

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The City of Redlands has a population of approximately 71,926 and is located 60 miles east of Los Angeles within the southwestern section of San Bernardino County. Downtown Redlands is located south of the San Bernardino Freeway (I-10), and includes a mix of historic, retail, office, and residential uses. The City of Redlands adopted a Specific Plan for the Downtown area in 1994 which is referred to herein as the 1994 Specific Plan. The Downtown General Plan and Specific Plan No. 45 Amendments, or proposed project, will extend the boundaries from Texas Street in the west to North Church Street in the east, and from the south side of the I-10 in the north to San Gorgonio Drive, Brookside Avenue, West Vine Street, South 6th Street, East Olive Avenue, and East Citrus Avenue in the south. Rail tracks are located just south of Stuart Avenue.

The proposed project is expanded from the 1994 Specific Plan area to add an additional 120 acres within the project boundaries and would generally include the area south of Redlands Boulevard to Citrus Avenue. While the entire 1994 Specific Plan area was located within the City of Redlands Redevelopment area, a small portion of the proposed project located near the southern boundary of the project site is outside the boundaries of the Redlands Redevelopment Plan area.

This Specific Plan amends the existing Downtown Redlands Specific Plan and is the result of a collaborative stakeholder effort that includes City and civic leaders, citizens, urban designers, architects traffic planners, landscape architects, and economic and environmental consultants. Stakeholders were brought together in a series of meetings and charettes which culminated in the development of a Master Plan. The Master Plan was the framework for the Specific Plan, or alternatively, the Specific Plan is the implementation tool of the Master Plan.

### 1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

The purpose of an EIR, as defined in Section 15121 (a) of the State Guidelines for the implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3 “Guidelines,” is to “inform public agency decision-makers and the public generally of the significant environmental effect of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project.” This document assesses the potential significant adverse impacts, including unavoidable adverse impacts and cumulative impacts, related to the implementation of the Downtown General Plan and Specific Plan No. 45 Amendments (hereafter referred to as the “proposed project”). Where there is potential for a significant adverse effect, this report identifies mitigation measures or alternatives that would either eliminate the impact or reduce the effect to a less than significant level. This report also identifies any significant adverse effects that may be unavoidable even after the implementation of feasible mitigation or feasible project alternatives.

According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168, “[A] program EIR is an EIR which may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related either: (1) geographically, (2) logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions, (3) in connection with 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 environmental effects which can be mitigated in similar ways.” A Program EIR provides broad-scale consideration of cumulative effects and includes broad policy alternatives and program-wide mitigation measures. This Program EIR offers useful large-scale analysis and a framework of mitigation measures for subsequent, site-specific environmental review documents prepared by implementing agencies as individual projects within the City of Redlands are developed.

The focus of environmental analysis in the Program EIR is on the potential large-scale and cumulative impacts of implementation of the proposed project and alternatives. The analysis considers potential impacts through the year 2025, the anticipated planning horizon (the year when the proposed project could be built out, although actual development could take longer). The long-range planning horizon necessitates that development, including anticipated infrastructure improvements, be addressed at the conceptual level; this document analyzes environmental impacts to the level they can be identified without undue speculation.

### **1.3 AUTHORIZATION AND FOCUS**

This Program EIR has been prepared in accordance with CEQA Guidelines, as amended to date. Specifically this document evaluates the environmental effects that could result from implementation of the proposed project. The following topic areas are addressed in this EIR.

- 4.1 Aesthetics
- 4.2 Air Quality
- 4.3 Biological Resources
- 4.4 Cultural Resources
- 4.5 Geology and Seismicity
- 4.6 Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- 4.7 Land Use and Planning
- 4.8 Noise
- 4.9 Population, Housing and Employment
- 4.10 Public Services
- 4.11 Traffic and Parking
- 4.12 Utilities and Service Systems
- 4.13 Water Resources

### **1.4 LEAD AGENCY**

The City of Redlands is the lead agency in accordance with Section 15367 of the CEQA Guidelines, which defines the lead agency as “the public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving the project.” This report represents the independent judgment of the City of Redlands.

### **1.5 INTENDED USES OF THE PEIR**

This Program EIR was prepared at the direction and under the supervision of the City of Redlands, the Lead Agency for the project. The intended use of this Program EIR is to assist the City of Redlands in making decisions regarding the approval of City of Redlands Downtown Specific Plan.

### **1.6 PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT**

A Notice of Preparation (NOP) for this Program EIR was issued on April 24, 2009 the City of Redlands for a 30-day period of public review. A total of seven comment letters were received. Information, data and observations resulting from these letters are included throughout the Program EIR where relevant. The NOP and copies of each comment letter received are included in Appendix B of this Program EIR. A public scoping meeting was held on May 18, 2009. The purpose of this meeting was to provide early consultation for responsible and trustee agencies and the community to express their concerns about the proposed project, and acquire information and make recommendations on issues to be addressed in the Program EIR.

In accordance with Sections 15087 and 15105 of the CEQA Guidelines, this Draft Program EIR is being circulated for a 45-day public review period. Responsible and trustee agencies and the public are invited to comment in writing on the information contained in this document. Persons and agencies commenting are encouraged to provide information that they believe is missing from the Draft Program EIR and to identify where the information can be obtained. All comment letters received concerning the Draft Program EIR will be responded to in writing, and the comment letters, together with the responses to those comments will be included in the Final Program EIR.

Comment letters should be sent to:

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35 Cajon Street  
Redlands, CA 92373  
Contact: Robert D. Dalquest, AICP, Assistant Development Services Director  
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