

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document is a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that has been prepared at the direction and under the supervision of the County of Orange (County) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the Guidelines for California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA Guidelines), as amended.^{1,2} The Cielo Vista Project (herein referred to as the “Project”) proposes to develop a maximum of 112 single-family dwellings on approximately 84 acres located in unincorporated Orange County. The proposed dwellings and associated infrastructure would occupy 47.6 acres of the project site, while 36.3 acres of the site would be preserved as permanent open space. The permanent open space would consist of the site’s natural habitat as well as the Project’s fuel modification zones, but exclusive of private slopes, water quality basins and roadways.

A detailed discussion of the Project is provided in Section 2.0, *Project Description*, of this EIR.

1. PURPOSE OF THE EIR

The County of Orange is the Lead Agency under CEQA responsible for preparing the EIR for the proposed Cielo Vista Project (State Clearinghouse No. 2012071013). This EIR has been prepared in conformance with CEQA (California Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.) and the *CEQA Guidelines* (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15000 et seq.). The principal *CEQA Guidelines* sections governing content of this document are Sections 15120 through 15132 (Content of an EIR).

In accordance with Section 15121 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, a primary purpose of this EIR is to provide decision-makers and the public with specific information regarding the environmental effects associated with the Project, identify ways to minimize the significant effects and describe reasonable alternatives to the Project. In addition, this EIR is the primary reference document in the formulation and implementation of a mitigation monitoring and reporting program for the Project.

The County, which has the principal responsibility of processing and approving the Project, will use and consider information in this EIR, along with other information that may be presented during the CEQA process, in the course of the decision to approve, disapprove, or modify the Project. Significant environmental impacts cannot always be mitigated to a level considered less than significant; in those cases, impacts are considered significant and unavoidable. In accordance with Section 15093(b) of the *CEQA Guidelines*, if a public agency approves a project that has significant impacts that are not substantially mitigated (i.e., significant unavoidable impacts), the agency shall state in writing the specific reasons for approving the project, based on the Final EIR and any other information in the public record for the project. This is termed, per Section 15093(b) of the *CEQA Guidelines*, a “statement of overriding considerations.”

This document analyzes the environmental effects of the Project to the degree of specificity appropriate to the currently proposed actions, as required by Section 15146 of the *CEQA Guidelines*. This analysis considers

¹ *Public Resources Code Section 21000-21178.*

² *California Code of Regulations Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15000-15387.*

the actions associated with the Project, to determine the short-term and long-term effects associated with their implementation. This EIR discusses both the direct and indirect impacts of this Project, as well as the cumulative impacts associated with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. CEQA requires the preparation of an objective, full disclosure document to inform agency decision makers and the general public of the direct and indirect environmental effects of the proposed action; provide mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate significant adverse effects; and identify and evaluate reasonable alternatives to the Project.

This EIR is intended to serve as a Project EIR under CEQA. Section 15161 of the CEQA Guidelines states that a Project EIR should focus primarily on changes in the environment that would result from development of the Project. A Project EIR must examine all phases of a project, including planning, construction, and operation. This Project EIR is intended to provide the environmental information necessary for the County to make a final decision on the requested entitlements for this Project. This EIR is also intended to support discretionary reviews and decisions by other agencies.

2. COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA

In compliance with the *CEQA Guidelines*, the County has provided opportunities for the public to participate in the environmental review process. During the preparation of the EIR, an effort was made to contact various Federal, State, regional, and local government agencies and other interested parties to solicit comments and inform the public of the proposed Project. This included, as further described below, the distribution of a NOP and public scoping meeting.

Pursuant to the provision of Section 15082 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, the County circulated a NOP to public agencies, special districts, and members of the public for a 30-day period commencing July 5, 2012 and ending August 6, 2012. The purpose of the NOP was to formally convey that the County is preparing an EIR for the Project, and to solicit input regarding the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIR. A description of the proposed Project was circulated with the NOP. In addition, in accordance with Public Resources Code Section 21083.9, a public scoping meeting was held for the project on July 19, 2012 to obtain input as to the scope and content of the environmental information that should be included in the EIR. The meeting was held on July 19, 2012 at the Travis Ranch Activity Center located at 5200 Via De La Escuela, Yorba Linda, CA 92887. The meeting was held to provide interested individuals/groups and public agencies the opportunity to provide input to the lead agency in determining the scope and focus of the EIR as described in the NOP. In an effort to ensure comments were accurately recorded, the County requested that all comments be submitted in writing by either completing a comment form available at the meeting or providing written comments by mail, fax or via e-mail. Comments on the scope and content of the EIR were received from various public agencies and individuals from the public. The NOP comments are contained in Appendix A and summarized in the Executive Summary under the "Issues Raised During NOP Process" subheading.

Section 4.0 of the EIR addresses the following environmental topics where the potential for significant impacts was identified: Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology/Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology/Water Quality, Land Use and Planning [includes impacts regarding consistency with agricultural zoning (Agricultural Resources) for the project site], Noise, Population/Housing, Public Services, Recreation, Transportation/Traffic, Utilities and Service Systems. For each of the environmental issues described above, a cumulative impact analysis is

provided in the EIR. Section 6.0, *Other Mandatory CEQA Considerations*, includes a discussion of those environmental issues (i.e., Mineral Resources) where the characteristics of the Project made it clear that impacts would not be significant and further evaluation of such issues in the EIR is not necessary.

The NOP and NOP comment letters are provided in Appendix A, *Notice of Preparation/NOP Comment Letters*.

The Draft EIR is subject to a 45-day public review period, commencing November 7, 2013 and ending December 23, 2013, by responsible and trustee agencies, members of the public and other interested parties. In accordance with the provision of Sections 15085(a) and 15087(a)(1) of the *CEQA Guidelines*, the County, serving as the Lead Agency has circulated a Notice of Availability (NOA) of a Draft EIR to: property owners within 2,000 feet of the project site; occupants of properties contiguous to the project site; and public agencies, organizations and individuals that commented on the NOP or have requested such notice in writing. The NOA indicates the Draft EIR will be available for review at the following locations:

- OC Planning's website - <http://ocplanning.net/planning/land/projects/cielo/>;
- OC Planning - 300 N. Flower Street, First Floor, Santa Ana, CA 92702;
- City of Yorba Linda Planning Department - 4845 Casa Loma Avenue, Yorba Linda, CA 92885;
- Yorba Linda Public Library - 18181 Imperial Highway, Yorba Linda, CA 92886; and
- East Anaheim Library - 8201 E. Santa Ana Canyon Road, Anaheim Hills, CA 92808.

The NOA indicates that the County will prepare and transmit a Notice of Completion (NOC) to the State Clearinghouse. Proof of publication is available at the County. All comments on the EIR should be addressed to:

OC Planning
Attn: Ron Tippetts
300 N. Flower Street
Santa Ana, CA 92702-4048
RE: Cielo Vista Project
Or via email at: Ron.Tippetts@ocpw.ocgov.com

Any agency, organization or members of the public desiring to comment on the EIR must submit their comments in writing to Ron Tippetts prior to the end of the public review period. Upon the close of the public review period, the Lead Agency will then proceed to evaluate and prepare written responses to all relevant written comments received from both citizens and public agencies during the public review period. The County's responses at this point in the process will be limited to issues relating to the adequacy of the EIR, and not the relative merits of the Project.

The Final EIR will consist of the Draft EIR, corrections and additions to the Draft EIR, responses to comments addressing concerns raised by responsible agencies or reviewing parties and a mitigation monitoring and reporting program. After the Final EIR is completed, and at least 10 days prior to its certification, a copy of the response to comments on the Draft EIR will be provided or made available to all commenting parties.

3. FORMAT OF THE EIR

The EIR includes eight sections as well as appendices, which are organized as follows:

Executive Summary. This section presents a summary of the proposed Project and alternatives, potential impacts and mitigation measures, and impact conclusions regarding significant unavoidable adverse impacts and effects not found to be significant. This section also summarizes the issues raised in the NOP comment letters regarding the scope and content of the EIR under the “Issues Raised During NOP Process” subheading.

1. **Introduction.** This section provides: a description of the purpose of the EIR; CEQA compliance information relative to the proposed Project and the EIR; a brief overview of the environmental review process; and, outlines the organization of the EIR.
2. **Project Description.** Describes the location, details and the objectives for the proposed Project.
3. **Basis for Cumulative Analysis.** This section contains a list of related projects anticipated to be built within the project vicinity.
4. **Environmental Impact Analysis.** This section contains the environmental setting, Project and cumulative impact analyses, mitigation measures, and conclusions regarding the level of significance after mitigation for each of the following environmental issues: Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology/Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology/Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Noise, Population/Housing, Public Services, Recreation, Transportation/Traffic, and Utilities and Service Systems. No significant impacts were identified regarding Agricultural and Forestry Resources, however, impacts regarding the Project’s consistency with agricultural zoning is discussed in the Land Use and Planning Section.
5. **Alternatives.** This section evaluates the environmental effects of the Project alternatives, including the No Project Alternative. It also identifies the environmentally superior alternative.
6. **Other Mandatory CEQA Considerations.** This section includes a discussion of issues required by CEQA that are not covered in other sections. This includes unavoidable adverse impacts, impacts found not to be significant, irreversible environmental changes, potential secondary effects caused by the implementation of the mitigation measures for the Project, and growth inducing impacts.
7. **List of Preparers.** This section lists all of the persons that contributed to the preparation of this EIR, the Lead Agency, and the Project Applicant.

This EIR includes the environmental analysis prepared for the Project and appendices as follows:

- Appendix A – Notice of Preparation/NOP Comment Letters
- Appendix B – Air Quality Study
- Appendix C – Biological Resources Assessment
- Appendix D – Cultural Resources Assessment
- Appendix E – Geology Study

- Appendix F – Greenhouse Gas Study
- Appendix G - Hazardous Materials Assessment
- Appendix H – Conceptual Water Quality Management Plan/Hydrology Analysis
- Appendix I – Noise Study
- Appendix J – Public Service and Utility Correspondence
- Appendix K – Sewer Study
- Appendix L - Traffic Study

