Agency, including issues raised by the public. A summary discussion of effects found not to be significant and, therefore, not included in the Draft PEIR analysis is also included in this chapter.

## **Chapter 3.0: Project Description**

Chapter 3.0 includes (1) a discussion of the project's geographical setting; (2) the site's previous use as an industrial and oil production use; and (3) the project's goals, objectives, characteristics, components, and phasing.

## **Chapter 4.0: Environmental Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures**

Chapter 4.0 includes an analysis of the project's environmental impacts. It is organized into the following topical sections: Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Environmental Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Noise, Population and Housing, Public Services and Utilities, and Transportation and Circulation. The environmental setting discussions describe the "existing conditions" of the environment on the project site and in the vicinity of the site as they pertain to the environmental issues being analyzed (Section 15125 of the State CEQA Guidelines).

The project impact discussions identify and focus on the potentially significant environmental effects of the proposed project. The direct and indirect significant effects of the project on the environment are identified and described, giving due consideration to both the short-term and long-term effects, as necessary (Section 15126.2[a] of the State CEQA Guidelines).

Cumulative impacts are based on the build out of the project and the surrounding area, including all other known proposed projects in the surrounding area.

The discussions of mitigation measures identify and describe feasible measures that could minimize or lessen significant adverse impacts for each significant environmental effect identified in the Draft PEIR (Section 15126[c] of the State CEQA Guidelines). The level of significance after mitigation is reported in each section. Unavoidable adverse effects are identified where mitigation is not expected to reduce the effects to insignificant levels.

## **Chapter 5.0: Alternatives to the Proposed Project**

In accordance with CEQA, the alternatives discussion in Chapter 5.0 describes a reasonable range of alternatives that could feasibly attain the basic objectives of the project and that are capable of

eliminating any significant adverse environmental effects or reducing them to a level of insignificance. The three on-site alternatives analyzed in Chapter 5.0 include (1) No Project/No Build; (2) No Project/General Plan; (3) Residential in District 2; (4) Residential West of Dry Bank Drive; and (5) Reduced Project Alternative.

### **Chapter 6.0: Long-Term Implications of the Project and Growth-Inducing Impacts**

Chapter 6.0 includes CEQA-mandated discussions on the following topics as required by Section 15126 of the State CEQA Guidelines: (1) the relationship between local short-term uses of the environment; (2) significant irreversible environmental changes that would result from implementation of the proposed project; and (3) growth-inducing impacts of the proposed project.

### **Chapter 7.0: Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program**

Chapter 7.0 provides a list of all proposed project mitigation measures, defines the party responsible for implementation, and identifies the timing for implementation of each control measure.

### **Chapter 8.0: Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts**

Chapter 8.0 describes those significant adverse environmental impacts for which either no mitigation or only partial mitigation is feasible.

### **Chapters 9.0, 10.0, and 11.0**

Chapters 9.0, 10.0, and 11.0 provide the organizations and persons contacted during preparation of the Draft PEIR, the Draft PEIR preparers and technical report authors and other experts included in preparation of the Draft PEIR, and the references used in the Draft PEIR.

## **2.6 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE**

As permitted in Section 15150 of the State CEQA Guidelines, this Draft PEIR has referenced several technical studies, analyses, and reports. Information from the documents that have been incorporated by reference has been briefly summarized in the appropriate section(s) of this Draft PEIR along with a description of how the public may obtain and review these documents. All documents incorporated by reference are also available for review at the City of Rolling Hills Estates, Planning Department, 4045 Palos Verdes Drive North, Rolling Hills Estates, California. These documents include:

- City of Rolling Hills Estates General Plan, 1992
- Final Environmental Impact Report for the Proposed Rolling Hills Estates General Plan Update, State Clearinghouse Number 1992031016
- City of Rolling Hills Estates Municipal Code
- City of Rolling Hills Estates Zoning Code

- City of Rancho Palos Verdes and the City of Rolling Hills Estates Joint Natural Hazards Mitigation Program
- Peninsula Village Overlay Zone Development Project SB610 Water Supply Assessment

## **2.7 INTENDED USES OF THE PEIR**

The Lead Agency, in particular the City Council, will use the PEIR in the decision making process regarding adoption of (1) a General Plan Amendment to eliminate the mixed-use designation over the full project area and adopt the Peninsula Village designation over a portion of the project area; (2) a Zone Change to remove the existing Mixed-Use Overlay Zone over the entire project area and adopt the new Peninsula Village Overlay Zone over a portion of the project area; (3) Design Guidelines to provide detailed development standards and guidelines; and (4) a Streetscape Plan to unify the design treatments within the planning area. Future development within the proposed Overlay District could also be evaluated consistent with the tiering process outlined in Section 15168 of the State CEQA Guidelines, which allows use of this Program EIR as the primary environmental document that forms the basis for future environmental documentation of individual projects.

## **2.8 CONTACT PERSON**

The City is the Lead Agency for the PEIR for the Peninsula Village Overlay Zone. Questions regarding the preparation of this report and review of the project should be referred to the following persons:

### **City of Rolling Hills Estates (Lead Agency)**

Ms. Niki Cutler, Senior Planner  
Planning Department  
4045 Palos Verdes Drive North  
Rolling Hills Estates, CA 90274  
Phone: (310) 377-1577  
Fax: (310) 377-4468