
2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 PURPOSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

This Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared to evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with the construction and operation of the Centennial Project (Project). This EIR has been prepared in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA; *California Public Resources Code* [PRC], Sections 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14, *California Code of Regulations* [CCR], Sections 15000 et seq.). This EIR addresses the potential environmental impacts associated with developing all of the land uses and implementing the associated actions identified in the Project's Conceptual Land Use Plan through buildout.

The County of Los Angeles (County) is the “public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving the project” and, as such, is the “Lead Agency” for this Project under CEQA (14 CCR 15367). CEQA requires the Lead Agency to consider the information contained in the EIR prior to taking any discretionary action. The County, as the Lead Agency, will review and consider this EIR in its decision to approve, revise, or deny the Project.

Under CEQA, “[t]he purpose of the environmental impact report is to identify the significant effects on the environment of a project, to identify alternatives to the proposed project, and to indicate the manner in which significant environmental effects can be mitigated or avoided” (PRC 21002.1[a]). An EIR is the most comprehensive form of environmental documentation identified in CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines and is intended to provide an objective, factually supported, full-disclosure analysis of the environmental consequences associated with a proposed project that have the potential to result in significant, adverse environmental impacts.

2.2 TYPE OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

This EIR analyzes the environmental impacts related to implementation of the master planned community that is detailed in Section 4.0, Project Description. More information related to the structure of each topical EIR section and the levels of analysis is provided in Section 5.0, Regulatory and Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation.

Since approval and implementation of the Project has the potential to cause physical changes in the environment, it is considered a “Project” (as defined by Section 21065 of CEQA and Section 15378 of the State CEQA Guidelines) and thus is subject to the mandates of CEQA. In accordance with Section 15051 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the Lead Agency is the public agency with the greatest responsibility for carrying out or approving the Project as a whole. The County of Los Angeles has the primary responsibility for the approval, construction, and operation of the Project.

This EIR provides a comprehensive evaluation of the reasonably anticipated scope of the Project and evaluates the potential impacts of its construction and long-term operation. It is intended to serve as an informational document for public agency decision makers and the general public regarding (1) the objectives and components of the Project; (2) any potentially significant environmental impacts (individual and cumulative) that may be associated with the planning, construction, and operation of the Project; and (3) appropriate and feasible mitigation measures and alternatives that may be adopted to reduce or eliminate these significant impacts.

This EIR is further intended to serve as the primary environmental document for all entitlements associated with the Project, including all discretionary approvals requested or required in order to implement the Project. Subsequent actions will be reviewed as required by CEQA (Section 21166) and the State CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR 15162).

This EIR provides project-level detail pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines, including specific infrastructure components needed to implement the Project, which state that a project EIR “examines the environmental impacts of a specific development project. This type of EIR should focus primarily on the changes in the environment that would result from the development project. The EIR shall examine all phases of the project including planning, construction, and operation” (14 CCR 15161).

This EIR analyzes Project-level impacts with the most current information provided at the time. In the case that the Project changes to add significant environmental impacts not analyzed in this EIR, additional CEQA may be required.

2.2.1 STANDARDS OF ADEQUACY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORTS UNDER THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

Given the role of the EIR in informing both the public and decision makers, it is critical that the information presented in this document be both accurate and adequate. The State CEQA Guidelines do not contain specific, detailed, quantified standards for the content of environmental documents. However, Section 15151 of the State CEQA Guidelines states the following:

An EIR should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision makers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences. An evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in the light of what is reasonably feasible. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR should summarize the main points of disagreement among the experts. The courts have looked not for perfection but for adequacy, completeness, and a good faith effort at full disclosure.

2.2.2 REVIEW OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The County of Los Angeles, which has the principal responsibility for processing and approving the Project and other public agencies with direct interest in the Project (e.g., responsible and trustee agencies) that may use this EIR in their decision-making or permitting processes will consider the information in this EIR along with other information that may be presented during the CEQA process. In addition, this EIR is the primary reference document in the formulation and implementation of a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) for the Project.

In accordance with CEQA, public agencies are required to make appropriate findings for each potential environmental impact identified in the EIR that cannot be mitigated to a less than significant level. If the Lead Agency (and responsible agencies using this CEQA document for associated permits or approvals) decides that the benefits of the Project outweigh any identified significant environmental effects that cannot be mitigated to below a threshold of significance, it (the Lead Agency) is required to adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations, which states the reasons that support its actions.

The actions involved in the implementation of the Project are described in Section 4.8, Intended Use of the EIR. Other agencies that may have discretionary approval over the Project, or components thereof, including responsible and trustee agencies, are also described in Section 4.8, Intended Use of the EIR.

2.3 SCOPE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

2.3.1 2004 NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND SCOPING PROCESS

The County has complied with the State CEQA Guidelines by providing opportunities for public participation in the environmental review process. Specifically, the Notice of Preparation (NOP) was distributed on March 15, 2004, to federal, State, regional, and local government agencies and interested parties to solicit comments and to inform agencies and the public of the Project during a 30-day public review period that extended from March 15 to April 14, 2004.

Copies of the NOP were also made available at the following libraries:

Quartz Hill Library
42018 North 50th Street West
Quartz Hill, California 93536¹

Lancaster Regional Library
601 West Lancaster Boulevard
Lancaster, California 93534

Valencia County Library
23743 West Valencia Boulevard
Santa Clarita, California 91355

Newhall County Library
22704 West 9th Street
Santa Clarita, California 91321

¹ Quartz Hill Library address prior to November 19, 2016.

San Fernando Library
217 North Maclay Avenue
San Fernando, California 91340

The Project, as it was envisioned in 2004, was described in the NOP; potential environmental effects associated with Project approval and implementation were identified; and agencies and the public were invited to review and comment on the Initial Study, NOP, and NOP mailing list. Three scoping meetings (two on March 30, 2004, and one on March 31, 2004) were conducted during this review period to solicit additional suggestions from the public on the content of the EIR. Attendees were provided an opportunity to identify verbally or in writing the issues they felt should be addressed.

2.3.2 2015 NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND SCOPING PROCESS

Since the issuance of the 2004 NOP, two land use policy document updates have been approved by the County Board of Supervisors (BOS), including the County of Los Angeles 2035 General Plan (General Plan 2035) on March 24, 2015 and the Antelope Valley Area Plan (AVAP) Update on June 16, 2015. These updates included information and data provided by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) adopted on April 4, 2012. These updated documents take into account the development proposed within the Project site, and the Project is consistent with and implements the requirements of the AVAP.

The 2004 NOP set forth a Project boundary that included approximately 11,680 acres. The original proposal requested approval of a three Vesting Tentative Tract Maps (VTTM) and required a General Plan amendment and zone change, among other entitlement actions. Since the issuance of the 2004 NOP, certain modifications to the Project have been made, and the County of Los Angeles subsequently confirmed that the preparation of an EIR is required. The revised Project Description includes 12,323 acres, which includes new property to the east of 300th Street, north of the SR-138. The Project includes a balance of land uses and economic development consistent with the intent and the land use designations set forth within the AVAP's West Economic Opportunity Area (EOA), which includes the Project site. As such, many of the land use entitlement actions previously requested in the 2004 NOP are no longer applicable.

A revised NOP, which included the 2004 NOP and Initial Study as attachments, was prepared and issued in October 2015 to federal, State, regional, and local government agencies and interested parties to solicit comments and to inform agencies and the public of the Project during a 30-day public review period that extended from October 5 to November 4, 2015. Comments on the NOP were received from 21 agencies and individuals, which are also provided in Appendix 2.0-A.

The County conducted a public scoping meeting for the purpose of soliciting oral and written comments from interested parties as to the appropriate scope and content of the EIR. All interested parties were invited to attend the scoping meeting to assist in identifying issues to be addressed in the EIR. The scoping meeting included a brief presentation of the Project to be addressed in the EIR and provided an opportunity for attendees to give input to the

scope of the EIR. The Scoping Meeting was held on October 21, 2015 from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM at the Gorman Elementary School (49847 Gorman School Rd, Lebec, CA 93243).

The NOP was made available for public review during regular business hours at the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning website (<http://planning.lacounty.gov/case>) and the address listed above as well as the following library locations:

Lancaster Regional Library
601 West Lancaster Boulevard
Lancaster, California 93534

Quartz Hill Library
42018 50th Street West
Quartz Hill, California 93536²

Castaic Library
27971 Sloan Canyon Road
Castaic, California 91384

Canyon County JoAnne Darcy Library
18601 Soledad Canyon Road
Santa Clarita, California 91351

Valencia Public Library
23743 West Valencia Boulevard
Santa Clarita, California 91355

San Fernando Library
217 North Maclay Avenue
San Fernando, California 91340

Old Town Newhall Library
24500 Main Street
Santa Clarita, California 91321

Bakersfield Library, Southwest Branch
8301 Ming Avenue
Bakersfield, California 93311

Frazier Park Library
3732 Park Drive
Frazier Park, California 93225

Stevenson Ranch Library
25950 The Old Road
Stevenson Ranch, CA 91381

2.3.3 SCOPE OF THIS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The scope of this EIR includes issues identified in consultation with the County during the NOP comment period, as well as environmental issues raised by agencies and the general public in response to the scoping process and circulation of the NOP. The environmental topics to be addressed (with the respective EIR section numbers) include the following:

- Geotechnical (Section 5.1)
- Hydrology and Flood (Section 5.2)
- Hazards and Fire Safety (Section 5.3)
- Water Quality (Section 5.4)
- Land Resources (Agricultural, Forestry, and Mineral Resources) (Section 5.5)
- Cultural and Tribal Resources (Section 5.6)
- Biological Resources (Section 5.7)
- Land Use, Entitlements, and Planning (Section 5.8)

² Quartz Hill Library address prior to November 19, 2016.

- Population, Housing, and Employment (Section 5.9)
- Traffic, Access, and Circulation (Section 5.10)
- Air Resources (Section 5.11)
- Noise (Section 5.12)
- Visual Resources (Section 5.13)
- Parks and Recreation (Section 5.14)
- Education (Section 5.15)
- Fire and Law Enforcement Services (Section 5.16)
- Other Public Services (Library, Solid Waste, and Other Public Facilities) (Section 5.17)
- Water Resources (Section 5.18)
- Wastewater Collection (Section 5.19)
- Dry Utilities (Electrical, Fossil Fuels [Natural Gas and Petroleum], Telephone, and Cable Service) (Section 5.20)
- Climate Change (Section 5.21)
- Growth-Inducing Impacts (Section 6.0)
- Cumulative Impacts (Section 7.0)
- Alternatives to the Proposed Project (Section 8.0)
- CEQA-Mandated Sections (Section 9.0)
- Document Preparation (Section 10.0)
- Acronyms (Section 11.0)
- Glossary (Section 12.0)

2.4 PLANNING CONTEXT

2.4.1 COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

As previously mentioned, the BOS voted to approve the *County of Los Angeles General Plan 2035* on March 24, 2015. The General Plan was subsequently adopted on October 6, 2015, and became effective on November 5, 2015. The General Plan 2035 serves as the land use policy for the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County and was developed in accordance with five guiding principles: smart growth; sufficient community services and infrastructure; strong and diverse economy; excellent environmental resource management; and healthy, livable, and equitable communities. The Elements of the General Plan discuss issues affecting the County and outline goals, policies, and implementation programs that address the needs of the County and achieve its long range vision for growth and development. The General Plan 2035 discusses the Antelope Valley Planning Area and its Economic Opportunity Areas, consisting of rural town centers and areas with opportunities for economic growth and development (DRP 2014). The Project is subject to the requirements of the General Plan 2035.

2.4.2 ANTELOPE VALLEY AREA PLAN

The AVAP is a component of the County of Los Angeles General Plan that provides a coordinate statement of public policy relating to the future of the Antelope Valley. It provides more specific goals and policies for unincorporated County land in the Antelope Valley area than the County General Plan (DRP 2014). The AVAP first went to the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors for approval on November 12, 2014, where the Board unanimously indicated its intent to approve the AVAP and certify its Final EIR (DRP 2015c). The Los Angeles County BOS adopted the AVAP on June 16, 2015, which includes the AVAP, associated zone changes, and amendments to the Zoning Code (Title 22) (DRP 2015b).

Both the General Plan 2035 and the AVAP updates include information and data provided in SCAG's 2012–2035 RTP/SCS adopted on April 4, 2012. On April 7, 2016, SCAG's Regional Council adopted the 2016-2040 RTP/SCS. This EIR addresses the Project's consistency with the adopted AVAP in Section 5.8, Land Use, Entitlements, and Planning.

2.5 PROJECT SPONSORS AND CONTACT PERSONS

The County of Los Angeles is the Lead Agency for preparation of this EIR. Inquiries regarding the EIR should be directed to the County. The Applicant for the Project is Centennial Founders, LLC. Key contact persons are as follows:

Lead Agency: County of Los Angeles
 Department of Regional Planning
 320 West Temple Street
 Los Angeles, California 90012
 Contact: Mr. Jodie Sackett
 Email: specialprojects@planning.lacounty.gov

Project Applicant: Centennial Founders, LLC
 28480 Avenue Stanford, Suite 210
 Santa Clarita, California 91355

2.6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT REVIEW

This EIR has been distributed to Responsible and Trustee Agencies, other affected agencies, surrounding jurisdictions, interested parties, and other parties who requested a copy of the EIR in accordance with Section 21092 of the *California Public Resources Code*. The Notice of Completion for the EIR was also distributed as required by CEQA. Typically, reviewers of the EIR are given a 45-day review period to prepare written comments on the document. Due to the comprehensive nature of this Project and the volume of technical materials to review, a 15-day extension (for a total 60-day review period) has been established for an initial review period prior to the first public hearing. During the public review period, this EIR (including the technical appendices) is available for review at the County of Los Angeles Department of

Regional Planning located at 320 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, California.³ Additionally, copies of the EIR and technical appendices (on CD) are available at the reference desk of the same libraries listed above for the 2015 NOP, with the exception of the Quartz Hill Library (formerly located at 42018 50th Street West, Quartz Hill). The EIR is available at: Lancaster Regional Library, Castaic Library, Valencia Public Library, Old Town Newhall Library, Frazier Park Library, Canyon County JoAnne Darcy Library, San Fernando Library, Bakersfield Library–Southwest Branch, Stevenson Ranch Library, and the new Quartz Hill Library, located at 5040 West Avenue M2, Quartz Hill, California.

Written comments to the EIR should be addressed to Mr. Jodie Sackett at the address provided above under Section 2.5. Upon completion of the 60-day public review period, written responses to all significant environmental issues that were raised in written and oral comments on the EIR will be prepared and provided to all agencies and interested organizations prior to final action on the Project. These environmental comments and their responses will be included as part of the environmental record for the decision makers to consider.

2.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

2.7.1 THE DOCUMENT AS A WHOLE

This EIR has been divided into sections and is bound in one volume. It is available both in hard copy and on DVD. This EIR contains 12 sections, as listed below, and technical appendices. For ease of use, the references have been listed at the end of each section instead of the end of the document in a separate section.

Section 1.0: Executive Summary. This section presents an overview of the Project objectives, and Project setting and description; a summary of each topical analysis in the EIR, growth-inducing impacts, cumulative impacts, and alternatives analysis; a description of Project alternatives; areas of known controversy; and a summary table listing the significance finding for each threshold addressed in Section 5.0.

Section 2.0: Introduction. This section provides an introduction to the EIR, the EIR process, and the public involvement process.

Section 3.0: Environmental Setting. This section describes the physical setting and current land uses on the site. It also discusses the current land use designations as defined by the *County of Los Angeles 2035 General Plan* and

³ Individuals or groups who would like a printed copy of the document can order directly from ARC at their own (nonrefundable) expense. Copies can be ordered from Robbie Watson by phone at (949) 660-1150 ext. 154 or by email at Robbie.Watson@e-arc.com.

Antelope Valley Area Plan, the current zoning, regional planning context, and summarizes possible development constraints and opportunities.

Section 4.0: Project Description.

This section provides a description of the Project, as illustrated by the Project's Conceptual Land Use Plan. This includes discussions of the Project's objectives, its design, implementation, and the entitlements required, among other issues.

Section 5.0: Regulatory and Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation.

This contains a brief overview of how each Section 5 analysis section is organized and explains the difference between a Project Design Feature (PDF) and a Mitigation Measure (MM).

Sections 5.1–5.21.

These sections present the regulatory and environmental settings, threshold criteria, direct and indirect environmental impacts, mitigation measures if needed, and level of significance after mitigation, including identification of any unavoidable significant impacts for the environmental topics itemized above in Section 2.3.3.

Section 6.0: Growth-inducing Impacts.

This section presents the analysis of possible indirect impacts due to growth wholly or partially induced by Project implementation.

Section 7.0: Cumulative Impacts.

This section presents the analysis of the Project's impacts in combination with anticipated impacts related to regional growth and local projects.

Section 8.0: Alternatives to the Proposed Project.

This section analyzes feasible alternatives to the Project that could reduce the potentially significant adverse impacts on the Project site. It also discusses how well these alternatives meet the Project objectives.

Section 9.0: CEQA-Mandated Sections.

This section summarizes the irreversible changes due to the Project and the Project's impacts, and discusses mitigation outside the authority of the Lead Agency.

Section 10.0: Document Preparation.

This section lists those persons who assisted in preparing this document.

Section 11.0: Acronyms.

This section lists the acronyms that have been used throughout this EIR.

Section 12.0: Glossary.

This section includes a glossary of terms that were frequently used in this EIR.

The technical appendices mentioned throughout this document that provide the technical support for the EIR have not been printed, except for the hard copies provided for the public at the County of Los Angeles offices. However, the technical appendices have been included in their entirety on DVDs that are included inside the front cover of all hard copies of this EIR. These appendices include the 2015 Notice of Preparation (and attachments) and responses to it; the *Centennial Specific Plan*; the technical studies prepared for the Project; and other subject-specific reports, documentation, guides, and information deemed important to the analysis. The appendix numbering corresponds to the section number (e.g., Appendix 5.1-A is used in Section 5.1, Geotechnical).

2.7.2 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS SECTIONS (SECTION 5.1–5.21)

As described in Section 5.0, Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation, and in accordance with Article 9 (Contents of Environmental Impact Reports) of the State CEQA Guidelines, each topical environmental analysis includes a description of the existing setting; identification of thresholds of significance; analysis of potential Project effects and identification of significant impacts; identification of mitigation measures, if required, to reduce the significant impacts; level of significance after mitigation; and references. This information is presented in the following format:

- 5.X.1 Introduction** – Describes the purpose, focus, and format of the subsequent topical analysis; provides a summary of the analysis presented in that section; and lists the primary technical references used in that section.
- 5.X.2 Relevant Plans, Policies, and Regulations** – Lists and describes the plans, policies, laws, and regulations relevant to that topic in descending order of jurisdiction, from federal to local.
- 5.X.3 Environmental Setting** – Describes the existing physical condition of the Project site and surrounding area at the time the NOP of the EIR was distributed (in accordance with 14 CCR 15125), as it is germane to that topic. If the analysis requires an evaluation of a baseline environmental condition other than described at the time of the issuance of the NOP, the justification and method for assuming a different baseline is discussed.
- 5.X.4 Project Design Features**– Lists the numbered PDFs germane to that topic (these elements are explained in more detail in Section 5.0). PDFs are design elements that have been incorporated into the Project to avoid or minimize environmental effects. Because PDFs have been incorporated into the Project, they do not constitute mitigation measures as defined by CEQA. However, if the PDFs have mitigation value to reduce a potentially significant impact, then a corresponding mitigation measure (MM) has been prepared to ensure the implementation of the measure through the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP).

- 5.X.5 Threshold Criteria** – Lists the numbered thresholds of significance for that topic, derived from the County of Los Angeles Environmental Checklist.
- 5.X.6 Environmental Impacts** – Includes the analysis of environmental impacts under each threshold criterion identified for that topic (listed in bold italics). If the subject matter is sufficiently related, threshold criteria may be grouped together to streamline the analysis. The analysis includes a description of the Project-related impacts on the environment, which is determined by comparing the effect of the Project on the baseline environmental condition. At the conclusion of the analysis for each threshold, an “impact summary” is provided that summarizes the level of significance for that threshold after consideration of PDFs and MMs.
- 5.X.7 Mitigation Measures** – Lists numbered mitigation measures for all significant impacts identified in the analysis.
- 5.X.8 Level of Significance After Mitigation** – Summarizes the overall level of significance for that topic as a whole, after all recommended mitigation measures have been implemented.
- 5.X.9 References** – Includes an alphabetical listing of all references used in that section. The technical reports used for the topical analyses are referenced as well.

2.8 REFERENCES

- California, State of. 2015a (access date). *California Code of Regulations* (Title 14, Natural Resources; Division 6, Resources Agency; Chapter 3, Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act). Sacramento, CA: the State.
- . 2015b (access date). *California Public Resources Code* (Division 13, Environmental Quality; Sections 21000–21189.3). Sacramento, CA: the State.
http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayexpandedbranch.xhtml?tocCode=PRC&division=13.&title=&part=&chapter=&article=
- Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning (DRP). 2015a (June). *Antelope Valley Area Plan: Town & Country*. Los Angeles, CA: DRP. <http://planning.lacounty.gov/tnc>.
- . 2015b (May 27, last accessed). Los Angeles County General Plan 2035. Los Angeles, CA: DRP. <http://planning.lacounty.gov/generalplan>.
- . 2015c (May 27, last accessed). Town & County—Antelope Valley Area Plan Update. Los Angeles, CA: DRP. <http://planning.lacounty.gov/tnc>.
- . 2004 (March 2004). *Notice of Preparation: Centennial Specific Plan Project Description* (Project Number 02-232, Specific Plan, Conditional Use Permits, Oak Tree Permit, Zone Change, Development Agreement, Vesting Tentative Tract Map Numbers 60020, 60021, 60023, and Vesting Tentative Parcel Map Number 60022). Los Angeles, CA: DRP (Appendix 2.0-A).

Placeworks. 2017 (June). *Centennial Specific Plan*. Santa Ana, CA: Placeworks (Appendix 4.0-A).

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