

INTRODUCTION

This introduction is intended to provide the reader with general information regarding the subject of this Environmental Impact Report (EIR), the purpose for an EIR, standards for EIR adequacy, an introduction to the scope and content of this EIR, and the opportunities that will be provided for public participation in the project and EIR review process.

SUBJECT OF THIS EIR

This Environmental Impact Report (EIR) addresses the environmental effects of The Greens at Camarillo Springs, a 182-acre, 248 dwelling unit senior (55+) for-sale residential and golf course renovation project (project or proposed project) proposed within the City of Camarillo (City). The California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code §21000 et seq.) (CEQA) requires that public agencies consider the environmental consequences of projects over which they have discretionary approval authority.

Project Site History

The proposed project site is the existing, privately-owned and operated Camarillo Springs Golf Course located at the base of the Conejo Mountains within the eastern area of the City of Camarillo. The site is located at 791 Camarillo Springs Road and includes Assessor's Parcel Numbers 234-0-040-420, 234-0-040-595, 234-0-040-740, 234-0-040-750, 234-0-040-760, 234-0-040-770, 234-0-181-115, 234-0-201-045, 234-0-201-055. The site is generally bound by Ridge View Street to the north, and is generally east and south of Ridge View Street's intersection with Adohr Lane.

The golf course was approved for development by the City of Camarillo in 1970 and has been developed and operational for more than 45 years. The property is currently developed with an 18-hole golf course, clubhouse facility, driving range, maintenance buildings, and associated structures. The golf course is open for public use and play, as well as tournaments, and its hours of operation are from 6:00 a.m. until sundown. The property is designated as Public/Quasi-Public in the City of Camarillo General Plan and is zoned RE (Rural Residential) and RE-1 Acre.

Proposed Project

NUWI Camarillo, LLC is requesting approval from the City of Camarillo to amend the General Plan Land Use Element to change the land use designation for an approximately 31-acre portion of the larger 182-acre project site from Public/Quasi-Public to Low-Medium Density Residential (5.1 - 10 dwelling units per acre) and change the zoning of this area from RE to RPD-8U (Residential Planned Development – 8 units per acre maximum). The area proposed for the General Plan Amendment (GPA) and change of zone is within one lot and is specifically located south of Ridge View Street and west of the existing golf course

driving range. The applicant is also requesting approval of a Tentative Tract Map (TT-6016) to subdivide the property for the development of up to 248 new age-restricted (55+) residential units and a Residential Planned Development (RPD-204) permit for the development of 248 age-restricted (55+) single family detached dwelling units. The development would include a private recreation center and open spaces that include two pocket parks and walking trail connectivity to the surrounding community.

Development of the residential area would require the temporary closure and reconfiguration of the golf course. The applicant is requesting to reconfigure the golf course into 12 holes instead of the current 18-hole layout under Special Use Permit Modification (SUP-6M3). The golf course clubhouse would be renovated and enhanced within the existing building footprint. Other improvements proposed for the golf course include a renovated driving range and additional open spaces including a new neighborhood park, trails, a dog park, and event spaces, all of which would be open and available for public use.

The project applicant has also submitted a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to modify the existing Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) floodplain map in order to remove 154 existing residences, located offsite and to the south and east of that portion of the project site upon which residential units are proposed, from the mapped floodplain area and facilitate residential development of the existing golf course. The area of the existing course in the southwest portion of the project site (“golf course – south area”) will be excavated and modified to generate fill for the creation of the approximate 31-acre residential pad. A continuous basin would be provided in the golf course – south area in order to capture the water that would normally inundate the northern part of the course, where the proposed senior residential development is located, during heavy storm events.

PURPOSE OF AN EIR

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was enacted in 1970 with the objective to inform the public and decision-makers of the potential environmental impacts of a proposed project. CEQA requires agencies to consider the significant effects of a project and to reduce the significant environmental effects of a project by implementing feasible mitigation measures or alternatives to the project as proposed. The public agencies must consider the information in the EIR along with other information which may be presented to the agency when deciding whether to approve or deny a project. An EIR is also intended to be the primary reference document in the formulation and implementation of a mitigation monitoring and reporting program for an approved project.

CEQA applies to all discretionary actions proposed to be carried out or approved by California public agencies, including state, regional, county, and local agencies. The proposed project requires discretionary approval from the City of Camarillo and is, therefore, subject to CEQA. For the purpose of CEQA compliance, the City of Camarillo is the “Lead Agency” for the proposed project. The Lead Agency is responsible for preparing the EIR in accordance with CEQA and the Guidelines for Implementation of the

California Environmental Quality Act (State CEQA Guidelines). As mandated by the State CEQA Guidelines, this EIR has been subject to the City's internal review process and reflects the City's independent judgement and objectivity with regard to the scope, content, and adequacy of analysis.

Although the City of Camarillo is the Lead Agency for the proposed project and the City has sole authority to approve or deny the project, development and operation of the proposed land uses may also be subject to permit approval by other federal, state, or regional agencies. Such responsible and trustee agencies may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- Ventura County Watershed Protection District
- Camarillo Sanitary District
- Camrosa Water District

EIR ADEQUACY

The principle use of an EIR is to enable the Lead Agency and other responsible agencies to examine the overall effects of projects that could have one or more significant effects on the environment. The State CEQA Guidelines require no particular level of detail for such a document; instead, Section 15151 of the State CEQA Guidelines states that an EIR, regardless of the type:

...should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision makers with information that enables them to make a decision that 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 good faith effort at full disclosure.

The critical factor is that an environmental analysis discloses all potential environmental consequences associated with the project implementation, while avoiding unnecessary, redundant environmental analysis. The California Supreme Court has explained that when an agency's prepared an EIR:

[T]he issue is not whether the [lead agency's] studies are irrefutable or whether they could have been better. The relevant issue is only whether the studies are sufficiently

credible to be considered as part of the total evidence that supports the [lead agency's] finding[.]¹

EIR SCOPE AND CONTENT

Before beginning the preparation of a Draft EIR, the Lead Agency must decide which specific issues should be evaluated in the document. CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines identify various steps that lead agencies must take to define the scope and contents of an EIR, and also give lead agencies discretion to use additional “scoping” methods.

To determine the environmental issues that should be addressed in the Draft EIR, City of Camarillo Department of Community Development conducted a preliminary evaluation of the potential environmental impacts that could occur with implementation of the proposed project. Based on this review, the City concluded that the project could have potentially significant impacts associated with the following environmental issues:

- Aesthetics and Scenic Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources and Tribal Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise and Vibration
- Population and Housing
- Public Services and Recreation
- Transportation
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire

Input as to the scope of the Draft EIR was then obtained from interested public agencies and private parties through a Notice of Preparation of a Draft EIR (NOP) of a Draft EIR review process and public Draft EIR scoping meeting. The NOP was circulated for a 30-day review period beginning on July 16, 2019 and ending on August 15, 2019. The NOP is included as Appendix A to this EIR and the letters received by the City of Camarillo in response to the NOP are included as Appendix B to this EIR.²

¹ *Laurel Heights Improvement Assn. v. Regents of the University of California* (1988) 47 Cal.3d 376, 409; see also *Eureka Citizens for Responsible Gov't v. City of Eureka* (2007) 147 Cal.App.4th 357, 382.

² The letter received from Julie Tumamait-Stensile on behalf of the Barbareno/Ventureno Band of Mission Indians is not included in Appendix B for confidentiality and to protect tribal cultural resources.

The City of Camarillo Department of Community Development also conducted an EIR scoping meeting for the public in the City Council Chambers on July 23, 2019. Written comments that were submitted by people in attendance are included as Appendix C to this EIR.

The input provided through the NOP review period did not identify any additional topical areas of analysis to be included in the Draft EIR and therefore did not change the City's proposed scope of the Draft EIR.

ISSUES OF KNOWN CONCERN

A summary of the environmental concerns identified in the letters submitted to the Department of Community Development in response to the NOP and during the EIR scoping meeting is provided in Table 1. A number of response letters from local residents identified early opposition to the project. While support or opposition to a project is important for consideration by the City of Camarillo Planning Commission and City Council, it does not pertain to the scoping of a Draft EIR. Therefore, support or opposition to the proposed project is not identified in Table 1-1.

As shown in Table 1-1, the issues of known concern are consistent with those identified previously by the City of Camarillo Department of Community Development. These issues are evaluated in the technical sections of this EIR.

TABLE 1-1: ISSUES OF KNOWN CONCERN

Commenting Entity	Environmental Issues of Concern
California Governor's Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse and Planning Unit	The EIR for the project has been assigned State Clearinghouse (SCH) Number 2019070514 and the state agencies that were informed about the project are identified.
California Department of Conservation	The project site is located within the abandoned Conejo field with 15 known oil, gas, or geothermal wells.
California Department of Transportation	Impacts to the Camarillo Springs Road and SR-101 ramps should be evaluated. VMT is to be used for evaluation starting July 1, 2020.
California Native American Heritage Commission	Identifies the tribal consultation requirements for compliance with Senate Bill 18 and Assembly Bill 52.
Pleasant Valley Recreation & Park District	Provision of parkland.
Ventura County Watershed Protection District	Impacts to Conejo Creek and maintenance of on-site drainage basins.
Jeffrey Camarda & David T. Vincent	Safety, traffic, environment, and wildlife. Development in a flood zone.

TABLE 1-1: ISSUES OF KNOWN CONCERN

Commenting Entity	Environmental Issues of Concern
Teri A. Denson	Impacts associated with the renovated lake.
Max Fowler	Impacts to wildlife.
Cheryl Harwood	Loss of floodplain. Oil well leakage. Reservoir becoming public recreation area. Construction noise levels. Potential blasting. Development in flood zone.
Jing Huang	Impacts to the environment.
Joe Karalius	Impacts to Highway 101, drainage, geologic stability, wildlife habitat.
Bruce McDonough	Impacts to wildlife, noise, watercourses.
Mike Mishler	Impacts to biological resources, geology, blasting, greenhouse gas emissions, abandoned oil wells and soil contamination, hydrology, recreation and open space, traffic modeling.
Brian Morris	Soil testing for contamination.
Oppose Camarillo Springs Building	Impacts to aesthetics/visual resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources/tribal cultural resources, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, construction noise, golf course recreation, traffic and circulation, emergency evacuation, water demand, wildlife.
Julie Tumamait-Stensile on behalf of the Barbareno/Ventureno Band of Mission Indians (Chumash)	Impacts to Native American resources.
Barbara Williams	Impacts to wildlife and wildlife corridors. Soil contamination.

ORGANIZATION OF THE EIR

This EIR has been formatted for ease of use and reference. To help the reader locate information of particular interest, a brief summary of the contents of each section of the EIR is provided. The following sections are contained within the EIR:

Introduction — This section introduces the subject of this EIR, the purpose for an EIR, standards for EIR adequacy, an introduction to the scope and content of this EIR, and the opportunities that will be provided for public participation in the project and EIR review process.

Executive Summary — This section provides a summary of the analyses and conclusions presented in the body of this EIR, including the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project, the

recommended mitigation measures, the level of significance after mitigation, and the unavoidable impacts of the project. Also contained within this section is a summary of alternatives to the proposed and their ability to reduce the significant impacts of the project.

Environmental Setting — This section describes the physical environment that currently exists at, and in the vicinity of, the project site. This section also summarizes the approach for addressing cumulative impacts in this EIR.

Project Description — This section describes the project as proposed by the project applicant, outlines the objectives for the project, and identifies the approvals required by the City of Camarillo and other agencies for project implementation.

Environmental Impact Analysis — The Environmental Impact Analysis is the primary focus of the EIR. Separate discussions are provided to address the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project. Each section provides a discussion of existing conditions (environmental setting), identification of the thresholds of significance for that topic, an assessment of the impacts of the project in relation to the thresholds of significance, recommended mitigation measures, cumulative impacts, and a residual impact statement as to the effectiveness of the recommended mitigation measures.

Alternatives to the Proposed Project — This section identifies alternatives to the proposed project that have been considered by the City to reduce and/or minimize significant project impacts. This includes a “no project” alternative.

Preparers of the EIR — This section identifies the individuals responsible for the preparation of this EIR.

References — This section identifies all references used and cited in the preparation of this EIR.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation is an essential part of the CEQA process. To provide full public disclosure of the potential environmental impacts that may occur as a result of the proposed project, CEQA requires that the Draft EIR be circulated for a 45-day public review period. During this review period, public agencies and interested organizations and individuals are encouraged to provide written comments addressing their concerns regarding the adequacy and completeness of the Draft EIR. When providing written comments on the subject matter of the Draft EIR, the readers are referred to Section 15204(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, which states:

In reviewing draft EIRs, persons and public agencies should focus on the sufficiency of the document in identifying and analyzing the possible impacts on the environment and ways in which the significant effects of the project might be avoided or mitigated. Comments are most helpful when they suggest additional specific alternatives or

mitigation measures that would provide better ways to avoid or mitigate the significant environmental effects. At the same time, reviewers should be aware that the adequacy of an EIR is determined in terms of what is reasonably feasible, in light of factors such as the magnitude of the project at issue, the severity of its likely environmental impacts, and the geographic scope of the project. CEQA does not require a lead agency to conduct every test or perform all research, study, and experimentation recommended or demanded by commenters. When responding to comments, lead agencies need only respond to significant environmental issues and do not need to provide all information requested by reviewers, as long as a good faith effort at full disclosure is made in the EIR.

All comments or questions regarding the Draft EIR should be addressed to:

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A copy of the Draft EIR will also be made available for public review on the City's website (http://www.cityofcamarillo.org/departments/community_development/index.php) and at the counter for the City of Camarillo Department of Community Development at the address listed above.

Following the Draft EIR public review period and receipt of all written comments, the City of Camarillo will prepare a Final EIR. The Final EIR will provide additions and revisions to the Draft EIR as applicable, written responses to the written comments received by the City during the Draft EIR review period, and a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program. Agency representatives and members of the public will also have additional opportunities to participate in the review of the proposed project through attendance at the public hearings before the City of Camarillo Planning Commission and City Council.

ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED

Issues to be resolved by the City of Camarillo include the determination that the EIR adequately evaluates the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project, the determination that the recommended mitigation measures reduce the significant impacts of the project to a less than significant level or to the maximum extent feasible, and the determination as to whether to approve or deny the project as proposed or one of the alternatives evaluated in the EIR.