

Environmental Impacts

1. Q: When will the potential environmental impacts (including traffic, noise, air quality, flooding, geology, vegetation and wildlife, hazardous materials, visual and aesthetic and cultural resources) of the specific plan be analyzed?

A: The CVSP Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) was prepared by the City in conformance with state law, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the City's Municipal Code. The CVSP DEIR public comment period ended on June 29, 2007, after a 90-day review period, which was extended beyond the 45-day review period required by CEQA. The CVSP DEIR is available on our website, and paper copies can be obtained by contacting Jared Hart at (408) 535-7904.

The Director of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement (PBCE), in accordance with the provisions of Title 21 of the San Jose Municipal Code (Environmental Clearance Ordinance), has determined to revise and recirculate the CVSP DEIR. This decision was made in consideration of the significance and depth of the comments received during the DEIR public review period. The revised and recirculated DEIR will provide the City with the opportunity to clarify and modify the project description, as well as address key environmental issues highlighted in the comments. For more information on this decision, informational memorandums from the Director of PBCE were sent to the City Council on July 31, 2007 and on October 18, 2007, highlighting the comments and major themes received on the CVSP DEIR and discussing DEIR issues. The memorandums can be viewed on the front page of our website.

The revised Draft Environment Impact Report (DEIR) is expected to be circulated for public review and comment in fall 2008. The revised DEIR will be prepared in compliance with State Law - California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements. The document will include a description of the specific plan project, description of the existing physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project, consideration and discussion of the project's environmental impacts, proposed mitigation measures, alternatives to the proposed project, and a discussion of cumulative impacts. The discussion and consideration of the physical environmental setting will include, but is not limited to the following:

- a. Land Use*
- b. Transportation and Traffic*
- c. Noise and Vibration*

- d. *Air Quality*
- e. *Cultural Resources*
- f. *Biological Resources*
- g. *Geology*
- h. *Hydrology and Water Quality*
- i. *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*
- j. *Visual and Aesthetics*
- k. *Utilities and Service Systems*
- l. *Energy*
- m. *Population, Jobs, and Housing*
- n. *Public Services*
- o. *Global Climate Change*
- p. *Water Supply Impacts*

2. Q: How long will the public have to review and comment on the DEIR?

A: In accordance with CEQA, the City will provide a public notice of the availability of the revised and recirculated DEIR to those individuals and organizations, which have previously requested such notice in writing. The usual public review and comment period for a draft EIR is 45 days, commencing upon the submittal date to the State Clearinghouse. The City will evaluate comments received during the review period and prepare written responses. It is expected that the revised draft EIR will be available for public review in fall 2008. The EIR will also be reviewed by the Planning Commission as a part of their review of the overall CVSP package (the Plan, zoning and implementation strategy) in spring 2009.

3. Q: Will the EIR cover the Greenbelt?

A: Yes, the EIR will cover the entire Coyote Valley Specific Plan Area.

4. Q: What is the Environmental Review Process?

A: In 1970 the California Legislature passed the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requiring cities and other public agencies to consider what effects their discretionary actions might have on the environment before making decisions on a wide range of public and private projects.

As a result of this legislation, environmental clearance is required prior to approval of public and private projects reviewed by the Planning Department. The City's Environmental Clearance Ordinance, Title 21 of the Municipal Code, specifies exactly how environment review is carried out in the City of San Jose. A copy is available from the Planning Department.

5. Q: What is the purpose of Environmental Review?

A: The purpose of the environmental review process is to identify the potential environmental impacts that might be associated with a project prior to decision-making. It does so by informing decision-makers and the public of what potential impacts a proposed project is likely to have on the environment and what can be done to reduce or mitigate any significant effects. Possible areas of environmental impact include traffic circulation, water quality, archaeological resources, vegetation, and wildlife.

In addition to providing information, the process also requires that significant impacts be reduced or mitigated to a less than significant level whenever possible. A wide range of City policies and procedures provide a basis for determining impacts and a means for insuring that these impacts are mitigated.

6. Q: What is an Environmental Impact Report (EIR)?

A: An EIR is a detailed informational document prepared by the public agency responsible for carrying out a project as part of the CEQA process that describes and analyzes a project's potential significant environmental effects and discusses ways to mitigate or avoid those effects. An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must be prepared if a project is likely to result in a significant impact on the environment that may be difficult to mitigate or reduce. The purpose of an EIR and CEQA in general is to inform decision makers about significant environmental impacts, identify ways environmental damage can be avoided, prevent avoidable environmental damage, and disclose to the public and potentially unavoidable impacts.

NOTE: Also see the "EIR" link on the front page of our website