

I INTRODUCTION

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared to provide an assessment of the potential environmental consequences of adoption and implementation of the proposed East Washington Place project. This evaluation is designed to inform City of Petaluma decision-makers, other responsible agencies, and the public-at-large of the nature of the proposed project and its effect on the environment. This EIR has been prepared in accordance with and in fulfillment of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements. The City of Petaluma is the Lead Agency for the project.

A. Proposed Action

The proposed East Washington Place project includes the development of the former Kenilworth Junior High School site, with associated bus facilities. The proposed project would replace existing uses with a 24.5-acre retail component on the northwest portion of the site, and a 12.6-acre residential component on the southeast portion of the site. The proposed retail project would include up to approximately 298,000 square feet of retail space and 1,260 parking spaces. The proposed residential project would include about 227 residential units, including townhomes, rowhouses, and mixed-use condominiums; and about 570 parking spaces.

B. EIR Scope, Issues and Concerns

The scope of this Draft EIR for the East Washington Place project was established by the City of Petaluma after carrying out an Initial Study and considering comments from public agencies and the community regarding the project. The purpose of the Initial Study is to identify possible environmental consequences deemed potentially significant. The City completed a Notice of Preparation (NOP) and Initial Study on May 11, 2005. The NOP and Initial Study were sent to a list of persons and agencies known to be interested in the project. The NOP comment period extended until June 10, 2005.

Based on the scoping process, the issues addressed in this EIR are as follows:

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| 1. Aesthetics | 8. Hydrology and Water Quality |
| 2. Agricultural Resources | 9. Land Use |
| 3. Air Quality | 10. Noise |
| 4. Biological Resources | 11. Population, Housing and
Urban Decay |
| 5. Cultural Resources | 12. Public Services |
| 6. Geology and Soils | 13. Transportation |
| 7. Hazards and Hazardous
Materials | 14. Utilities |

Mineral resources were excluded from the EIR through the scoping process because it was determined that the project would have less than significant impacts or no impacts with regard to these resources. Please see the Initial Study included in Appendix F for an evaluation and discussion of Mineral Resources in the project area.

C. Report Organization

This Draft EIR is organized into the following chapters:

- ◆ **Chapter 1: Introduction** provides a preface and overview describing both the intended use of the document, and the review and certification process of the EIR.
- ◆ **Chapter 2: Report Summary** summarizes environmental consequences that would result from the proposed project, describes recommended mitigation measures and indicates the level of significance of environmental impacts before and after mitigation. A Summary Table is also included for clarity.
- ◆ **Chapter 3: Project Description** describes the East Washington Place project in detail, including a map and summary of various features of the proposed project.

- ◆ **Chapter 4: Environmental Evaluation** provides an analysis of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project and presents recommended mitigation measures, if required, to reduce their significance.
- ◆ **Chapter 5: Alternatives to the Proposed Project** considers six alternatives to the proposed project, including the CEQA-required “No Project Alternative.”
- ◆ **Chapter 6: CEQA-Required Assessment Conclusions** discusses growth inducement, unavoidable significant effects and significant irreversible changes as a result of the project.
- ◆ **Chapter 7: Report Preparers and References** identifies the data sources and preparers of the Draft EIR.

D. Environmental Review Process

The Draft EIR will be available for review by the public and interested parties, agencies and organizations for a period of at least 45 days, as required by State law. A public hearing on the Draft EIR will be held in front of the Planning Commission and City Council during the review period, during which oral comments are welcome.

Written comments on the Draft EIR are also encouraged for incorporation into the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) and should be submitted to:

Betsi Lewitter, Project Planner
Community Development Department
City of Petaluma
11 English Street
Petaluma, California, 94952-2610

Following the close of the public comment period, a FEIR will be prepared to respond to all substantive comments regarding the Draft EIR. The FEIR will be made available for public review prior to consideration of its certification by the City of Petaluma Planning Commission and City Council. Once the

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City Council certifies the FEIR, it will also consider approval of the proposed project, which may be approved as submitted, modified, or denied.