

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This document is an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared for the City of Beaumont for the Potrero Logistics Center Warehouse Project (Project) in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). CEQA is a statute that requires local and state agencies to identify the significant environmental impacts of their actions and to avoid or mitigate those impacts, if feasible. The CEQA Guidelines are located within the California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, §15000-15387, while the CEQA Statute is codified as Public Resources Code (PRC) § 21000-21189.57. This Draft EIR has been prepared by the City of Beaumont as the Lead Agency under CEQA. This Project entails the construction and operation of a 577,920-square foot warehouse on approximately 32 acres. The Project would be constructed in one phase, beginning in 2022 with anticipated construction completion in the same year.

This Draft EIR evaluates the potentially significant, adverse and beneficial impacts on the environment resulting from implementation of the Project. **Section 2.0, Project Description**, provides detailed descriptions of the construction and operational components of the Project. **Section 3.0, Environmental Impact Analysis**, discusses the document content and cumulative impact analysis approach. Following public review of the Draft EIR, a Final EIR will be prepared, in which the City of Beaumont will respond to public comments on the Draft EIR.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE EIR

According to §15121 of the CEQA Guidelines, an EIR is an informational document which will inform public agency decision-makers and the public of the significant environmental effects of a proposed project. The purpose of this Draft EIR for the proposed Project is to review the existing conditions at and in the vicinity of the Project Site; identify and analyze the potential environmental impacts; and suggest feasible mitigation measures or alternatives to reduce significant adverse environmental effects, as described in **Section 2.0, Project Description** and **Section 4.0, Alternatives to the Proposed Project**. The potential impacts include both temporary construction-related effects and the long-term effects of development, operation, and maintenance of the Project, as described in **Section 2.0, Project Description**.

The intent of this EIR is to address the potential Project impacts utilizing the most current and detailed plans, technical studies, and related information available. This EIR will be used by the City of Beaumont as the Lead Agency, other responsible and trustee agencies, interested parties, and the general public to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Project (refer to **Section 2.8, Discretionary Actions and Approvals**, for a list of anticipated responsible and trustee agencies and Project approvals).

Therefore, this EIR is intended to serve as the primary environmental document for all entitlements associated with the Project, including all discretionary approvals requested or required to implement the Project. The City of Beaumont, as Lead Agency, can approve subsequent actions without additional

environmental documentation unless otherwise required by Section 21166 of the CEQA Statutes and Section 15162 of the CEQA Guidelines. Section 21166 of the CEQA Statutes states that:

When an environmental impact report has been prepared for a project pursuant to this division, no subsequent or supplemental environmental impact report shall be required by the lead agency or by any responsible agency, unless one or more of the following events occurs:

- a) Substantial changes are proposed in the project which will require major revisions of the environmental impact report.*
- b) Substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is being undertaken which will require major revisions in the environmental impact report.*
- c) New information, which was not known and could not have been known at the time the environmental impact report was certified as complete, becomes available.*

Additionally, Section 15162 of the CEQA Statutes states that:

a) When an EIR has been certified or a negative declaration adopted for a project, no subsequent EIR shall be prepared for that project unless the lead agency determines, on the basis of substantial evidence in the light of the whole record, one or more of the following:

- 1) Substantial changes are proposed in the project which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or negative declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects;*
- 2) Substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or negative declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects; or*
- 3) New information of substantial importance, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the previous EIR was certified as complete or the negative declaration was adopted, shows any of the following:*
 - (A) The project will have one or more significant effects not discussed in the previous EIR or negative declaration;*
 - (B) Significant effects previously examined will be substantially more severe than shown in the previous EIR;*
 - (C) Mitigation measures or alternatives previously found not to be feasible would, in fact, be feasible and would substantially reduce one or more significant effects of the project, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative; or*

(D) Mitigation measures or alternatives which are considerably different from those analyzed in the previous EIR would substantially reduce one or more significant effects on the environment, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative.

1.3 COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA

According to the CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR § 15064[f][1]), preparation of an EIR is required whenever a project may result in a significant effect on the environment. An EIR is an informational document used to inform public agency decision-makers and the general public of the significant environmental effects of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project that could feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the Project while substantially lessening or avoiding any of the significant environmental impacts. Public agencies are required to consider the information presented in the EIR when determining whether to approve a project. CEQA requires that state and local government agencies consider the environmental effects of projects over which they have discretionary authority before taking action on those projects.

This document analyzes the environmental effects of the Project to the degree of specificity appropriate to the current proposed actions, as required by § 15146 of the CEQA Guidelines. The analysis considers all activities associated with the Project, to determine the short-term and long-term effects associated with their implementation. This EIR discusses both direct and indirect impacts of the Project, as well as cumulative impacts associated with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects.

Based on significance criteria, the effects of the Project have been categorized as either “no impact,” “less than significant impact,” “less than significant with mitigation incorporated,” or “significant unavoidable impact” (refer to **Section 3.0, Environmental Impact Analysis**). Mitigation measures are recommended for potentially significant impacts, to avoid or lessen impacts. In some cases, the Project results in significant unavoidable impacts even with implementation of feasible mitigation measures. In these situations, the decision-makers may approve the Project based on a “Statement of Overriding Considerations.” This determination would require the decision-makers to balance the benefits of the Project to determine if they outweigh identified unavoidable impacts. The CEQA Guidelines § 15093 provides in part the following:

- CEQA requires that the decision-maker balance the benefits of a proposed project against its unavoidable environmental risks in determining whether to approve the Project. If the benefits of the Project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects, the adverse environmental effects may be considered “acceptable.”
- Where the decision of the public agency allows the occurrence of significant effects that are identified in the Final EIR but are not avoided or substantially lessened, the agency must state in writing the reason to support its action based on the Final EIR and/or other information on the record. This statement may be necessary if the agency also makes the finding under § 15091 (a)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines.

- If an agency makes a Statement of Overriding Considerations, the statement should be included in the record of the Project approval and should be mentioned in the Notice of Determination.

1.4 NOTICE OF PREPARATION/EARLY CONSULTATION

In compliance with the CEQA Guidelines, the City of Beaumont provided opportunities for various agencies and the public to participate in the environmental review process. During preparation of the Draft EIR, efforts were made to contact various Federal, State, regional, and local government agencies and other interested parties to solicit comments on the scope of review in this document. This included the distribution of a Notice of Preparation (NOP) to various responsible agencies, trustee agencies, and interested parties. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines § 15082 and PRC § 21084.4, the City of Beaumont circulated the NOP directly to public agencies (including the State Clearinghouse Office of Planning and Research), special districts, and members of the public who had requested such notice. The NOP was distributed on May 14, 2020, with the 30-day public review period concluding on June 15, 2020.

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

The City of Beaumont prepared a NOP for the Project and sent it to the general public and Local, State and Federal agencies. A public virtual scoping meeting was held on Thursday, June 4, 2020, utilizing teleconference communications as opposed to an in person meeting, due to the COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) pandemic, and associated Federal, State, and local orders for social distancing. The purpose of the scoping meeting was to obtain comments from the public and agencies regarding the scope of the environmental document.

A total of 7 comment letters were received in response to the NOP. The comment letters received during the NOP comment period; along with Scoping Reports for the NOP, providing a more detailed summary of the issues raised during the public scoping meeting, are included in **Appendix A, Notice of Preparation and Scoping Meeting**.

SCOPING RESULTS

Areas of concern identified during the scoping period include:

- Air quality/Greenhouse gas impacts
- Impacts to tribal cultural resources
- Solid Waste/Landfill Impacts

NATIVE AMERICAN CONSULTATION

Senate Bill (SB) 18, further discussed in **Section 3.14, Tribal Cultural Resources**, essentially requires local governments to consult with Native American tribes when amendment or adoption of a general or specific plan, or designation of open space occurs. The Bill encourages local governments to consider the cultural aspects of California Native American prehistoric, archaeological, cultural, spiritual, and ceremonial places early in the land use planning process. In compliance with SB 18, the City of Beaumont contacted the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) to request a review of the Sacred Lands File (SLF). The

NAHC responded that the results of the search were negative, but that the absence of specific site information in the SLF does not indicate the absence of cultural resources in any project area.

The NAHC also included a contact list of several tribal groups or individuals who may have knowledge of cultural resources within the Project area. Further complying with SB 18, the City of Beaumont mailed 27 letters to 23 tribal groups on November 5, 2020, requesting any information they may have regarding Native American cultural resources within the Project area. SB 18 consultation and correspondence (including the aforementioned NAHC response letter) is included as **Appendix E, Cultural Resources**.

Similarly, on July 24, 2020, the City initiated Native American consultation consistent with Assembly Bill (AB) 52. The City received requests for consultations from one tribe: the Morongo Band of Mission Indians. See **Section 3.14, Tribal Cultural Resources** for a discussion of the outcome of AB 52 and SB 18 consultation.

1.5 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

The Draft EIR has been prepared in accordance with CEQA to assess the environmental effects associated with the implementation of the proposed Project, as well as anticipated future discretionary actions and approvals. There are five main objectives of this document as established by CEQA:

- To disclose to decision-makers and the public the significant environmental effects of proposed activities;
- To identify ways to avoid or reduce environmental damage;
- To disclose to the public reasons for agency approval of projects with any significant environmental effects;
- To foster interagency coordination in the review of projects; and
- To enhance public participation in the planning process.

The Draft EIR, with an accompanying Notice of Completion (NOC), would be circulated to the State Clearinghouse, trustee agencies, responsible agencies, other government agencies, and interested members of the public for a 45-day review period as required by CEQA. During this period, public agencies and members of the public may provide written comments on the analysis and content of the Draft EIR. In reviewing a Draft EIR, readers should focus on the sufficiency of the document in identifying and analyzing the possible impacts on the environment and on ways in which the significant effects of the proposed Project might be avoided or mitigated.

Following the close of the public comment period, a Final EIR will be prepared to respond to all substantive comments raising environmental issues surrounding the proposed Project. The Final EIR will be completed prior to the final public hearing to consider this EIR and the proposed Project.

Concurrent with the City's consideration of the Final EIR, the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors will also consider the merits of the proposed Project itself. This consideration may render a request to revise the proposed Project, or an approval or denial. If the proposed Project is approved, the Board of Supervisors may require mitigation measures specified in this Draft EIR as conditions of proposed

Project approval. Alternatively, the Board of Supervisors could require other mitigation measures deemed to be effective mitigations for the identified impacts, or it could find that the mitigation measures cannot be feasibly implemented. For any identified significant impacts for which no mitigation measure is feasible, or where mitigation would not reduce the impact to a less than significant level, the Board of Supervisors will be required to adopt a finding that the impacts are considered acceptable because specific overriding considerations indicate that the proposed Project's benefits outweigh the impacts in question.

1.6 COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA

PUBLIC REVIEW OF DRAFT EIR

The Draft EIR is available to the general public for review at the locations listed below and on the City's website at:

<https://www.beaumontca.gov/1132/Potrero-Logistics-Center>

Community Development Department
550 E. Sixth Street
Beaumont, CA 92223

As stated above, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines § 15087 and 15105, this Draft EIR will be circulated for a 45-day public review period.

Comment letters should be sent to:

City of Beaumont - Planning
Attn: Christina Taylor
Community Development Director
550 E. Sixth Street
Beaumont, CA 92223
(951) 769-8518

1.7 FINAL EIR

Upon completion of the 45-day Draft EIR public review period, the City of Beaumont will evaluate all written comments received during the public review period on the Draft EIR. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines § 15088, the City of B will prepare written responses to comments raising environmental issues. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines § 15132 (Contents of Final Environmental Impact Report), the Final EIR will be prepared and will include:

- a) The draft EIR or a revision of the draft;
- b) Comments and recommendations received on the Draft EIR either verbatim or in summary;
- c) A list of persons, organizations, and public agencies commenting on the Draft EIR; and
- d) The Lead Agency's responses to significant environmental points raised in the review and consultation process.

Additionally, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines § 15088 (Evaluation of and Response to Comments), after the Final EIR is completed, the City of Beaumont will provide a written proposed response to each public agency on comments made by that public agency at least ten days prior to certifying the EIR.

CERTIFICATION OF THE FINAL EIR

The Draft EIR, as revised by the Final EIR, will be considered by the City of Beaumont City Council for certification, consistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15090, which states:

Prior to approving a project, the lead agency shall certify that:

- 1) *The final EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA;*
- 2) *The final EIR was presented to the decision-making body of the lead agency, and that the decision-making body reviewed and considered the information contained in the final EIR prior to approving the project; and*
- 3) *The final EIR reflects the lead agency's independent judgment and analysis.*

Regarding the adequacy of an EIR, according to CEQA Guidelines § 15151, "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."

1.8 EIR ORGANIZATION

The purpose of this EIR is to provide environmental review of the Project, such that the City of Beaumont will be able to utilize this EIR to satisfy CEQA for Project-related permits or approvals and to provide CEQA analysis.

This Draft EIR is organized into nine sections:

- Section 0.0** **Executive Summary**, provides a Project summary and summary of environmental impacts, and the proposed mitigation measures and alternatives.
- Section 1.0** **Introduction**, provides CEQA compliance information.
- Section 2.0** **Project Description**, provides Project history, as well as the environmental setting, Project characteristics and objectives, phasing, and anticipated permits and approvals that may be required for the Project.
- Section 3.0** **Environmental Impact Analysis**, provides a discussion of the existing conditions for each of the environmental impact areas. This section also describes methodologies for significance determinations, identifies both short-term and long-term environmental impacts of the Project, recommends mitigation measures to reduce the significance of environmental impacts, and identifies any areas of potentially significant and unavoidable

impacts. This section includes a discussion of cumulative impacts that could arise as a result of the implementation of the proposed Project.

Section 4.0 Alternatives to the Proposed Project, describes potential Project alternatives, including alternatives considered but rejected from further consideration, the No Project Alternative, various Project Alternatives, and identifies the Environmentally Superior Alternative.

Section 5.0 Effects Found Not to Be Significant, describes potential impacts that have been determined not to be significant throughout the EIR process.

Section 6.0 Other CEQA Considerations, summarizes unavoidable significant impacts, and discusses significant irreversible environmental changes, growth-inducing impacts, and energy conservation, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Appendix F.

Section 8.0 Agency Contacts and Preparers identifies the CEQA Lead Agency and EIR preparation team, as well as summarizes the EIR consultation process.

Based on significance criteria, the effects of the proposed Project have been categorized as either “less than significant,” “less than significant with mitigation,” or “potentially significant.” Mitigation measures are recommended for potentially significant impacts, to avoid or lessen impacts. In the event the proposed Project results in significant impacts even after implementation of all feasible mitigation measures, the decision-makers are able to approve a proposed Project based on a Statement of Overriding Considerations. This determination would require the decision-makers to provide a discussion of how the benefits of the proposed Project outweigh identified unavoidable impacts. The CEQA Guidelines provide in part the following:

- CEQA requires that the decision-maker balance the benefits of a proposed Project against its unavoidable environmental risks in determining whether to approve the Project. If the benefits of the Project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects, the adverse environmental effects may be considered “acceptable.”
- Where the decision of the public agency allows the occurrence of significant effects that are identified in the Final EIR but are not mitigated, the agency must state in writing the reasons to support its action based on the Final EIR and/or other information in the record. This statement may be necessary if the agency also makes the finding under Section 15091 (a)(2) or (a)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines.
- If an agency makes a Statement of Overriding Considerations, the statement should be included in the record of the Project approval and should be mentioned in the Notice of Determination (Section 15093 of the CEQA Guidelines).

1.9 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

Pertinent documents relating to this EIR have been cited in accordance with CEQA Guidelines § 15148 or have been incorporated by reference in accordance with CEQA Guidelines § 15150, which encourages incorporation by reference as a means of reducing redundancy and the length of environmental reports.

The following documents are hereby incorporated by reference into this EIR and are available for review online. Information contained within these documents has been utilized for various sections of this EIR.

Riverside County General Plan. The County of Riverside adopted the County of Riverside General Plan in 2015. The General Plan serves as a blueprint for growth and development. The County of Riverside General Plan primarily focuses on the unincorporated area - territory that is not located within a city - but also addresses regional services and facilities provided by the County such as regional parks, roads, and flood control facilities. As part of its General Plan, the County includes the following nine elements: 1) Land Use; 2) Circulation; 3) Multipurpose Open Space; 4) Safety; 5) Noise; 6) Housing; 7) Air Quality; 8) Healthy Communities; and 9) Administration. The General Plan is used throughout this EIR since it contains information, policies, and regulations relevant to the Project.

This document is available for review on the County's website at:

<https://planning.rctlma.org/General-Plan-Zoning/General-Plan>

City of Beaumont General Plan. This City of Beaumont General Plan serves as the blueprint for future planning and development in the City. This General Plan indicates the City's vision for the future through the policies, programs, and plans contained herein. The information contained in the individual sections or Elements that comprise this General Plan will shape the physical development of the City. Public and private decision-makers will refer to this General Plan to formulate decisions with respect to land use and development.

The General Plan consists of five elements:

- Land Use and Community Design
- Mobility
- Economic Development
- Health and Environmental Justice
- Community Facilities and Infrastructure
- Conservation and Open Space
- Safety
- Noise

The Beaumont GP was used throughout this EIR since it contains policies and regulations relevant to the Project. This document is available for review on the City's website at:

https://www.beaumontca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/36923/Beaumont-GPU_Final-rev-22521

Draft Program Environmental Impact Report. Beaumont General Plan (SCH #2018031022). The City of Beaumont General Plan articulates Goals, Policies, and Implementation Programs which will provide for successful realization of the City's near-term plans, and will facilitate implementation of land uses, supporting infrastructure, and services envisioned under Buildout conditions. Modifications incorporated in the General Plan Update, are evaluated in this Draft Program EIR. This document is available for review on the City's website at:

<https://www.beaumontca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/36627/DEIR-090720>

Beaumont Municipal Code. The Beaumont Municipal Code establishes detailed zoning districts and regulations based on the General Plan. The Beaumont Zoning Code (Title 17) serves as the primary

implementation tool for the General Plan. Whereas the General Plan is a policy document that sets forth direction for development decisions, the Zoning Code is a regulatory document that establishes specific standards for the use and development of all properties in the City. The Zoning Code regulates development intensity using a variety of methods, such as setting limits on building setbacks, yard landscaping standards, and building heights. The Zoning Code also indicates which land uses are permitted in the various zones. The Municipal Code includes all the City's zoning ordinance provisions and has been supplemented over time to include other related procedures such as subdivision regulations, environmental review procedures, and an advertising and sign code. Municipal Code regulations and maps must be consistent with the General Plan land uses, policies, and implementation programs. The Municipal Code is referenced throughout this Draft EIR to establish the proposed Project's baseline requirements according to the City's regulatory framework.

The Beaumont MC can be accessed online at:

https://library.municode.com/ca/beaumont/codes/code_of_ordinances

SR-60/Potrero Boulevard Interchange Project. The SR-60/Potrero Boulevard Interchange Project is on State Route 60 (SR-60) in the City of Beaumont (between Jack Rabbit Trail and the Interstate 10/SR-60 Junction) and includes a new 6-lane Potrero Boulevard overcrossing (3-lanes in each direction) with a temporary connection to Western Knolls Avenue. The City will also construct interim project Phase 1A which includes a deceleration lane and acceleration lane along westbound SR-60 at the Western Knolls Avenue access point (west). Phase 2 of the interchange includes the design and construction of a six ramp, partial cloverleaf interchange. The six ramp interchange would consist of four on-ramps and two off-ramps.

More information about the SR-60/Potrero Boulevard Interchange Project can be found here:

<https://beaumontca.gov/992/Potrero-Interchange>

Southern California Association of Governments. The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) 2020/2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) was adopted in September 2020. The RTP/SCS aims to create a long-range vision plan that balances future mobility and housing needs with economic, environmental and public health goals. The RTP/SCS charts a course for closely integrating land use and transportation – so that the region can grow in accordance with smart and sustainable growth strategies. The 2020/2045 RTP/SCS Program EIR (SCH # 2019011061)) addresses the cumulative impact of future development and associated infrastructure improvements for the SCAG region, which includes Riverside County and the City of Beaumont.

The SCAG RTP/SCS can be accessed online at:

<https://scag.ca.gov/read-plan-adopted-final-plan>