

I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE OF THE EIR

In compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this report describes the environmental consequences of the Strategy 2000: San Jose Greater Downtown Strategy for Development (*Strategy 2000*) proposed for the redevelopment of the San Jose Greater Downtown area. This Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is designed to fully inform City of San Jose decision-makers, other responsible agencies, and the general public of the proposed project and the potential consequences of project approval. This EIR also examines various alternatives to the proposed project, and recommends a set of mitigation measures to reduce or avoid potentially significant impacts. The City of San Jose Department of Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement is the lead agency for environmental review of the proposed project. This EIR will be used by the City of San Jose staff, Redevelopment Agency staff, the Planning Commission, the Redevelopment Agency Board, and the City Council in their review of the proposed project and the various approvals required, as described in Chapter III, Project Description.

B. PROPOSED PROJECT

The proposed project would result in the development and redevelopment of Greater Downtown San Jose. *Strategy 2000* provides a long-range conceptual program for redevelopment. The Plan focuses on revitalizing the traditional Downtown by allowing higher density infill development and replacement of underutilized uses, and expanding the Greater Downtown Core Area and land use intensities to the west and north into areas that are presently undeveloped and underutilized. *Strategy 2000* is an update of the San Jose *Downtown Strategy Plan 2010*, adopted by the San Jose City Council and the Redevelopment Agency Board on December 15, 1992 (Resolution 64283).

This EIR is a Program EIR, prepared in conformance with Section 15168 of the State *CEQA Guidelines*. A Program EIR is an EIR that addresses a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project, and are related either geographically or as logical parts in a chain of contemplated actions. The preparation of a Program EIR can: (1) provide an occasion for more thorough consideration of effects and alternatives than would be practical in an EIR on an individual action; (2) ensure consideration of cumulative impacts that might be slighted a case-by-case analyses; (3) avoid duplicative reconsideration of basic policy considerations; and (4) allow the early consideration of broad policy alternatives and program-wide mitigation measures when the lead agency has greater flexibility to deal with basic problems or cumulative impacts. Subsequent activities and proposals for specific development projects aimed at carrying out *Strategy 2000*'s concepts, policies, and strategies will be examined in the light of this Program EIR to determine appropriate subsequent environmental documentation.

The project under review is the *Strategy 2000* plan and its related and implementing plans, programs and amendments. Although the analysis is conducted within the framework of a Program-level EIR, the objective is to develop project level information (such as may be related to traffic and circulation)

whenever possible. Accordingly, this EIR evaluates the impacts of development envisioned by *Strategy 2000*, so that subsequent environmental analyses will be needed only when there are significant departures from *Strategy 2000*, or where circumstances unique to a specific project site that have not been analyzed in this EIR (e.g., archeological or historic characteristics, visual or aesthetic resources, hazardous materials).

The amount of future development anticipated to occur in the expanded Greater Downtown Core Area during the planning horizon of *Strategy 2000* includes the following components:

- 8,000,000 to 10,000,000 square feet of office space
- 8,000 to 10,000 residential dwelling units
- 900,000 to 1,200,000 square feet of retail space; and
- 2,000 to 2,500 guest rooms of hotel space, in four to five hotel projects

C. EIR SCOPE

The Redevelopment Agency of the City of San Jose circulated a Notice of Preparation (NOP) that included a list of potential environmental effects that could result from the proposed project. The NOP was published on April 16, 2003, and mailed to public agencies and organizations considered likely to be interested in the potential impacts of the project. Additionally, one public scoping session was held on May 22, 2003 to notify the public of the project, solicit comments, and identify areas of concern to be addressed in this EIR. Comments received by the City on the NOP and at the public scoping meeting were taken into account during preparation of this EIR. The NOP, distribution mailing list, and written comment letters are provided in Appendix A of this EIR.

The following environmental topics are addressed as separate sections in this EIR:

- Consistency with Plans and Policies
- Land Use
- Transportation and Circulation
- Air Quality
- Noise
- Shade and Shadow
- Aesthetics
- Vegetation and Wildlife
- Geology
- Cultural Resources
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Public Facilities and Services
- Hydrology and Flooding

- Utilities and Infrastructure
- Energy

D. REPORT ORGANIZATION

This EIR is organized into the following chapters:

- *Chapter I – Introduction:* Discusses the overall EIR purpose; provides a summary of the proposed action and environmental review process; identifies potentially significant issues and concerns; and summarizes the organization of the EIR.
- *Chapter II – Summary:* Provides a summary of the impacts that would result from implementation of the proposed project, and describes mitigation measures recommended to reduce or avoid significant impacts.
- *Chapter III – Project Description:* Provides a description of the project’s objectives, location and site conditions, site development history, details of the project itself, required approval process, and uses of the EIR.
- *Chapter IV – Consistency with Plans and Policies:* Identifies relevant regional and local plans and evaluates the proposed project’s consistency with these plans and policies.
- *Chapter V – Setting, Impacts and Mitigation Measures:* Describes the following for each environmental technical topic: existing conditions (setting); potential environmental impacts and their level of significance; and mitigation measures recommended to mitigate identified impacts. Potential adverse impacts are identified by levels of significance, as follows: less-than-significant impact (LTS), significant impact (S), and significant and unavoidable impact (SU). The significance of each impact is categorized before and after implementation of any recommended mitigation measure(s).
- *Chapter VI – Cumulative Impacts:* Provides the required analysis of potential environmental impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively significant, resulting from the proposed project alone, or together with other projects.
- *Chapter VII – Alternatives:* Provides an evaluation of four alternatives to the proposed project, including the No Project Alternative.
- *Chapter VIII – Significant Effects Which Cannot Be Avoided:* Identifies any significant adverse impacts which, even after implementation of any and all recommended mitigation measures, would not be reduced to less than significant levels.
- *Chapter IX – Growth-Inducing Impacts:* Discusses the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment.
- *Chapter X – Irreversible Environmental Changes:* Identifies any significant irreversible environmental changes that would be caused by the proposed project being analyzed. Irreversible environmental changes may include current or future commitments to the use of non-renewable resources, or secondary or growth-inducing impacts that commit future generations to similar uses.

- *Chapter XI – Authors and Consultants:* Identifies the authors and consultants involved in the preparation of this EIR.
- *Chapter XII – References and Contacts:* Provides a list of the reference documents, publications, and literature reviewed and cited, and identifies the persons and agencies contacted during report preparation.