

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 (proposed 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. Background

The current project represents a revision to a previously proposed project for the site. Initially, the Applicant and a residential builder proposed to develop East Washington Place, a mixed-use development, to include retail uses as well as 227 residential units. The City issued a Notice of Preparation for the Project on February 14, 2005, held a scoping meeting on May 23, 2005 and released a Draft EIR on February 28, 2007 for agency and public review.

The Applicant redesigned the project at the suggestion of the City due to the findings of significant, unavoidable impacts from the residential portion of the original proposal. Although the revised project did not require the preparation of an EIR under CEQA, the applicant decided to go ahead and have a revised EIR prepared. The new project contained less development than that described for the site in the certified EIR for the Petaluma General Plan.

A subsequent NOP was released by the City on October 14, 2008 to request comments on the scope of the EIR that would be prepared for the revised project. The 30-day comment period was between October 14 and November 14, 2008.

B. Proposed Action

The proposed project involves the development of the former Kenilworth Junior High School site. The project would replace existing uses with 364,000 square feet of retail and 16,000 square feet of office uses. The overall parking ratio would be approximately four parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of retail and office space, resulting in 1,510 parking spaces.

Most of the site is currently vacant. It is a disturbed site, formerly occupied by a school that has now been demolished. Existing uses on the property include ball fields, which will be relocated to

school district property. The topography of the site is relatively flat, with a one to five percent slope across the site. The project site contains some mature trees of varying health and seasonal wetlands in the low areas adjacent to the athletic fields. These low areas receive excessive irrigation runoff from the athletic fields in the dry season and are seasonally wet in the winter months.

C. EIR Scope, Issues and Concerns

The scope of this Draft EIR for the proposed 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.

Based on the scoping process, it was determined that the following issues should be addressed in the EIR:

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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 |

In Section 4.3, Air Quality, the EIR addresses the impacts of global warming and greenhouse gas emissions. 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 A for an evaluation and discussion of Mineral Resources in the project area.

D. 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 three 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.

E. 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 members of the public and agency representatives will have the opportunity to comment.

Written comments on the Draft EIR are also encouraged 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 Final EIR (FEIR) will be prepared to respond to all substantive comments received on 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 City Council certifies the FEIR, it will also consider approval of the proposed project, which may be approved as submitted, modified or denied.

CITY OF PETALUMA
EAST WASHINGTON PLACE EIR
INTRODUCTION