

CHAPTER 1.0 – INTRODUCTION

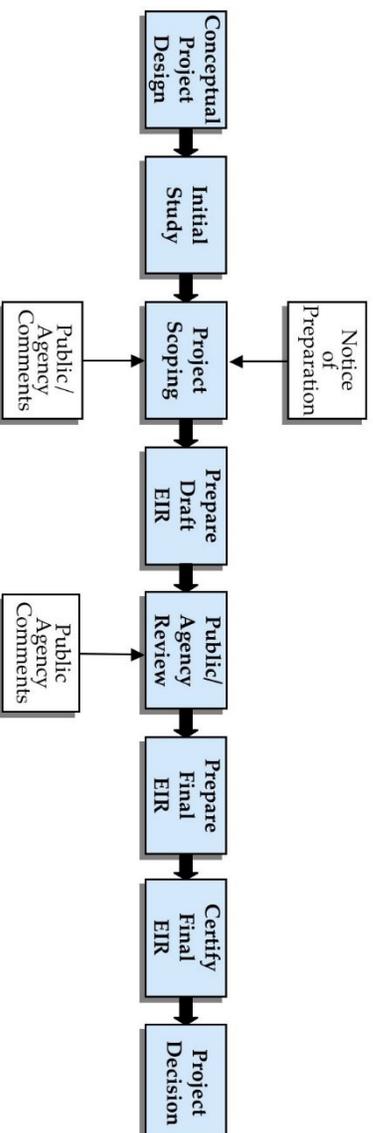
1.1 PURPOSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The City of San Juan Capistrano (City) is proposing to repeal the existing Historic Town Center Master Plan (HTCMP), amend the City’s General Plan, and amend the City’s Zoning Code (collectively, the Project or Proposed Project). The purpose of the Project is to correct land use inconsistencies between the HTCMP and the General Plan, replace the “form-based code” (FBC) currently applicable to the City’s Historic Town Center (HTC) area by amending the Zoning Code and General Plan Land Use Element, and to clarify setbacks, building heights, and allowable Floor Area Ratio (FAR) within the HTC area. This document is a Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) and it was prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15000 et seq.).

CEQA was enacted in 1970 by the California Legislature to disclose to decision makers and the public the significant environmental effects of a proposed project and identify possible ways to avoid or minimize significant environmental effects of a project by requiring implementation of mitigation measures or recommending feasible alternatives. CEQA applies to all California governmental agencies at all levels, including local, regional, and State, as well as boards, commissions, and special districts. As such, the City of San Juan Capistrano is required to conduct an environmental review to analyze the potential environmental effects associated with the Proposed Project. The City of San Juan Capistrano is the lead agency for the preparation of this Draft EIR in accordance with CEQA.

This Draft EIR is circulated to the public and affected agencies for review and comment. One of the primary objectives of CEQA is to enhance public participation in the planning process; public involvement is an essential feature of CEQA. Community members are encouraged to participate in the environmental review process, request to be notified, monitor newspapers for formal announcements, and submit substantive comments at every possible opportunity afforded by the agency. The environmental review process provides ample opportunity for the public to participate through scoping, public notice, and public review of CEQA documents. A diagram illustrating the CEQA process is shown in Figure 1-1 below. Additionally, lead agencies are required to respond to timely public comments in Final EIRs and consider comments from the scoping process in the preparation of the Draft EIR.

Figure 1-1: The Environmental Review Process



1.2 SCOPE OF THE DRAFT EIR

This section provides a summary of the issues addressed in this Draft EIR. This Draft EIR was prepared following input from the public, responsible agencies, and affected agencies through the EIR scoping process, which included the following:

- In accordance with the CEQA Guidelines, sections, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) and Initial Study (IS) were prepared and distributed to responsible agencies, affected agencies, and other interested parties.
- The NOP was posted in the County Clerk's office for 30 days. The NOP was submitted to the State Clearinghouse to officially solicit participation in determining the scope of the EIR.
- Information requested and input provided during the 30-day public review period regarding the contents of the NOP/IS and the scope of the EIR were incorporated in this Draft EIR.

The content of the Draft EIR was established based on the findings of the IS and public and agency input. Under the *CEQA Guidelines*, the analysis in the Draft EIR is focused on issues determined in the IS to be potentially significant, whereas issues found in the IS to have less than significant impacts (with or without mitigation) or no impact do not require further evaluation. Therefore, based on the analysis contained in the IS, the following issue areas were determined to have less than significant impacts or no impacts with respect to implementation of the Proposed Project and would not require further evaluation in the Draft EIR:

- Agricultural and Forestry Resources
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Mineral Resources

- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire

This Draft EIR analyzes the following environmental issues:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Cultural Resources
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Land Use
- Transportation

Mitigation measures to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level are proposed whenever feasible. In addition to the environmental issues identified above, this Draft EIR also includes all of the sections required by the *CEQA Guidelines*. (Table 1-1 contains a list of sections required under *CEQA Guidelines*, along with reference to the chapter where these items can be found.)

Table 1-1: Required EIR Contents

Section Title	Location
Table of Contents (Section 15122)	Table of Contents
Summary (Section 15123)	Executive Summary
Introduction (Section 15122)	Chapter 1
Project Description (Section 15124) and Environmental Setting (Section 15125)	Chapter 2
Consideration and Discussion of Environmental Impacts (Section 15126)	Chapter 3.4-3.9
Unavoidable Significant Environmental Impacts (Section 15126.2)	Chapter 5
Mitigation Measures (Section 15126.4)	Chapter 3.4-3.9
Cumulative impacts (Section 15130)	Chapter 3.4-3.9
Alternatives to the Proposed Project (Section 15126.6)	Chapter 4
Growth-Including Impacts (Section 15126.2)	Chapter 5
Effects Found Not to Be Significant (Section 15128)	Chapter 5
Organizations and Persons Consulted (Section 15129)	Chapter 6 and 7
List of Preparers	Chapter 7

1.3 DRAFT EIR ORGANIZATION

The Draft EIR is organized into the following chapters so the reader can easily obtain information about the Proposed Project and related environmental issues:

- Executive Summary – Presents a summary of the Proposed Project and alternatives, potential impacts and mitigation measures.

- Chapter 1: Introduction – Describes the purpose and use of the Draft EIR, provides a brief overview of the Proposed Project, and outlines the organization of the Draft EIR.
- Chapter 2: Project Description and Environmental Setting – Describes the Proposed Project location, Project details, baseline environmental setting and existing physical conditions, and the City's overall objectives for the Proposed Project.
- Chapter 3: Environmental Analysis – Describes the existing conditions, or setting, before project implementation; methods and assumptions used in impact analysis; thresholds of significance; impacts that would result from the Proposed Project; and applicable mitigation measures that would eliminate or reduce significant impacts for each environmental issue.
- Chapter 4: Alternatives Analysis – Evaluates the environmental effects of project alternatives, including the No-Project Alternative and Environmentally Superior Project Alternative.
- Chapter 5: Other CEQA Considerations – Includes a discussion of issues required by CEQA that are not covered in other chapters. This includes unavoidable adverse impacts, impacts found not to be significant, irreversible environmental changes, and growth-inducing impacts.
- Chapter 6: References – Identifies the documents and individuals consulted in preparing the Draft EIR.
- Chapter 7: Report Preparation – Lists the individuals involved in preparing the Draft EIR and organizations and persons consulted.
- Chapter 8: Acronyms/Abbreviations – Presents a list of the acronyms and abbreviations.

Appendices – Present data supporting the analysis or contents of this Draft EIR. The Appendices include the following:

- APPENDIX A Proposed Text Changes in General Plan and Zoning Code
- APPENDIX B Notice of Preparation, Initial Study, and Comments
- APPENDIX C Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Studies
- APPENDIX D Historic Resources Preliminary Visual Impacts Assessment
- APPENDIX E Traffic Impact Assessment