

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section presents an introduction to the proposed Wine Country Community Plan project (“Project”), as defined under Section 21065 of the *California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines*, including the need for the Project, Project objectives, and the required permits and approvals for implementation of the Project. This section also discusses the scope and approach to the Project Environmental Impact Report (EIR) No. 524 and an overview of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) environmental review process (including scoping and public review).

The EIR is a “Program EIR”, evaluating the broad-scale impacts of the Project. Program EIRs are typically prepared for an agency plan, program or series of actions that can be characterized as on large project, such as the Project. A “Community Plan” Program EIR, addressing the impacts of area-wide and local policy decision, can be thought of as a “first tier” document (*CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15152). It evaluates the large-scale impacts on the environment that can be expected to result from the revision of the General Plan, Zoning Ordinance No. 348, and Design Guidelines pursuant to the Project, but does not necessarily address the site-specific impacts of each of the individual implementing projects (herein referred to as “implementing projects”) that will follow through implementation of the Project. CEQA requires each of those implementing projects be evaluated for their particular site-specific impacts. Such site-specific analyses are typically encompassed in second-tier documents, such as Project EIRs, Focused EIRs, or Negative Declarations for individual implementing projects subject to the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance No. 348 amendments proposed under the Project. They typically evaluate the impacts of a single activity undertaken to implement the overall plan.

The preparation, content, and processing of this document are covered by Section 15168 of the *CEQA Guidelines*. According to this section, a Program EIR is one that may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and that are related: (1) geographically; (2) as logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions; (3) in connection with the issuance of rules, regulations, plans or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program; or (4) as individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar effects that can be mitigated in similar ways.

The Project falls within all of these criteria. It addresses implementing project proposals with effects across the expanse of the Project area boundaries, thus indicating a basic geographic relationship. The Project includes maps, goals, policies and actions that will be a logical part of a chain of contemplated actions governing the orderly development of land uses over time. The proposed policies and actions either directly establish, or will govern, future plans that will establish or revise rules, regulations, plans or other criteria governing implementation of the General Plan, Zoning Ordinance No. 348, and Design Guidelines. Future implementing projects associated with the Project will be carried out under the authority and approval of Riverside County. Lastly, many of the specific implementing projects and actions subsequently carried out pursuant to the Project would have a similar range of environmental impacts to which similar programmatic means of mitigation would be warranted.

There are several advantages to a Program EIR. It provides a more thorough consideration of regional influences, secondary effect, cumulative impacts, land use and policy alternatives, global climate change and other factors that apply to the program as a whole. Program EIRs avoid duplicative reconsideration of basic policy considerations. They allow the lead agency to consider broad policy alternatives and

program-wide mitigation measures at a time when the agency has greater flexibility to deal with fundamental issues and, in particular, cumulative effects.

Implementing projects approved or undertaken pursuant to a Program EIR may still require additional environmental review. This will be determined by the County on a project-by-project basis, based on the details and specifics of the implementing project and/or site, and appropriate subsequent analysis. However, Program EIRs allow subsequent environmental review to focus on issues unique to the site that were not specifically addressed in the Program EIR. This allows decision makers and interested parties to focus the CEQA analysis of the subsequent implementing project on new effects not considered before. The parameters by which a lead agency can determine the need for additional environmental documentation are contained in the State *CEQA Guidelines* (Sections 15160 to 15170).

In this case, EIR No. 524 will address the approvals/amendment of the existing General Plan, Zoning Ordinance No. 348, and advisory documents, which are more clearly defined in Section 3.0 of this Draft EIR. This EIR anticipates a series of actions needed to achieve the implementation of the Project. Further actions or procedures expected to be associated with the Project include the processing of land use planning approvals, subdivision mapping approvals, engineering plan approvals, biological resources permitting, water quality plans and permits, air quality permits, etc.

The analysis in a Program EIR for an area this size is not intended to be site-specific (e.g., determining the level-of-service for specific roadway intersections within the Project area), but is a more broad analysis. For instance, the traffic analysis only determines whether the roadway segments affected by the Project will accommodate the planned land uses. The Program EIR does not, however, determine fair-share roadway improvements for individual implementing projects. These fair-share improvements that implementing projects will be responsible to build or pay for will be determined during subsequent environmental review on a case-by-case basis.

Furthermore, EIR No. 524 is the primary reference document for the formulation and implementation of a mitigation monitoring program for the Project. Environmental impacts cannot always be mitigated to a level that is considered less than significant. In accordance with Section 15093(b) of the CEQA Guidelines, if a lead agency approves a project that has significant impacts that are not substantially mitigated (i.e., significant unavoidable impacts), the agency shall state in writing the specific reasons for approving the project based on the final CEQA documents and any other information in the public record for the project. This is defined in Section 15093 of the CEQA Guidelines as a “statement of overriding considerations.”

In a similar manner, EIR No. 524 in itself can be considered a second-tier environmental document, because it incorporates the broad-scale analyses presented in the County of Riverside General Plan EIR No. 441 and corresponding mitigation measures. This Draft EIR evaluates the impacts of a component undertaken to implement the overall plan of the Riverside County General Plan. Pursuant to Section 15168(d) of the *CEQA Guidelines*, the focus of this Draft EIR is on new effects which were not considered in the previous General Plan EIR No. 441. The Draft EIR uses the analysis of general matters contained in the General Plan EIR No. 441, incorporating by reference these general discussions and concentrating solely on the issues specific to the Project as required under *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15142.

## 2.2 PURPOSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

According to Section 15121 and 15362 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, a Draft EIR is an informational document that is written to 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 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 to reduce significant adverse environmental effects. The potential impacts include both temporary effects from subsequent implementing projects within the Project area and long-term effects of build-out of the Project.

The intent of this Draft EIR is to conservatively address the potential Project impacts by avoiding or minimizing the need for future environmental documentation of the Project by utilizing the most-current and detailed plans, technical studies, and related information available. This Draft EIR will be used by the County of Riverside, other responsible agencies, interested parties, and the general public to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the Project (refer to Section 3.8, *Required Permits and Approvals*, in Section 3.0, *Project Description*, of this Draft EIR for a list of responsible agencies and Project approvals).

## 2.3 LEAD, RESPONSIBLE, AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES

Lead Agency is defined in Section 15051(a) of the *CEQA Guidelines*, which states:

*If the project will be carried out by a public agency, that agency shall be the lead agency even if the project would be located within the jurisdiction of another public agency.*

The County of Riverside is the Lead Agency for the Project. A Responsible Agency is an agency (other than the Lead Agency) with discretionary approval for the Project. A Trustee Agency is an agency with jurisdiction over natural resources that could be affected by the Project.

Section 21001.1 of the *CEQA Guidelines* further find that projects to be carried out by public agencies must be subject to the same level of review and consideration as that of private projects required to be approved by public entities.

## 2.4 NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND INITIAL STUDY

The County of Riverside prepared a Notice of Preparation (NOP) and an Initial Study (IS) for the Project. The 30-day review period began on December 28, 2009 (in accordance with *CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15082). The NOP review period closed on January 26, 2010. The NOP/IS was prepared to identify potential significant environmental effects of the Project and determine the focus of the analysis of the EIR (in accordance with *CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15063). The 2009 NOP, including the IS, is included in this EIR in Appendix A, *Initial Study and Notice of Preparation*, along with NOP comment letters.

Comment letters provided on the project were received from the following agencies/ groups:

- Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR)
- California Department of Conservation – Division of Land Resource Protection
- City of Temecula Planning Department

- Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC)
- Department of Transportation – District 8 (Caltrans)
- Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD)
- Endangered Habitats League
- Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD)
- Palomar Observatory
- Pechanga Cultural Resources
- Rancho California Water District (RCWD)
- Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission
- Riverside County Fire Department
- Riverside County Waste Management Department
- Soboba Cultural Resource Department
- South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD)
- Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)
- Western Municipal Water District (WMWD)

## 2.5 PUBLIC SCOPING

The County of Riverside has implemented a comprehensive public scoping and stakeholder involvement process over the last few years, for the County to communicate Project information, and for the stakeholders and general public to provide valuable input to the Project and its EIR process. The following is a brief summary of the primary public scoping efforts by the County (also refer to Appendix B, *Public Scoping Materials*).

### CEQA PUBLIC SCOPING

CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(c)(1), stipulates: “For Projects of statewide, regional or areawide significance pursuant to Section 15206, the Lead Agency shall conduct at least one scoping meeting”. Due to the proposed changes in land use and necessity for a General Plan and Zoning Code Amendment, it was determined that the Project met the criteria under CEQA Guidelines Section 15206, *Projects of Statewide, Regional or Areawide Significance*. To comply with this requirement, Riverside County staff conducted a public scoping meeting on January 19, 2010 at the Riverside County Planning Department (12<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room). The purpose of the meeting was to inform involved agencies and the public of the nature and extent of the Project, and provide an opportunity to identify issues to be addressed in the EIR document.

Issues raised during this meeting included the following:

- Water Infrastructure Issues – including water supply and water use, region-wide water issues, groundwater recharge zones, groundwater quality (salinity), and interagency issues;
- Sewer Infrastructure Issues – treatment plant capacity needs, impacts on existing and currently planned facilities, estimates for total flows, and effects on outflows and recharge;
- Potential impacts to agricultural activities/ operations (i.e. farmers harvesting or spraying sulfur at night, related noise and air quality impacts, etc.);
- Relationship between land use planning and water usage;
- Development constraint issues associated with installation costs for new vineyards, development impact fees, and infrastructure funding;

- Existing or planned land use issues for specific areas as well as land use issues associated with policy area and zoning considerations; and,
- Accessibility issues associated with trails (public and equestrian access), security concerns of farmers (i.e. theft) and other potential land use conflicts to be considered.

Based on the input provided during this meeting, no new or previously unconsidered impacts were raised that would affect the Project's environmental analysis. Comment letters submitted in response to the NOP and scoping meeting are provided in Appendix A, and have been considered in this EIR, where applicable.

### **PROJECT OUTREACH/ SCOPING**

In addition to the CEQA scoping conducted for the Project, County Staff has conducted a significant amount of additional community outreach and engagement in conjunction with the Project. To achieve this, the County has conducted the following:

#### **Website:**

The County has developed a Project website to disseminate Project information. This site has been used to provide copies of available documents and maps of the Project, and to update interested parties about upcoming meetings/ events and new developments. In addition, this website points to basic project information for individuals that want to learn about the Project area and surrounding communities. The Project website can be found at this location:

<http://www.socalwinecountryplan.org/Home/tabid/38/Default.aspx>

#### **Wine Country Community Plan Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee Meetings:**

Understanding that the Project area is composed of diverse groups that may have competing interests, the County organized an Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee to assure that the plan addresses the uses of residents and equestrians and winery owners in the area. The Committee is composed of 19 members that periodically provide input on the overall Project and review specific Project documents. The Committee meets regularly, with County staff providing briefings and updates as warranted, and convening special meetings to address issues of common concern. Areas of representation on the Committee include vintners, equine, residents, trails, agriculture, development, ballooning, environmental and tourism.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Stakeholder Meetings:**

Periodically County Staff meets with specific groups, organizations, and key stakeholders to discuss Project issues or specific concerns. To achieve this County staff conducted stakeholder meetings with these particular groups to discuss issues (i.e. sewer infrastructure, traffic impacts/ analysis, land use constraints, etc). As part of this process, County staff reached out to the responsible agencies that may have oversight in the areas affected as well as the property owners, interested parties, and Advisory Committee members that may have an interest in the topic. As a result, County staff has been successful in resolving many of the issues associated with the Project and obtained the necessary input and analysis to make informed choices about the Project proposal.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.socalwinecountryplan.org/AdHocAdvisoryCommittee/tabid/77/Default.aspx>, accessed August 8, 2011.

## 2.6 SCOPE OF THIS DRAFT EIR

Based on the comments submitted during the NOP process and the Public Scoping meeting, input and dialogue associated with Advisory Committee and Stakeholder meetings, and results of various technical studies including air quality, noise, greenhouse gas emissions, traffic, water supply, wastewater, and storm drain infrastructure, this EIR will analyze the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts for the following resource areas:

- Aesthetics, Light and Glare (Section 4.1)
- Agricultural and Forestry Resources (Section 4.2)
- Air Quality (Section 4.3)
- Biological Resources (Section 4.4)
- Cultural Resources (Section 4.5)
- Geology, Soils, and Seismicity (Section 4.6)
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Section 4.7)
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials (Section 4.8)
- Hydrology and Water Quality (Section 4.9)
- Land Use and Relevant Planning (Section 4.10)
- Mineral Resources (Section 4.11)
- Noise (Section 4.12)
- Public Services, Recreation and Utilities (Section 4.13)
- Traffic and Transportation (Section 4.14)

As a point of information, impacts related to greenhouse gas emissions were addressed under the air quality section of the NOP/IS. However, since the publication of the NOP/IS a revised CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Initial Study Checklist was issued by the State Clearinghouse which includes new checklist questions regarding greenhouse gas emissions. These additional questions are incorporated into this Program EIR in Section 4.7, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*.

## 2.7 REPORT ORGANIZATION

The Draft EIR is organized into 10 sections:

- **Section 1.0, *Executive Summary***, provides a brief Project description and summary of the environmental impacts, and the mitigation measures for each impact.
- **Section 2.0, *Introduction***, provides CEQA compliance information.
- **Section 3.0, *Project Description***, provides the Project location, background and history, environmental setting (including on and offsite use), Project characteristics, Project objectives, Project phasing, and permits and approvals that are required for the Project.
- **Section 4.0, *Environmental Setting, Environmental Impacts, and Mitigation Measures***, discusses the existing conditions for each environmental issue area. This section describes the methodology for significance determination; identifies short-term and long-term environmental impacts of the Project; recommends feasible mitigation measures to reduce the significance of impacts; and identifies areas of unavoidable significant impacts after mitigation.

- **Section 5.0, *Growth-Inducing Impacts***, discusses the growth-inducing impacts that may result from the Project, should it be implemented.
- **Section 6.0, *Alternatives to the Proposed Project***, describes alternatives to the Project, some of which may be considered during Project deliberations.
- **Section 7.0, *Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes***, explains significant irreversible environmental changes which would be caused by the Project, should it be implemented.
- **Section 8.0, *Effects Found Not to Be Significant***, explains potential impacts that were determined not to be significant in the IS/ NOP.
- **Section 9.0, *Organizations and Persons Consulted***, identifies the lead agency contacts, preparers of the EIR, and all federal, state, and local agencies, and other organizations, and individuals consulted during the preparation of the EIR.
- **Section 10.0, *Bibliography***, identifies reference sources utilized for the EIR.

## 2.8 DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

Pertinent documents relating to this EIR are cited and incorporated by reference, in accordance with Section 15150 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, as a means of reducing the redundancy and length of environmental reports.

The following documents are available for public review at the County of Riverside Planning Department, located at 4080 Lemon Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor, Riverside, California 92502, and are hereby incorporated by reference into this Draft EIR. Information contained within these documents has been utilized for sections throughout this Draft EIR.

### **COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 618 (“GENERAL PLAN”) AND EIR No. 441, 2003 (SCH# 2002051143)**

The County of Riverside General Plan Amendment No. 618 (“General Plan”) and EIR No. 441 serve as the major tools for directing growth within Riverside County and present a comprehensive plan to accommodate the County’s growing needs. Currently this document regulates the existing land uses within the Project area. That General Plan analyzes existing conditions in the County, including physical, social, cultural, and environmental resources and opportunities. The Plan looks at trends, issues, and concerns that affect the region, includes County goals and objectives, and provides policies to guide development and change. Additionally, the EIR No. 441 documents the potential environmental impacts of General Plan buildout.

Since the County of Riverside 2003 General Plan adoption and EIR No. 441 certification, there have been eighty-three General Plan Amendments adopted by the Riverside County Board of Supervisors through a series of resolutions as of December 2008. The amendments include land use designations, as well as text and map modifications (Land Use Element, Circulation Element, Area Plans, Policy Areas, etc.). The text and land use amendments have been incorporated into the General Plan document. Links to the updated General Plan (General Plan 2008) and General Plan Amendment Summary can be accessed at

[http://www.rctlma.org/genplan/general\\_plan\\_2008/general\\_plan\\_2008.aspx](http://www.rctlma.org/genplan/general_plan_2008/general_plan_2008.aspx), and are also available for review at the County of Riverside Planning Department.

## 2.9 REFERENCED TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS

### PRIMARY REFERENCED TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS

#### **Eastern Municipal Water District, Wine Country Infrastructure Study**

The purpose of the Wine Country Infrastructure Study (May 2011) is to evaluate the ability of EMWD's existing collection system to convey future dry weather flows from the Project area and to recommend a regional collection system to collect wastewater flows within the Project area. The Study evaluated the existing collection system under three flow scenarios, and then provided recommendations for three alignment alternatives under each of the flow scenarios. The Study recommended incremental improvements to the existing collection system facilities in order to serve the needs of the Project area, in a phased approach that minimizes impacts to EMWD's existing collection system and overall project cost. The results of the updated Wine Country Infrastructure Study were incorporated into Section 4.13, *Public Services, Recreation and Utilities*. This Study is available for review at the County of Riverside Planning Department.

### OTHER REFERENCED TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS

Technical documents related to this EIR are cited in accordance with Section 15148 of CEQA Guidelines, to assist in reducing the length of environmental reports. Information contained within the following technical documents was used throughout this EIR:

- Rancho California Water District, *Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) for the Upper Santa Margarita Watershed Planning Region*,  
<https://www.ranchowater.com/irwmp.aspx>.
- Southern California Association of Governments, *Regional Comprehensive Plan (Final)*  
<http://www.scag.ca.gov/rcp/index.htm>.
- Southern California Association of Governments, *Compass Blueprint*  
<http://www.compassblueprint.org/>.
- Southern California Association of Governments, *Regional Housing Needs Assessment*  
<http://www.scag.ca.gov/housing/rhna/index.htm>.
- South Coast Air Quality Management District, *Air Quality Management Plan*  
<http://www.aqmd.gov/aqmp/07aqmp/07AQMP.html>.

In addition, technical reports prepared for the Project are referenced within the corresponding impact section throughout this EIR. These Project-specific technical studies are contained within the Technical Appendices of this EIR, and are also available for review at the County of Riverside, Planning Department.



## 2.0 Introduction

### 2.10 PUBLIC REVIEW OF DRAFT EIR AND LEAD AGENCY CONTACT

The Lead Agency for the Project is the County of Riverside. Please see [www.socalwinecountryplan.com](http://www.socalwinecountryplan.com) for more information regarding the Project. This document and related project materials will also be available for public inspection during normal business hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday) at the address below. Requests for additional information, comments or questions should be directed to Ms. Mitra Mehta-Cooper for Project-related items. Her contact information is as follows:

Mitra Mehta-Cooper (Project Manager) at [mmehta@rctlma.org](mailto:mmehta@rctlma.org)

**County of Riverside Planning Department**

Post Office Box 1409  
4080 Lemon Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Riverside, California 92502  
(951) 955-8514 [phone]  
(951) 955-3157 [fax]

The document and related Project materials will also be made available at the following two libraries located in the City of Temecula:

**Temecula Public Library**

30600 Pauba Road  
Temecula, California 92592  
(951) 693-8900

**Grace Mellman Community Library**

(Temecula County Center Library)  
41000 County Center Drive  
Temecula, California 92591  
(951) 296-3893

The Notice of Completion (NOC) for this EIR was filed with the State Clearinghouse. Concurrent with the filing of the NOC, the County provided a Notice of Availability (NOA) to public agencies, organizations, groups, and individuals, including those that had previously requested information or provided comments. The EIR will be available for a 45-day review period. Comments on the EIR should be sent to Mitra Mehta-Cooper at the address provided above. Refer to the NOA for public review details, including scheduled public meetings and hearings (the NOA is contained on the Project website, as well as Appendix B, *Public Scoping*).



## 2.0 Introduction

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