

CHAPTER 2.0

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter provides a summary of the Proposed Project, a summary of the Phase I project components, a summary of the alternatives, and a summary table of the impacts and mitigation measures identified by this analysis.

2.2 GENERAL INFORMATION

2.2.1 PROJECT LOCATION

The project site is located south of Downtown Sacramento on 14.7± acres in the southwesterly corner of William Land Park (corner of Land Park Drive and Sutterville Road) within the Land Park Community area (**Figure 2-1**). The project site is contained within the boundaries of the existing Zoo grounds (**Figure 2-2**).

2.2.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Proposed Project consists of the proposed Concept and Vision Plan (Plan) for the Sacramento Zoo. If adopted, the Plan will replace the existing master plan *Zoo – 2002: Master Plan for the Sacramento Zoo and Surrounding Area*, which was adopted in 1988. The Plan will update and reconfigure the Zoo’s exhibits and facilities within the existing 14.7± acre footprint. The Plan envisions the update of the Zoo with the concept of a “sensory zoo” as a central interpretive theme. The plan that has been developed will focus on creating a zoo that will teach visitors to use their senses as they walk through the Zoo. The proposed Plan is focused on creating eight zones within the zoo that define the exhibits, visitor services, and zoo operations. The eight zones include the following: Sensory Exhibit Center, Sensory Reptile Center, Discovery Lake, Asian Transect, African Savanna, African Forest, Visitor Services and Amenities, and Zoo Operations and Maintenance. The eight zones will incorporate a number of existing features and facilities. These include: Victoria Lake, an artificial lake and animal exhibit; Kampala food service, a cafeteria serving Zoo patrons; a picnic area, which includes a number of mature oak trees; the gift shop; reptile house; amphitheater; jaguar exhibit; and red panda exhibit.

A significant new feature of the Zoo is the “sensory zoo” exhibit. The sensory approach is achieved through three to five primary “anchor” exhibits. These are exhibit complexes that will lead visitors through sensory zones of: awareness, hearing and smell, sight and touch, interaction and behavior enrichment, and demonstration. The Plan also envisions the construction of several new facilities for staffing and visitors. Facilities to be replaced or improved include the animal hospital, animal kitchen, administration building, education center, maintenance/shop facilities, and front entrance to the zoo.

Figure 2-1 Regional Location Map

Figure 2-2 Site/Vicinity Map.

2.2.3 ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED AND AREAS OF CONTROVERSY

In accordance with Section 15082 of the CEQA *Guidelines*, the City circulated a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for this EIR in October 2001, for a 30-day review period. 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. The NOP and comments received in response to the NOP are presented in **Appendix C**. An Initial Study, which is included in **Appendix B**, was prepared for the Proposed Project in accordance with CEQA Section 15063. The issues discussed within the EIR are those that have been identified within the Initial Study as having potentially significant impacts. The following environmental resources were found to have the potential of being significantly affected by the Proposed Project and have been addressed in greater detail in the Draft EIR.

1. Land Use Consistency and Compatibility
2. Parking Supply
3. Air Quality
4. Noise/Vibration
5. Tree Resources
6. Visual Resources

Issues that were identified within the Initial Study as being less than significant and which will not be evaluated in the EIR include:

1. Seismicity, Soils and Geology
2. Population / Housing
3. Water
4. Energy
5. Public Services (communication systems)
6. Cultural Resources
7. Hazards
8. Utilities
9. Recreation
10. Transportation and Circulation

Listed below is a summary of issues raised by the public in the response to the NOP. The issues identified below are divided by topic area.

TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

The lack of available parking for vicinity of the Zoo at certain times was reported, with specific concern addressed to future impacts from increases in Zoo attendance.

It was suggested that a discussion of Regional Transit's current operations in the project area should be included in the EIR that includes the ease of pedestrian movement to and from bus stops located along Freeport Boulevard and Land Park Drive.

Further, it was suggested that the EIR evaluate the potential traffic impacts on circulation patterns as it relates to the movement of Regional Transit buses, and that the EIR evaluate integrating bicycle amenities into the Concept/Vision Plan.

It was suggested that the EIR address the feasibility of the proposed below grade staff parking with regards to dewatering and the loss of on-site parking during the construction process.

It was suggested that, contrary to statements in the Initial Study, a comprehensive traffic study is required, as evidenced by current traffic problems in the project area, and that the cumulative traffic impacts must be examined and mitigated.

It was noted that the zoomobile is frequently parked on the sidewalk on a slope, causing increased pedestrian traffic on a grassy slope, resulting in the loss of grass and soil erosion. It was suggested that increased zoo attendance would exacerbate this problem.

Transportation and Circulation issues are treated within the revised Initial Study, Section 4.6 in Appendix B. Parking issues are treated within Chapter 6.2 Parking Supply.

AIR QUALITY

It was suggested that the EIR address the air quality impacts of additional vehicle traffic that an increase in Zoo attendance will cause.

This issue is treated within Chapter 6.3, Air Quality.

VISUAL/AESTHETICS

It was suggested that the visual analysis of the proposed pavilion structure should include the removable sides as well as the roof and supporting structure and should reflect wintertime conditions.

It was suggested that the “north slope” and oak trees are a scenic vista, contrary to a statement in the Initial Study.

It was suggested that the pavilion must be classified as a “severe negative visual impact,” which would require a statement of overriding considerations.

The visual impact of a service road along the west and northwest boundary of the Zoo due to a lack of vegetation was noted.

These issues are treated within Chapter 6.6, Visual Resources.

LAND USE

The degree to which increased attendance of the Zoo will lead to increased wear and tear of William Land Park was questioned. *This issue is treated within the revised Initial Study, Section 4.15 in Appendix B.*

It was suggested that the EIR must identify the many changes that have occurred in William Land Park since the 1989 Zoo master plan. *This issue is treated within Chapter 8, Cumulative Impacts.*

It was suggested that the EIR assess the cumulative impacts of increases in Zoo attendance with regards to increases in attendance of other recently privatized operations in William Land Park, including Fairytale Town and the golf course. *This issue is treated within Chapter 8, Cumulative Impacts.*

NOISE

The scope of the noise analysis, who would be performing the analysis, and whether neighbors would be surveyed to present baseline conditions, was questioned.

It was suggested that noise impacts should be assessed by the strictest provisions of the two City Code sections and the Zoological Society – City Partnership Agreement.

It was suggested that noise is a significant impact and having more events will increase this impact.

These issues are treated within Chapter 6.4, Noise and Vibration.

TREE RESOURCES

The manner in which significant unmitigable impacts to Heritage Trees that may result from construction of the proposed pavilion will be treated in the EIR was questioned. *This issue is treated within Chapter 6.5, Tree Resources.*

PUBLIC UTILITIES

Potential impacts to the City's combined sewer and stormwater system was questioned, with regards to recent combined sewer and stormwater system improvements in the project area. It was suggested that improvements to the Zoo's sewer pipes are necessary due to increased runoff from the pavilion and other features. *This issue is treated within the revised Initial Study, Section 4.12 in Appendix B.*

MITIGATION

The person who would be responsible for monitoring mitigation measures was questioned. *Individuals or parties responsible for assuming adequate implementation of mitigation measures will be identified in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) pursuant to section 15097 of the CEQA Guidelines. The MMRP will be a separate document developed following the close of the public comment period on the EIR. The public will have an opportunity to review the MMRP prior to formal project consideration by the City Council.*

The manner in which the mitigation measures that are specified in the Zoo – 2002 EIR be integrated into this EIR was questioned. *This issue is treated within Chapter 3, Project Description.*

It was suggested that the process for ensuring ongoing compliance with the EIR and mitigation measures should be identified in the EIR. *This issue is treated within Chapter 1, Introduction.*

2.3 ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

2.3.1 ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

CEQA *Guidelines* (Sections 15126 and 15126.6) requires an EIR to consider a range of alternatives that could feasibly attain the basic objectives of the Proposed Project. This EIR fully evaluates two alternatives to the Proposed Project. Descriptions for each of the alternatives are provided below. Chapter 4.0, Alternatives to the Proposed Project, provides additional information on each of the project alternatives.

ALTERNATIVE A: NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE (AA)

The No Project Alternative consists of continuation of existing conditions in the short term, while future improvements assumed for the No Project Alternative include a proposed 5,300 square foot health care facility that would contain space for surgery, x-rays, quarantine, storage and office space. The proposed facility, as identified in *Zoo – 2002*, would be located directly southeast of the current administration building. This facility would likely be constructed under the No Project Alternative as a response to current AZA requests for the development of veterinary and quarantine facilities.

ALTERNATIVE B: REDUCED INTENSITY ALTERNATIVE (AB)

The Reduced Intensity Alternative would be located within the existing Zoo grounds. Under this alternative, improvements to the Zoo would consist primarily of those required to assure American Zoological and Aquarium Association (AZA) and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) standards are maintained. Currently, improvements that are required consist of the creation of a veterinary clinic, additional quarantine areas, and an improved kitchen and food storage space. Future improvements include replacing or renovating dilapidated exhibits and holding areas to assure animal health, and providing adequate facilities to provide for the care and maintenance of the Zoo's animal collection. An administration building would be included in this alternative to provide additional staff office space and education classrooms. However, a number of improvements included in the Proposed Project would not be included under the reduced intensity alternative. Notably, the picnic pavilion, new entrance building, below grade parking garage, and sensory exhibit center would not be constructed.

2.4 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Table 2-1 presents a summary of project impacts and proposed mitigation measures that would avoid or minimize potential impacts. In the table, the level of significance of each environmental impact is indicated both before and after the application of the recommended mitigation measure(s). The following abbreviations have been used to identify the Proposed Project and project alternatives:

Proposed Project	(PP)
Alternative A	(AA)
Alternative B	(AB)

For detailed discussions of all project impacts and mitigation measures, the reader is referred to environmental analysis sections in Chapter 6.0, Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures.

2.5 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

After reviewing the comparative impacts of all alternatives, the EIR concludes that the No Project Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative. CEQA requires that should the No Project Alternative be the environmentally superior alternative, the EIR must specify a development alternative which is environmentally superior (CEQA *Guidelines* Section 15126.6 (e) (2)). In this case, the EIR finds that Alternative B – Reduced Intensity Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative.

Alternative B would be located on the existing Sacramento Zoo Grounds. The noise, air quality and visual impacts would be similar to those of the Proposed Project and other alternatives. The parking impacts of the Reduced Intensity Alternative on the project area would be less than the Proposed Project, as the alternative would attract less traffic than the Proposed Project. The development of fewer facilities (no pavilion would be constructed), would result in fewer impacts to City Heritage Trees. It should be noted; however, that the Reduced Intensity Alternative would not attain the project objectives to the extent of the Proposed Project. Nevertheless, given the physical environmental impacts addressed within this EIR, Alternative B is considered the environmentally superior alternative.

Insert Table 2-1 Summary Table