

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

### 1.1 OVERVIEW

This Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) evaluates the environmental impacts of the proposed Fountain Valley Crossings Specific Plan (Project) for the City of Fountain Valley, California (City). The purpose of the Project is to provide the City, property owners, and businesses with a guide for future development in the approximate 162-acre Crossings Specific Plan Area (Project area).



*The Project proposes actions, policies, and standards to guide development in the Crossings District from an aging light industrial/manufacturing area to a vibrant downtown core for the community.*

The Project proposes general vision policies to guide future development. Based on the proposed policies, the Project provides the details on the type, location, and intensity of uses; defines the capacity and design of needed public improvements and infrastructure; and determines the resources necessary to finance and implement the public improvements and infrastructure needed to support the vision for the Project area.

The intent of the Project is to provide the area with a unique and comprehensive framework to guide the future reinvestment and physical development of land and to attract new businesses and greater economic investment to the Project area. The Project would address market constraints and opportunities for residential, retail, and office uses, and evaluate the appropriateness of other uses necessary to create a vibrant business community. The Project involves adoption of new development policies, land use regulations, design standards, capital improvement program, and financing program concisely within a single planning document. The Project and EIR will also take into consideration the proximity of the Project area to other residential neighborhoods, the Hyundai Motor America North American Corporate Campus, and Interstate 405 (I-405) Freeway that runs through the Project area.

Development of the Specific Plan document and environmental review of the Project began on August 19, 2014. The process of preparing the draft Specific Plan and the environmental analysis is proceeding concurrently given both analyses require many of the same studies and baseline information.

Project actions may include the following:

- Adoption of the Fountain Valley Crossings Specific Plan
- Carrying out an urban design framework for the existing industrial business park that addresses five primary development concept districts (activity core, workplace neighborhood, workplace gateway, mixed industry)
- Community benefits program tied to development capacity
- Implementation of development code regulations for modifications to buildings, streets, open space, parking, and signage
- Improvements to the Project area that may include:
  - Street improvements
  - Traffic circulation and new transportation services
  - Utilities and infrastructure upgrades
  - Expansion of open space in Project area
  - Infrastructure and public facilities improvements
- Related amendments to the Fountain Valley General Plan and Municipal Code, such as rezoning the existing Project area to “Specific Plan”, which would refer all zoning standards to the Fountain Valley Crossings Specific Plan.

This EIR has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as discussed below. The EIR was prepared by Amec Foster Wheeler under the direction of City of Fountain Valley Planning and Building staff, with assistance from staff in the Office of the City Manager, Public Works Department, and Recreation and Community Services Department.

Any changes to the text of the pre-recirculation Final EIR and Partial Recirculated Draft EIR to correct information, data, or intent, other than minor typographical corrections or minor working changes, are noted in the Revised Final EIR as changes from the pre-recirculation Final EIR and Partial Recirculated Draft EIR. Changes in the EIR text in response to public comments received during public review of the Draft EIR, pre-recirculation Final EIR, and Partial Recirculated Final EIR are signified by strikeouts (~~strikeouts~~) where text is removed and by underline font (underline font) where text is added. If text is added where the font is already bold or underlined, additions are noted using underlined bold font (**underlined bold font**).

### **1.1.1 EIR Purpose and Legal Authority**

This EIR was prepared in accordance with the Guidelines for Implementation of CEQA, published by the Resources Agency of the State of California (Title 14, California Code of Regulations 15000 et. seq.), and the City’s procedures for implementing CEQA. Per §21067 of CEQA and §15367 and 15050 through 15053 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the City is the Lead Agency under whose authority this document has been prepared. It is intended to provide information to public agencies, decision-makers, and the public regarding the environmental impacts that would result from implementation of the Project. Under the provisions of CEQA, “the purpose of the environmental impact report is to identify the significant effects of a project on the environment, to identify alternatives to the project, and to indicate the manner in which significant effects can be mitigated or avoided” (Public Resources Code 21002.1[a]).

The environmental review process was established to enable public agencies to evaluate a project in terms of its environmental consequences, to examine and implement mitigation measures for eliminating or reducing any potentially adverse impacts, and to consider alternatives to the project. While CEQA §150201(a) requires that major consideration be given to avoiding environmental damage, the Lead Agency and other responsible public agencies must balance adverse environmental effects against other public objectives, including social and economic goals, in determining whether and in what manner a project should be approved. This EIR was prepared by Amec Foster Wheeler under the direction of City of Fountain Valley Planning and Building Department staff. A full copy of the Fountain Valley Crossings Specific Plan can be viewed on the project webpage: <http://www.fountainvalley.org/341/Fountain-Valley-Crossings-Specific-Plan>.

### 1.1.2 Program EIR

State CEQA Guidelines §15168 provides for the preparation of a Program EIR for a series of actions that constitute one large project and are related geographically. In the case of this Project, this includes adoption of the proposed Specific Plan document, policy amendments, rezoning, and action items.

A Program EIR provides the City with the opportunity to consider broad policy and development alternatives and mitigation programs to address citywide cumulative impacts. Once a Program EIR has been prepared, subsequent activities within the program are evaluated to determine whether additional CEQA analysis is needed. These subsequent activities could be found to be within the Program EIR scope, and additional environmental documents may not be required if the Program EIR adequately addressed impacts of the subsequent activity (CEQA Guidelines §15168[c]). When a Program EIR is relied upon for a subsequent activity, the Lead Agency incorporates applicable mitigation measures and alternatives developed in the Program EIR into the subsequent activities (CEQA Guidelines §15168 [c] [3]). If a subsequent activity would have effects that are not identified in the Program EIR, the Lead Agency would prepare additional environmental review documentation, as applicable.



*This Program EIR examines proposed action items, standards, and policies associated with development and buildout of the Crossings District over the next 20 years.*

This Program EIR addresses total buildout of the Project within the Project area. The Project includes a Land Use Element, Infrastructure Element, and an Implementation, Financing, and Phasing Element to help revitalize this light industrial area while respecting existing, thriving businesses. The environmental analysis provided in this EIR provides sufficient analysis in compliance with the requirements of CEQA to enable decision-makers to approve subsequent

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projects proposed in the Project area consistent with the Specific Plan without subsequent environmental review. However, if any substantial changes to the development parameters (e.g., building envelope, height, use, etc.) analyzed in this EIR are later revised, subsequent environmental review would be required prior to approval.

### **1.1.3 Agencies and Roles**

The EIR process involves the following interested agencies, as specified in the CEQA Guidelines:

Lead Agency	The City of Fountain Valley as the agency with principal responsibility for approving or carrying out a project (CEQA Guidelines §15367).
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Responsible Agencies	Additional agencies with approval authority over aspects of a project (CEQA Guidelines §15381).
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Trustee Agencies	State agencies with general management authority over specified resources of the State when the resources may occur within a project area, including the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) (CEQA Guidelines §15386).
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Other Interested Agencies	Additional agencies that may be interested in a project and its environmental impacts, although they would have no authority over the project approval and adoption. These agencies would include the FAA, South Coast Air Quality Management District, Caltrans, Orange County Water District, Orange County Sanitation District, and the Orange County Airport Land Use Commission.
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### **1.1.4 Environmental Review Process**

The EIR process consists of the following steps, as specified in the CEQA Guidelines:

1) Notice of Preparation (NOP)/Public Scoping Hearing	The City issued a NOP on October 15, 2015, requesting comments on the proposed EIR scope of analysis within 30 days. The City held a public Scoping Hearing on October 28, 2015, and public comments were received until November 16, 2015.
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2) Draft EIR and Public Review Period	The City releases the Draft EIR and provides a public review and comment period (45 days). The City will hold a Public Hearing on January 25, 2017 as another opportunity for public comment on the Draft EIR.
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3) Final EIR                      The Final EIR includes the Draft EIR with any necessary revisions, public comments and a list of persons and entities who commented, and written responses to public comments submitted during the Draft EIR public review period.

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4) EIR Certification, Project Decision, Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations                      The City certifies that the Final EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA and makes a decision on the project analyzed. CEQA provides that the Lead Agency may disapprove a project because of its significant environmental effects, require changes to the project to reduce or avoid significant environmental effects, or approve the project despite its significant environmental effects if findings and a statement of overriding considerations are first made and adopted.

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5) Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP)                      The City adopts a MMRP for mitigation measures that were adopted or made conditions as part of project approval.

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6) Notice of Determination (NOD)                      The City files a NOD with the State Clearinghouse within five working days of the agency action to complete environmental review.

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### **1.1.5      Environmental Setting/Definition of Baseline Conditions**

CEQA requires that an EIR include a description of the existing physical environment in the vicinity of the project to provide the baseline condition against which project-related impacts are compared (CEQA Guidelines §15125). Normally, the baseline condition is the physical condition that exists when the NOP is published. Because physical environmental conditions may vary over a range of time periods, in some cases the use of environmental baselines that differ from the date of the NOP is reasonable and appropriate when doing so results in a more accurate or conservative environmental analysis. The Specific Plan baseline year (2015) is used for all impact areas analyzed in this EIR to determine impacts.

### **1.1.6      Recirculation of the Final EIR**

A Program Draft EIR for the proposed project (State Clearinghouse Number #2015101042) was circulated for an extended 47-day public review period from January 6, 2017 to February 22, 2017. During the duration of the 47-day public comment period, a total of 44 individual comment letters as well as oral testimonies from two City Council members and 13 members of the public were received.

Following release of the Program Draft EIR and closure of the public review period in February 2017, the City prepared and released for public review the pre-recirculation Final EIR on April

27, 2017. The full Program Draft EIR and the pre-recirculation Final EIR are available for public review at Fountain Valley Library located at 17635 Los Alamos Street, or the Planning and Building Department office located at 10200 Slater Avenue in Fountain Valley, CA 92708, or online at:

<http://www.fountainvalley.org/341/Fountain-Valley-Crossings-Specific-Plan>.

The City Planning Commission held a public hearing on May 10, 2017 to provide Project adoption recommendations to the City Council. The City scheduled a City Council public hearing for the Project on June 20, 2017; however, following receipt public comment and staff's recommendations, the City directed staff to recirculate the EIR to address public comments and make other clarifying revisions.

The Partial Recirculated Draft EIR consisted of only the portions of the EIR that were modified. Specifically, Partial Recirculated Draft EIR sections that were revised include the cumulative impact analysis, revised Transportation Impact Analysis for the FVCSP (September 2017), a new section to address Tribal Cultural Resources, as well as sections which have been revised to provide clarity. The specific sections of the original pre-recirculated Final EIR and associated revisions provided in the Partial Recirculated Draft EIR are summarized below:

- Section 1.0, *Introduction* – The Introduction is revised to further describe the Partial Recirculated Draft EIR process and related CEQA requirements.
- Section 3.0, *Environmental Impact Analysis* – Section 3.0.3, *Cumulative Impacts Analysis*, is revised to update the list of pending and future projects and their relation to the proposed Project, including a discussion of the Southpark Specific Plan - Sakioka Site. This section further clarifies the approach to cumulative analysis within the EIR, which uses both the general plan projection method and list method where appropriate to determine the extent of cumulative impacts.
- Section 3.2, *Air Quality* – This section is modified to update emissions estimates with the latest version of CalEEMod 2016.3.1, provide expanded discussion on the Project's compliance with South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) Rules, include discussion of cumulative impacts with respect to updates in the cumulative projects list, as well as revise appropriate sections of the text in response to public comments received on the Draft EIR and pre-recirculation Final EIR. Mitigation measures MM AQ-1a through 1e and MM AQ-2 were removed given they are pre-existing requirements of the SCAQMD, California Air Resources Board (CARB), and State Vehicle Code.
- Section 3.4, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions* – This section is modified to update GHG emissions estimates with the latest version of CalEEMod 2016.3.1, update the list of regulatory policies and programs with those which have been recently approved and adopted, and provide revisions to the text based on comments receive on the Draft and pre-recirculation Final EIR. This section provided expanded discussion on the Project's consistency with applicable GHG reduction strategies, plans, and regulations, including

the 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, under Impact GHG-2.

- Section 3.5, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials* – Impact HAZ-4 is expanded to provide revisions to the text based on comments received on the Draft and pre-recirculation Final EIR regarding the potential presence of hazardous materials within the Project area.
- Section 3.7, *Land Use and Planning* – This section is modified to include discussion of cumulative impacts with respect to updates in the cumulative projects list, update the list of regulatory policies and programs with those which have been recently approved and adopted, and provide revisions to the text based on comments received on the Draft and pre-recirculation Final EIR. In particular, Impact LU-2 and Table 3.7-1 were revised to further expand on the Project’s consistency with applicable policies and plans.
- Section 3.8, *Noise* – This section is modified to include discussion of cumulative impacts with respect to updates in the cumulative projects list and update the analysis or potential impacts from noise generated by the Project and other cumulative development projects to appropriately reflect updates to the Transportation Impact Analysis (TIA).
- Section 3.9, *Population and Housing* – Section 3.9.1.2, *Housing* is revised to provide additional information regarding affordable housing within the City, including efforts by the Housing Authority to secure a site for affordable housing within the City.
- Section 3.10, *Public Services* – Section 3.10.4.2, *Cumulative Impacts* is modified to include discussion of cumulative impacts with respect to updates in the cumulative projects list as well as further information about the City’s ability to ensure adequate public services under the cumulative scenario.
- Section 3.11, *Transportation, Circulation, and Traffic* – This section is revised to reflect updates in the revised TIA. Modifications to this section focused primarily on updated traffic data; additional discussion on construction and operational impacts; an expanded methodology; and discussion of cumulative impacts and updated cumulative trip data with respect to the updated cumulative projects list, particularly the Southpark Specific Plan – Sakioka Site. Revisions to this section resulted in the identification of new significant impacts, consistent with the revised TIA. Due to the extent of revisions, this section was recirculated as a complete “clean” version, and unlike the majority of recirculated sections, revisions to the text in this section were not shown in ~~strike through~~ or underline format.
- Section 3.12, *Utilities* – This section is modified with expanded discussion on the availability of projected water supplies and the ability to meet future water demands as well as new mitigation to ensure the adequacy of utility infrastructure.

- Section 3.14, *Tribal Cultural Resources* – This is provided as a new resource section that considers potential impacts to tribal cultural resources consistent with CEQA State Guidelines and Section 21080.4.3 of the PRC, and describes the Native American consultation process pursuant to the requirements of AB 52 and SB 18. This section addresses potential environmental effects of the Project on sensitive known and undiscovered tribal cultural resources that may exist within the Project area. Because this is a new section, the text in this section was provided in its entirety as a “clean” version, i.e., without underline and ~~striketrough~~ revisions
- Section 4.0, *Other CEQA* – This section is modified to provide revisions to the text based on comments receive on the Draft and pre-recirculation Final EIR, including those related to the San Diego fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta sandiegonensis*) and Coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*), as well as modifications based on preparation and circulation of a new Section 3.14, *Tribal Cultural Resources* (see discussion above).
- Section 5.0, *Alternatives* – This section provides text clarifications based on comments receive on the Draft and pre-recirculation Final EIR regarding alternatives considered but discarded, the range of alternatives, and the ability of a feasible alternative to reduce significant traffic impacts.
- Section 7.0, *References* – This section includes additional references used in the Partial Recirculated Draft EIR.
- Appendix D – Appendix D, *California Emissions Estimator Model Worksheets*, provides worksheets and results of the updated emissions model runs using CalEEMod Version 2016.3.1.
- Appendix E – Appendix E, *Fountain Valley Crossings Specific Plan Traffic Study*, includes the updated TIA with consideration and analysis of the revised list of cumulatively considered projects and was provided to inform the analysis provided in Section 3.11, *Transportation, Circulation, and Traffic*.
- Appendix F – Appendix F, *Native American Consultation*, includes additional letters relating to the Native American consultation process initiated and completed by the City in conformance with Assembly Bill 52 and Senate Bill 18 to assist in public review of new Section 3.14, *Tribal Cultural Resources*.

The Partial Recirculated Draft EIR was circulated to the public for a 45-day public review and comment period pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5(c). During the 45-day public comment period, from October 6, 2017 to November 20, 2017, a total of 10 individual comment letters were received (see Section 8.0, *Response to Comments*).

### 1.1.7 Scope of EIR

This EIR assesses the potential environmental impacts of developing the Project area in accordance with the Specific Plan. The scope of this EIR includes assessment and evaluation of potentially significant environmental issues, comments in response to the NOP, and scoping discussions among consulting staff and the City. The NOP and comment letters received during the NOP review period are included in Appendix B. The initial study and scoping phase determined that the Specific Plan may result in potentially significant impacts with respect to the following issue areas, which are addressed in detail in this EIR:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Transportation, Circulation, and Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Energy Conservation
- Tribal Cultural Resources

This EIR addresses the issues referenced above and identifies environmental impacts, including Project area-specific and cumulative effects of the Project, in accordance with the provisions set forth in the CEQA Guidelines. In addition, the EIR recommends feasible mitigation measures, where possible, that would reduce or eliminate adverse environmental effects.

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines §15128 (Effects Not Found to Be Significant), environmental impacts related to Agriculture and Forestry Resources, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Mineral Resources, and Recreation were not considered significant (Section 4.0, *Other CEQA Considerations*).

Cumulative project impacts, which give consideration to other large, discretionary projects in the immediate vicinity that are expected to be operational by the time the Project would be implemented, are discussed in each resource area analysis section of the EIR. Cumulative project analyses represent a comprehensive assessment of potential impacts on City resources using a list of past, present and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts (refer to Chapter 3.0, *Cumulative Impacts*).

Consistent with CEQA Guidelines (§15126.6[d]), this EIR includes the assessment of a range of reasonable alternatives to the Project to allow for comparative analyses and foster informed decision making and public participation (refer to Chapter 5.0, *Alternatives*).

## **1.2 SPECIFIC PLAN BACKGROUND AND REGIONAL CONTEXT**

The City of Fountain Valley was incorporated in 1957, and has a long history of agricultural production, primarily in field crops such as sugar beets, beans, barley, wheat, and since the 1930s, fruit and vegetable truck crops. The City experienced rapid growth during the 1960s within the framework of a 1962 Master Plan.

The City Council adopted the Industrial Area Redevelopment Project in November 16, 1976, which encompassed 498 acres on the eastern edge of the City, bounded by Warner Avenue to the north, the Santa Ana River to the east, Ellis Avenue to the south, and Ward Street and Euclid Street to the west. The current Project area encompasses the majority of the former Industrial Area Redevelopment Plan Area (City of Fountain Valley 1995).

Since the 1980s there have been numerous additions and improvements in the Redevelopment Plan Area as a result of the former Agency for Community Development efforts. The public improvements that the former Agency for Community Development performed, such as the development of the Newhope Extension Retail Center, the Mile Square Recreation Park Expansion, the Los Caballeros Condominiums, and various intersection improvements and sidewalk upgrades, were key contributors to the attraction of businesses.

The majority of the southern portion of the Industrial Area Redevelopment Plan Area remains underutilized. This portion is bisected by I-405 and is made up primarily of 1970s concrete tilt-up buildings. Within the confines of this area there are approximately 320,000 vehicle trips per day on I-405 and between 20,000 to 30,000 vehicle trips per day each on Euclid Street and Ellis Avenue (Caltrans 2014; City of Fountain Valley 2013).

In October 2013, a city-wide Strategic Plan was established. One of the goals set out in the three-year plan was “Enhance Economic Development,” and a supportive objective was established that called for staff to, “Identify and recommend to the City Council for consideration and direction a geographic area(s) for business development, including vision for the area(s) and strategy(ies) for achieving it/them.” In April 2014, the City Council was presented with the recommended areas of the City to focus renewal efforts. Included in the presentation was the Euclid/I-



*Close proximity to highly traveled transportation routes (I-405, Ellis Ave, and Euclid Street) provides market opportunities for the Project area.*

405 District, which was formerly part of the Industrial Area Redevelopment Project Area and is the current Project area. This area has been identified by the City as an area that is no longer being used to its full potential. While once vibrant with light manufacturing and warehouse uses, today the Project area contains a mix of somewhat incompatible uses, code enforcement violations, and some properties with maintenance issues.

### 1.3 AREAS OF KNOWN CONTROVERSY

CEQA requires that an EIR identify areas of controversy known to the Lead Agency, including issues raised by the agency as well as the public (CEQA Guidelines §15123). Based on City Council and Planning Commission meetings, public workshops held in 2015, and public letters received on the NOP, the following environmental issues are known to be of concern and may be controversial. Each issue is further discussed in this EIR:

- Building height and mass, considering proximity to residential land uses;
- Neighborhood compatibility and aesthetic between the business park and surrounding residential areas;
- Parking availability within the Project area;
- Transportation demand and congestion management; and
- Utility infrastructure and dependent resources.

### 1.4 ORGANIZATION OF THE EIR

This EIR is organized into the following eight sections:

- **Section 1.0, *Introduction***, summarizes the background of the proposed projects and explains the environmental review process.
- **Section 2.0, *Project Description***, provides a detailed description of the proposed project.
- **Section 3.0, *Environmental Impact Analysis and Mitigation***, provides the existing environmental conditions, analyzes the proposed project, cumulative and residual impacts and recommends feasible mitigation measures.
- **Section 4.0, *Other CEQA Considerations***, identifies insignificant issue areas, as well as significant and irreversible, growth-inducing, and unavoidable effects.
- **Section 5.0, *Alternatives***, describes alternatives to the proposed projects, and identifies the Environmentally Superior Alternative.
- **Section 6.0, *List of Preparers***, identifies the EIR project team.
- **Section 7.0, *References***, provides documents and interviews used as a basis of information for preparing the EIR.
- **Section 8.0, *Response to Comments***, provides responses to public letters and comments that are given during public review of the DEIR.

- **Section 9.0, *Corrections and Additions***, reflects all changes and/or updates that are made to the DEIR between circulation of the public DEIR and issuance of the Final EIR.
- **Appendices**, Appendices to the EIR include the IS, NOP and NOP comment letters, the MMRP, which provides the monitoring and reporting program requirements for each mitigation measure recommended in the EIR, and supporting technical studies used as a basis of information and analyses in preparation of the EIR.