

Introduction

Section 1.0

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The City of Lemon Grove, (referred throughout this report as the "City"), is in the process of updating its General Plan. The existing General Plan was adopted in 1980 following the City's incorporation in 1977. The General Plan represents a comprehensive plan for the entire City, and establishes strategies to achieve community goals pertaining to development, circulation patterns, aesthetics, public safety, open space and other civic matters. The General Plan is often referred to as the "blueprint" of the future City. The overriding goal of the General Plan is to enhance the quality of life for existing and future residents and facilitate a viable local economy. Once adopted, the General Plan will guide the decisions of elected officials and City staff when considering community development proposals, infrastructure improvements and public service expenditures.

1.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE MASTER EIR

This Master Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is prepared pursuant to §21157(a) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). As a Master EIR, the document is intended to serve two primary purposes. First, the document identifies the environmental effects and mitigation measures associated with the proposed update of the City of Lemon Grove's General Plan. Secondly, the document is intended to reduce the environmental review required as subsequent development occurs. Through the initial study process, the City will review subsequent projects to determine whether the potential project impacts were anticipated in the Master EIR for the proposed General Plan. No new environmental document will be required for subsequent projects if the City determines that the potential environmental effects have been addressed in the Master EIR and no new or additional mitigation measures are required. If the initial study identifies new impacts or mitigation measures, the City will either prepare a Mitigated Negative Declaration or focused EIR. Subsequent development projects may rely on this Master EIR for five years following certification.

The structure of the impact analysis within Section 4.0 of this Master EIR is designed to distinguish between the potential impacts and mitigation measures associated with the proposed General Plan and subsequent projects. Subheadings entitled "Plan-wide" and "Special Treatment Areas (STAs) and Other Development Areas" occur in the impact and mitigation discussions. Under the subheading "Plan-wide", the Master EIR examines the potential environmental effects which would occur from the overall changes in the policies contained in the proposed General Plan as well as the proposed changes in land use type and intensity. Mitigation measures correspond to applicable implementation programs for the various General Plan Elements which are contained in a separate document entitled Lemon Grove General Plan Implementation Manual. These mitigation measures when implemented by the City or subsequent developments will avoid, or reduce, environmental impacts.

Under the subheading "STAs and Other Development Areas", the Master EIR provides more specific analysis of environmental impacts and recommends additional studies or mitigation considerations which should be required of subsequent projects. Since the Master EIR is intended to apply to subsequent projects, the basis for analysis of impacts in Section 4.0 is the conditions as they exist at the time this EIR is prepared. This frame of reference is often referred to as "plan-to-ground" impacts. A discussion of the "plan-to-plan" effects can be found in Section 10.0. The discussion of the "No Project" alternative in Section 10.0 compares the environmental effects of buildout under the proposed General Plan with the effects which would occur with buildout under the current General Plan.

The scope of the analysis for this EIR was determined by the City of Lemon Grove in an initial study and the responses to the Notice of Preparation (NOP), which was distributed by the City in October, 1995 (Appendix A). The initial study and Notice of Preparation (NOP) indicated that adoption and subsequent implementation of the proposed Lemon Grove General Plan may result in potentially significant adverse environmental impacts in the following areas:

Land Use	Transportation/Circulation
Population/Housing	Public Facilities
Utilities/Energy	Aesthetics/Light and Glare
Noise	Hydrology and Water Quality
Air Quality	Geology
Biological Resources	Cultural Resources
Paleontological Resources	Parks and Recreation
Public Health and Safety	

The proposed General Plan includes comprehensive changes to all existing elements of the Plan with the exception of the Housing Element which has been recently updated, and adds new elements. The proposed General Plan includes:

- an expansion of existing policies;
- reflects changes in state law, regional plans, as well as existing conditions within the City;
- provides more implementation mechanisms to achieve community goals; and
- sets forth programs to minimize environmental impacts from future development.

As such, the majority of the changes to the General Plan are improvements that will not result in physical changes that will cause significant environmental impacts. With the exception of changes to the Community Development and Mobility Elements, no significant impacts will be associated with updating the elements of the General Plan. As a result, the analysis in this Master EIR addresses the General Plan as a whole and does not focus on the policy changes to each element. The Community Development Element and Mobility Element, however, contain revisions that would result in physical changes. As such, the changes proposed in these elements are discussed in appropriate sections of this EIR.

1.2 CEQA REQUIREMENTS

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970 (California Public Resources Code, §21000 et. seq.) requires the preparation of an EIR for any project that a Lead Agency determines may have a significant impact on the environment. The City of Lemon Grove is the Lead Agency for this EIR.

This EIR has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the City of Lemon Grove's CEQA Guidelines and complies with all criteria, standards and procedures of CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Administrative Code, §15000, et. seq.).

This EIR has been prepared as a Master EIR in accordance with Section 21157 of CEQA. A Master EIR is intended to provide a program-level environmental review of plans and programs upon which the approval of subsequent, related, development proposals can be based.

1.3 USERS GUIDE

This EIR will be used by the City of Lemon Grove as Lead Agency in combination with related documentation and public comment to adopt, not adopt, or modify the proposed General Plan. As described in Section 1.1, this EIR will also be used as the first level of CEQA documentation for future discretionary approvals within the City of Lemon Grove.

Important to the environmental review and ultimate decision-making process is public involvement. There are several mechanisms whereby agencies, organizations and the general public may be involved in the preparation of this EIR. The response period associated with the NOP was the first opportunity for public and agency comments to be received on the scope of the EIR. The NOP was distributed to various organizations and governmental agencies including the State Clearinghouse. Copies of the NOP and responses are included in Appendix A.

This EIR will be subject to review and comment by the public as well as other interested jurisdictions, agencies and organizations during a period in excess of 45-days. Following public review, a Final EIR will be prepared which will address all written comments received during the public review period and oral comments received during the public hearing. The City Council will review and certify the Final EIR in making their decision to adopt, not adopt, or modify the proposed City of Lemon Grove General Plan.