

## 1.1 ENVIRONMENTAL PROCEDURES

This Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is an informational document intended for use by City of Rancho Palos Verdes (City) decision makers, other local and state agencies with discretionary authority, and members of the general public in evaluating the potential effects of the Rancho Palos Verdes Natural Communities Conservation Planning (NCCP) Subarea Plan (hereinafter referred to as “Subarea Plan” or “Proposed Project”). The goal of the Proposed Project is to maximize benefits to wildlife and vegetation communities while accommodating appropriate economic development in Rancho Palos Verdes and the region pursuant to the requirements of the NCCP Act of 1991 (California Fish and Game Code, Section 2800 et seq.). The Proposed Project provides for comprehensive management and conservation of multiple species, including but not limited to species protected under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) or federal Endangered Species Act (ESA).

This EIR complies with all criteria, standards, and procedures of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended, and is consistent with State of California (State) CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Section 15000 et seq.) and City Local CEQA Guidelines (Revised September 2002). The City is the Lead Agency under CEQA.

Although the following text of this EIR describes the document as an EIR/Environmental Assessment (EA), this document is not a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the U.S. Department of the Interior. A forthcoming NEPA document approved by the USFWS and the U.S. Department of the Interior will be available for public review once announced in the Federal Register.

## 1.2 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE EIR/EA

The City’s Department of Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement determined that the Proposed Project may have a significant effect on the environment; therefore, preparation of an EIR is required. The Initial Study (IS) and the Notice of Preparation (NOP) dated June 25, 2003, identified the potential for significant environmental effects to biological resources, land use/planning, and recreation. This EIR/EA evaluates potential effects of the Proposed Project’s implementation and alternatives on these resources. Effects described in the EIR/EA include short- and long-term effects, direct and indirect impacts, and cumulative impacts. The EIR is intended to be a Program EIR pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168. This EIR will be used to streamline the task of preparing environmental documents on Program actions in the future.

This EIR/EA considers the following actions included in the Proposed Project:

- Adoption of the Subarea Plan.
- Contribution and acquisition of land for a Reserve network to be managed by the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy (PVPLC) with assistance from City and Wildlife Agencies.
- Issuance of take authorizations for covered species by the USFWS under Section 10(a)(1)(B) of the ESA and by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) under California Fish and Game Code, Section 2835.

- Amendment of the City's General Plan, Coastal Specific Plan, and Municipal Code to incorporate the Subarea Plan.
- Approval of Amendment to the Program of Utilization for Upper Point Vicente (Property CA-1088(2) portion of LADA Nike 55 Point Vicente) by the United States Department of Interior, National Parks Services

The EIR/EA is intended to be used by the City in its capacity as lead agency under CEQA for the adoption of the NCCP and subsequent implementing actions. Further, the EIR/EA is intended to be relied upon in the future by the USFWS in its role as lead agency under NEPA and by the National Park Service when it considers revisions to the Point Vicente Program of Utilization, each of which may require adoption of a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) at the appropriate time.

### 1.3 RESPONSIBLE, TRUSTEE, AND COOPERATING AGENCIES

The Proposed Project would require permits and approvals from public agencies other than the CEQA Lead Agency to be implemented. These other public agencies are referred to as Responsible Agencies and Trustee Agencies under CEQA (Sections 15381 and 15386). Responsible agencies are public agencies other than the CEQA Lead Agency that have discretionary approval over the Proposed Project. Trustee agencies include State agencies that have jurisdiction by law over natural resources affected by a project that are held in trust for the people of California. The California Coastal Commission (CCC) is a Responsible Agency under CEQA. The CDFG is a Responsible and Trustee Agency for the Proposed Project.

Federal agencies other than the NEPA Lead Agency that have jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to the environmental effects anticipated from the Proposed Project are Cooperating Agencies under NEPA. A cooperating agency participates in the scoping process and may provide input during preparation of the NEPA document. The National Park Service and U.S. Coast Guard are Cooperating Agencies for the Proposed Project.

### 1.4 COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA

This Draft EIR is subject to a 45-day review period by Responsible and Trustee Agencies and interested parties. In accordance with Sections 15085(a) and 15087 (a)(1) of State CEQA Guidelines, as amended, the City will 1) publish a Notice of Availability (NOA) of a Draft EIR/EA in the *Palos Verdes Peninsula News*, a newspaper of general circulation, and 2) prepare and transmit a Notice of Completion (NOC) to the State Clearinghouse.

Any public agency or members of the public desiring to comment on the Draft EIR must submit their comments in writing to the individual identified on the NOA or NOC before the end of the 45-day public review period. Upon close of the public review period, the City will evaluate and prepare responses to all relevant comments received. The Final EIR will consist of the responses to public review comments and revisions made to the Draft EIR to incorporate comments received. Within 10 days before certification of the Final EIR, a copy of the response to comments will be provided to agencies and other parties that submitted comments on the Draft EIR during the public review period.

## 1.5 SCOPING PROCESS

Several opportunities for public input have been available during formulation of the Draft Subarea Plan and EIR/EA.

### 1.5.1 Public Input During Preparation of the Draft Subarea Plan

Development of the Subarea Plan involved a substantial amount of public input and meetings throughout the planning process. An NCCP Planning Group was established in 1997 to provide a forum for public discussion and consensus building on issues and proposed policies. The Planning Group, which met approximately once a month over four years (1997 to 2000), included representatives from the City, wildlife agencies, environmental groups and organizations, property owners, and various citizen and special-interest groups.

### 1.5.2 CEQA/NEPA Scoping Process

The City issued the NOP (with IS attached) for preparation of the EIR/EA for the Proposed Project on June 25, 2003, initiating a 30-day public scoping period that concluded on July 25, 2003. The purpose of the NOP was to indicate formally that the City was preparing a Draft EIR/EA for the Proposed Project and, as Lead Agency, was soliciting input regarding the scope and content of the EIR/EA. The NOP was distributed to all Responsible and Trustee Agencies, as well as other agencies and members of the public who may have an interest in the Proposed Project. Comment letters were received from the following persons, agencies, or organizations in response to the NOP:

- United States Fish and Wildlife Service / California Department of Fish and Game
- National Park Service
- State of California Department of Transportation
- Southern California Association of Governments
- County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works
- County of Los Angeles Fire Department
- York Long Point Associates, L.P.
- California Native Plant Society
- Endangered Habitats League
- Los Serenos de Point Vicente
- Vic Quirarte
- Jim Knight
- Kathy Snell
- Ann Shaw and Dena Friedson

A public hearing was held on July 15, 2003, by the City Council to present the Draft Subarea Plan and solicit public comments on the NOP. The following individuals and organizations provided comments at the public hearing:

- Jim Knight
- Jack Downhill
- Dale Warren, Southern Bay Archery Club
- Barbara Sattler, California Native Plant Society
- Ann Shaw

During the public scoping period, comments were received regarding the contents of the Draft Subarea Plan and environmental issues to be addressed in the EIR/EA. Comments regarding revisions to the Draft Subarea Plan will be addressed once the Subarea Plan is finalized. Anticipated revisions to the March 2003 Draft Subarea Plan have been included in the project description (Section 3) and associated impacts are evaluated in this EIR/EA. Other revisions to the Draft Subarea Plan are expected to involve only minor editorial changes. The following environmental concerns were raised in response to the NOP (the EIR/EA section in which each concern is addressed is provided in parentheses):

- Adjacent land use and public access to proposed Reserve (Section 5.2).
- Consistency with the Los Angeles County Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide (Section 5.2) and the City's General Plan and Municipal Code (Sections 5.2 and 5.3).
- Consistency with the Program of Utilization for Point Vicente Park/Civic Center (Section 5.3).
- Cultural and archaeological resources (Section 8).
- Impacts to biological resources, including sensitive habitats, trees, raptors, and rare, threatened, and endangered species (Section 5.1).
- Impacts of predator control and herbicide use on non-target species (Section 5.1).
- Indirect effects on biological resources, including lighting, noise, human activity, exotic species, and drainage (Section 5.1).
- Maintenance of biodiversity, habitat connectivity, wildlife corridors, and minimization of edge effects (Section 5.1).
- Selection process for covered species (Section 3.4.1).

Copies of the NOP, distribution list, and letters received in response to the NOP are included in Appendix A of this EIR/EA.

Through the scoping process and preparation of the IS, the following issues were considered potentially significant and are analyzed in Section 5 of this EIR/EA:

- Biological resources
- Land use/planning

- Recreation

The IS determined that the Proposed Project would not result in significant impacts to the following issue areas, which are discussed briefly in Section 8 of this EIR/EA:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture resources
- Air quality
- Cultural resources
- Geology/soils
- Hazards and hazardous materials
- Hydrology/water quality
- Mineral resources
- Noise
- Population/housing
- Public services
- Transportation/traffic
- Utilities/service systems

### 1.6 FORMAT OF THE EIR/EA

This EIR/EA is organized into the following 10 sections:

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| Section 1 | INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE. Provides CEQA-compliance information.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Section 2 | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY. Provides a brief project description and summary of the environmental impacts and mitigation measures.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Section 3 | PROJECT DESCRIPTION. Provides a detailed project description indicating project location, project characteristics, and objectives, as well as associate discretionary actions required.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Section 4 | BASIS FOR THE CUMULATIVE ANALYSIS. Describes the approach and methodology for the Cumulative Analysis.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Section 5 | DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING, IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION MEASURES. Contains a detailed environmental analysis of existing conditions, project impacts, mitigation measures, and unavoidable adverse impacts. The analysis of each environmental category in this section is organized as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “Existing Conditions/Environmental Setting” describes physical conditions that currently exist and that may influence or affect the issue under investigation.</li><li>• “Environmental Impacts/Environmental Consequences” describes potential environmental changes to existing physical conditions that may occur if the Proposed Project is implemented.</li></ul> |

- “Cumulative Impacts” describes potential environmental changes to existing physical conditions that may occur if the Proposed Project is implemented together with other reasonably foreseeable, planned, and approved future projects.
- “Mitigation Measures” are specific measures that may be required to avoid or minimize a significant adverse impact.
- “Level of Significance after Mitigation” discusses whether the Proposed Project and its contribution to cumulative impacts can be reduced to levels considered less than significant.

Section 6	LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT. Discusses significant environmental changes that would be involved with implementation of the Proposed Project and discusses growth-inducing impacts.
Section 7	ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT. Describes a reasonable range of alternatives to the Proposed Project that could attain the basic project objectives feasibly.
Section 8	EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT. Provides an explanation of potential impacts that have been determined not to be significant.
Section 9	ORGANIZATIONS AND PERSONS CONSULTED. Identifies all federal, State, or local agencies, other organizations, and individuals consulted.
Section 10	BIBLIOGRAPHY. Identifies reference sources for this EIR/EA.
Section 11	LIST OF PREPARERS. Identifies people involved in the EIR/EA preparation.