

CHAPTER 1.0

INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The City of Sacramento (City) has prepared this Draft Programmatic/Project Specific Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) to provide the public and interested public agencies with information about the potential environmental effects of the proposed Sacramento Zoo Concept and Vision Plan (Proposed Project). The Proposed Project consists of a master plan to upgrade and reconfigure uses within the existing confines of the Zoo located within the southwesterly corner of William Land Park. The Draft Sacramento Zoo Concept/Vision Plan and the addendum to the plan, are presented in **Appendix A**. While serving as a Program EIR for the entire Concept/Vision Plan, this document also serves as the Project Specific EIR for the construction of the first phase of planned developments within the Zoo.

This EIR was prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the CEQA *Guidelines* (California Code of Regulations [CFR], Title 14), and the City of Sacramento's rules, regulations, and procedures for the implementation of CEQA.

As described in CEQA *Guidelines* Section 15121(a), an EIR is a public information document that assesses potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Project, as well as identifies mitigation measures and alternatives to the Proposed Project that could reduce or avoid adverse environmental impacts. CEQA requires that state and local government agencies consider the environmental consequences of projects over which they have discretionary authority. The EIR is an informational document used in the planning and decision-making process. It is not the intent of an EIR to recommend either approval or denial of a project.

CEQA requires that a Lead Agency neither approve nor carry out a project as proposed unless the significant environmental effects have been reduced to an acceptable level, or unless specific findings are made attesting to the infeasibility of altering the project to reduce or avoid environmental impacts (CEQA *Guidelines*, Sections 15091 and 15092). An acceptable level is defined as eliminating, avoiding, or substantially lessening the significant effects. CEQA also requires that decision-makers balance the benefits of a Proposed Project against its unavoidable environmental risks. If environmental impacts are identified as significant and unavoidable, the project may still be approved if it is demonstrated that social, economic, or other benefits outweigh the unavoidable impacts. The Lead Agency would then be required to state in writing the specific reasons for approving the project based on information presented in the EIR, as well as other information in the record. This process is defined as a "Statement of Overriding Considerations" by the CEQA *Guidelines*, Section 15093.

1.2 TYPE OF ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

As noted above, this is both a Program EIR for the overall Concept/Vision Plan for the Sacramento Zoo, as well as a Project Specific EIR for the first phase of planned developments within the Zoo.

A Program EIR is described in Section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines. The Program EIR is an informational document designed to provide the basis for the local planning and decision-making process. A Program EIR assesses the impacts of a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related in one of four ways described in Section 15168(a) of the CEQA Guidelines:

- Geographically;
- As logical parts in a chain of contemplated actions;
- In connection with issuance of rules, regulations, plans, or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program; or
- As individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar environmental effects which can be mitigated in similar ways.

The Sacramento Zoo Concept/Vision Plan is being evaluated under a Program EIR because the Concept/Vision Plan consists of a series of development activities within a specified geographic area. Specific development projects within the project site are subject to additional site specific environmental review with accordance to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168 (c).

This EIR addresses potential impacts, which would logically and foreseeably occur from project implementation (i.e. impacts that would result from the adoption of the Concept/Vision Plan or from the construction of Phase I components). This Program EIR will provide a basic environmental document that can be used as the basis for additional CEQA documentation for the issuance of approval for specific development projects pursuant to the Concept/Vision Plan. Analysis of these specific developments at the design stage will be made based on the more detailed project information, and additional project-specific mitigation measures may be required.

For both the program level and the project level analysis, the basis of the analysis is the project description as presented in Chapter 3 of the EIR. The first phase of development would follow consideration and approval of the Sacramento Zoo Concept/Vision Plan by the City of Sacramento. Phase I includes the construction of a veterinary clinic, kitchen, storage areas, a multi-use pavilion, and improvements to Kamala Center. Phase I constitutes a specific proposal which is a component of the Concept/Vision Plan. The CEQA Guidelines Section 15146 states that the degree of specificity required in the analysis depends on the specificity of the underlying activity described in the EIR. Therefore, the program level analysis of the overall Concept/Vision Plan may be more general than the analysis of the Phase I components which is developed in more detail at this time. Accordingly, the EIR includes a project specific level analysis of impacts and mitigation measures for the Phase I developments.

1.3 EIR ASSUMPTIONS

This Draft EIR is based on the following general assumptions:

- The Proposed Project will be developed based on the general specifications outlined in Chapter 3.0, Project Description.
- Future development in the City of Sacramento will be generally consistent with the City of Sacramento *General Plan*, as well as other City, local, and state-adopted planning documents.
- The requirements of the Partnership Agreement will remain in place as currently worded between the City of Sacramento and the Sacramento Zoological Society.
- The timing of construction activities during the day will comply with the City of Sacramento Noise Ordinance which exempts construction activity on Monday through Saturday – 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Sunday 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m..
- Construction activities will comply with the requirements of Sacramento City Code Chapter 12.64 – Heritage Trees.
- The No Project Alternative assumes no development for the existing plus project conditions. Facilities that would likely be constructed under future conditions include a 5,300 square foot health care facility.
- Future growth associated with Zoo visitation is assumed to be the same as projected in the proposed Concept and Vision Plan (**Appendix A**).
- The final boundaries for the Zoo will be Land Park Drive on the east and the fence line on the north. The formal gardens at the north of the Zoo as well as the slope to the west of the formal gardens will be maintained outside the fence line for public use. Any further expansion of the Sacramento Zoo or construction of ancillary facilities of the Zoo will take place elsewhere than in William Land Park.
- The Zoo will comply with the Sacramento City Code section 8.68.160 – Outdoor Recreation Activities with regards to outdoor noise. In addition, it is the Zoo’s policy to end amplified sound by 9:00 pm on weekdays and 10:00 pm on weekends (one hour earlier than City Code requirements). During special events, any speakers for amplified sound will be directed inside the Zoo. A phone number will be provided for residents to immediately report any perceived violations or concerns.
- Additional low-level permanent lighting will be added where necessary along sidewalks for guest safety.
- The Zoo will continue efforts to spread attendance throughout the year and reduce impact on peak weekends.
- To the extent feasible, parking for Zoo employees will be provided on-site.

1.4 CEQA EIR PROCESS

1.4.1 LEAD AGENCY/PROJECT SPONSOR

The City of Sacramento is the Lead Agency for preparation of the Sacramento Zoo Concept/Vision Plan EIR. Sections 15050 and 15367 of the State CEQA *Guidelines* define the “Lead Agency” as the “public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project.”

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1.4.2 INITIAL STUDY

An Initial Study (**Appendix B**), was prepared for the Proposed Project in accordance with CEQA Section 15063. Based on the Initial Study, it was determined that an EIR should be prepared. The issues discussed within the EIR are those that have been identified in the course of extensive review of all potentially significant environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Project.

1.4.3 NOTICE OF PREPARATION

In accordance with Section 15082 of the CEQA *Guidelines*, the City circulated a Notice of Preparation for this Draft EIR in October 2001, for a 30-day review period that expired in November 2001. The Notice of Preparation is presented in **Appendix C**. These notices were circulated to the public, local, state, and federal agencies, and other interested parties to inform responsible agencies and the public that the Proposed Project could have significant effects on the environment and to solicit their comments. Concerns raised in response to the Notice of Preparation were considered during preparation of the Draft EIR and are presented in **Appendix C**.

1.4.4 DRAFT EIR

This document constitutes the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR contains a description of the project, description of the environmental setting, identification of project impacts, and mitigation measures for impacts found to be significant, as well as an analysis of project alternatives.

1.4.5 PUBLIC REVIEW

This document is being circulated to local, state, and federal agencies and to interested organizations and individuals who may wish to review and comment on the report. Please note that this document contains information incorporated by reference (see Section 1.7). The public can review this information at the following address during normal business hours (8am to 5pm):

City of Sacramento
Planning and Building Department
1231 I Street, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95814

Publication of this Draft EIR marks the beginning of a 45-day public review period. During this review period, written comments will also be received by the City at the following address:

City of Sacramento
Planning and Building Department
Attention: Colleen Laubinger, CEQA Project Manager
1231 I Street, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95814
Fax: (916) 264-7185

1.4.6 FINAL EIR AND EIR CERTIFICATION

Written comments received in response to the Draft EIR will be addressed in a Response to Comments addendum document, which together with the revised Draft EIR text, will constitute the Final EIR. The City Council will then review the project, the EIR, and public testimony and decide whether to certify the EIR and whether to approve the project or deny the project. If the City approves the project, even though significant impacts identified by the EIR cannot be mitigated, the City must state in writing the reasons for its actions. A Statement of Overriding Considerations must be included in the record of the project approval and mentioned in the Notice of Determination.

1.4.7 MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM

Section 21081.6 of the State Public Resources Code, requires lead agencies to "adopt a reporting and mitigation monitoring program for the changes to the project which it has adopted or made a condition of project approval in order to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment." The specific "reporting or monitoring" program required by CEQA is not required to be included in the EIR. Throughout the EIR, however, mitigation measures have been clearly identified and presented in language that will facilitate establishment of a monitoring and reporting program. Any mitigation measures adopted by the City as conditions for approval of the project will be included in a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program to verify compliance. The Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program will identify the responsible parties for implementing and for monitoring each mitigation measure.

1.5 TERMINOLOGY

This Draft EIR uses the following terminology to describe environmental effects of the Proposed Project:

- **Significance Criteria:** A set of criteria used by the Lead Agency to determine at what level or “threshold” an impact would be considered significant. Significance criteria used in this EIR include factual or scientific information; regulatory standards of local, state, and federal agencies; and/or guiding and implementing goals and policies identified in local plans.
- **Less Than Significant Impact:** A less than significant impact would cause no substantial change in the environment (no mitigation required).
- **Potentially Significant Impact:** A potentially significant impact may cause a substantial change in the environment; however, additional information is needed regarding the extent of the impact. For CEQA purposes, a potentially significant impact is treated as if it were a significant impact.
- **Significant Impact:** A significant impact would cause a substantial adverse change in the physical conditions of the environment. Significant impacts are identified by the evaluation of project effects using specified significance criteria. Mitigation measures and/or project alternatives are identified to reduce project effects to the environment.
- **Significant and Unavoidable Impact:** A significant and unavoidable impact would result in a substantial change in the environment that cannot be avoided or mitigated to a less-than-significant level if the project is implemented.
- **Cumulative Significant Impact:** A cumulative significant impact would result in a substantial change in the environment from effects of the project as well as surrounding projects and reasonably foreseeable development in the surrounding area.

1.6 EIR ORGANIZATION

This Draft EIR is organized into eleven chapters as described below.

Chapter 1.0, Introduction. This chapter describes the purpose and organization of the EIR and the EIR preparation, review, and certification process.

Chapter 2.0, Executive Summary. A summary of the project description, a description of issues to be resolved and areas of controversy, the significant environmental impacts that would result from project implementation, and mitigation measures proposed to reduce or eliminate those impacts are provided in this chapter, pursuant to CEQA *Guidelines* Section 15123.

Chapter 3.0, Project Description. Chapter 3.0 describes project background, outlines project objectives, and summarizes components of the Proposed Project, pursuant to CEQA *Guidelines* Section 15124.

Chapter 4.0, Alternatives to the Proposed Project. Chapter 4.0 provides descriptions for each of the alternatives to the Proposed Project, pursuant to CEQA *Guidelines* Section 15126.6. These alternatives are analyzed together with the Proposed Project in Chapter 6.0, Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures.

Chapter 5.0, Land Use, Zoning, and Adopted Plans. Chapter 5.0 provides discussion on pertinent land use policies, local zoning regulations, and other adopted plan policies, which pertain to the Proposed Project and project alternatives.

Chapter 6.0, Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures. Each environmental issue area describes the existing environmental setting, discusses the environmental impacts associated with project construction and operation, and identifies mitigation measures for the impacts of the Proposed Project, as well as all the alternatives to the Proposed Project, pursuant to CEQA *Guidelines* Sections 15125, 15126 and 15126.6.

Chapter 7.0, Growth Inducing Impacts. Chapter 7.0 discusses the potential for the Proposed Project to induce urban growth and development, pursuant to CEQA *Guidelines* Section 15126(d).

Chapter 8.0, Cumulative Impacts. Chapter 8.0 discusses the potential for the Proposed Project and project alternatives to result in cumulative impacts, pursuant to CEQA *Guidelines* Section 15130.

Chapter 9.0, Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts. Chapter 9.0 summarizes significant unavoidable adverse impacts of the Proposed Project and project alternatives, pursuant to CEQA *Guidelines* 15126(b).

Chapter 10.0, Secondary Impacts. Chapter 10 discusses the potential secondary impacts that may result from the proposed project, pursuant to CEQA *Guidelines* 15126.4 (a)(1)(D), 15358 (a)(2) and 15064 (d).

Chapter 11.0, Report Preparation. Chapter 11.0 provides the names of City project staff and the EIR authors and consultants, pursuant to CEQA *Guidelines* 15129.

Chapter 12.0, Acronyms. Chapter 12.0 provides a list of technical terms used, including definitions.

Chapter 13.0, References. Chapter 13.0 provides a list of reference materials and persons consulted during the preparation of the EIR.

Appendices. The appendices are located at the back of the EIR and are referenced in the Table of Contents.

Since the project is not anticipated to require amendments to the City planning documents or ordinances, this EIR does not include a section discussing significant irreversible environmental changes related to the implementation of the project, pursuant to CEQA *Guidelines* Section 15127.

1.7 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

Section 15150 of the State CEQA *Guidelines* allows incorporation by reference of "...all or portions of another document which is a matter of public record or is generally available to the public."

Incorporation by reference is used principally as a means of reducing the size of EIR's. The EIR relies, in part, on information prepared by the City for areas within the project vicinity. Applicable documents are listed here and incorporated by reference as source documents for this EIR. All documents are available for public review and inspection at the City of Sacramento Planning and Building Department, Office of Environmental Affairs, 1231 I Street, Suite 300, Sacramento, California.

1. *Zoo – 2002: Master Plan for the Sacramento Zoo and Surrounding Area*, January 1988.
2. *Sacramento Zoo Master Plan Finding of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations*, 1988
3. *City of Sacramento General Plan*, January 1988.
4. *City of Sacramento Zoning Ordinance*, amended by the City Council February 2002.
5. *Land Use Planning Policy Within 100 year Floodplain in the City of Sacramento EIR*, 1990 & Addendum through 2001.