

Memorandum

DATE: August 25, 2016



SUBJECT: Revisions to Proposed Final EIR for the Serena Park project (DEIR SCH #2014121075, Case No. 5.1327): Finding CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5(b) applies and that change to the project made by the Planning Commission during their public hearing on Plan adoption does not require major revisions necessitating recirculation of the draft EIR.

Introduction

An Environmental Impact Report (Case 5.1327) was prepared for Serena Park to assess the potential of adverse impacts resulting from new residential development and recreation amenities associated with project implementation and full buildout of Serena Park. A subsequent change to the project site plan as a result of Planning Commission direction during the hearing for the plan adoption was to consider adopt an alternative site plan with reduced density. This EIR revision documents and evaluates the modification directed by the Planning Commission on April 13, 2016 for the proposed EIR (SCH# 2014121075).

CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5 describes circumstances under which a lead agency is required to recirculate and EIR when significant new information is added to the EIR after the close of the public review period but before EIR certification by the Palm Springs City Council. According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5 (a), "a lead agency is required to recirculate an EIR when new significant new information is added". New information added to the EIR is not "significant" unless the EIR is changed in a way that deprives the public of a meaningful opportunity to comment on substantial adverse project impacts or feasible mitigation or alternatives.

EIR Revision Findings

Inclusion of the change directed by the Planning Commission will not result in any new significant environmental impacts, nor will it result in a substantial increase of any environmental impacts beyond those analyzed in the EIR. Therefore, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5(b), the proposed revisions described in this memorandum have not been recirculated for additional public comment. The proposed Serena Park Final EIR is hereby amended by the memorandum.

Background

A draft EIR (SCH #2014121075) was prepared for the Serena Park project and released for public review from June 29th – August 12, 2015 and has not yet been certified. The Planning Commission considered the Serena Park project at a number of public hearings and public scoping sessions. At the April 13, 2016 Planning Commission meeting, the commission recommended adoption of the Serena Park project. The City Council is scheduled to consider adoption of Serena Park at a public hearing on September 7, 2016.

Changes to the Project

The original Serena Park site plan (herein called the “Original Proposed Project”) is summarized in Section 2.0 of the draft EIR. The final site plan includes the following changes to the project which were incorporated by the Planning Commission in its recommendation to the City Council (“Revised Proposed Project”):

The Original Proposed project analyzed 429 residential units and a five-acre public park consisting of 137 single story, attached residences in the northern portion and 292 detached single-family residences on the southern portion, the development proposed a mix of market rate and senior housing.

The Revised Proposed Project would redevelop the 140 acre former golf course with a reduced density of 386 residential units, 112 single story, attached and detached residences in the north portion and 274 detached single-family residences on the southern portion. The street layout similar to Alternative 3 analyzed in the draft EIR and the spine road traverses the approximate center of the area found midway between the existing Alexander Estates and the Whitewater River. The Revised Proposed Project includes a similar housing mix as the Original Proposed Project. The project will remain a private community and will be gated at the age restricted portion only. An HOA will maintain the common area open spaces and other common area features and facilities. With this Revised Project, a reduced public park is found in a similar location to the Original Project.

Changes in Environmental Effects

The Revised Proposed Project is a decrease of 43 residential units and will result in 386 new residential unit’s vs the Original Plan of 429 units. Impacts of this “Revised Proposed Project” would have reduced impacts versus the “Original Proposed Project” for Air Quality, Noise, and Traffic primarily due to the reduced level of construction activities and residential units.

Environmental Impact of Larger Lot Single Family Residential Alternative

Aesthetics: The Revised Proposed Project building heights would be similar to the Original Proposed Project and the distance adjustments would be screened by the Project’s perimeter wall, aesthetic impacts are not expected to differ appreciably from the Original Proposed Project and the level of visual changes would be similar. This alternative would result in less than significant impacts.

Air Quality: Impacts to air quality resulting from this Revised Proposed Project are anticipated to be reduced compared to the Original Proposed Project due to a reduction in construction and operational

emissions that result from fewer residential units. The development of approximately 10% fewer residential units under this alternative would reduce duration and intensity of construction. Moreover, the daily trip generation would be lowered.

Biological Resources: The Revised Proposed Project has similar impacts compared to the Original Proposed Project because the entire property would be graded and developed. The CVMSHCP fees would be paid in entirety. The inclusion of residential development adjacent to the Whitewater Floodplain Conservation Area does have some potential for impacts to the biological resources in the adjacent floodplain but the reduced residential density of this alternative would result in slightly less than that of the Original Proposed Project. This Revised Proposed Project is also anticipated to result in less than significant impacts relative to biological resources.

Cultural Resources: The cultural resources investigation demonstrated that no such resources are present on the surface of the site. As both projects would involve grading of the entire site, the same standard mitigation measures would insure that buried resources uncovered during the course of grading operations would be properly dealt with including the potential discovery of human remains. No new impacts are anticipated.

Geotechnical: The Revised Proposed Projects site plan has similar but slightly less impacts compared to the Original Proposed Project, because the entire property would have the opportunity to be graded and developed. The residential density of the Revised Proposed Project is slightly less than that of the Original Proposed Project therefore the impacts are somewhat reduced and less than significant impacts are expected.

Greenhouse Gas: Impacts to greenhouse gases resulting from the Revised Proposed Project are expected to be reduced compared to the Original Proposed Project due to the level of construction activities and mixture of uses and facilities. The construction of fewer residential units translates to lower operational carbon dioxide equivalent emissions pertaining to area, energy, mobile and waste source categories. Mobile sources represent the largest percentage operational GHG emissions. The daily trip generation from the residential component of this Revised Project would be lower compared to the Original Proposed Project, therefore reducing the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions and overall greenhouse gas impacts.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials: Impacts would be similar to the Original Proposed Project. Residential construction would still occur as would hazardous waste from routine construction operations. The project would still comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations regarding hazardous materials. The project would still be located within the Palm Springs International Airport Land Use Plan and review by the Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission would still be required. Therefore, less than significant impacts are anticipated.

Hydrology and Water Quality: Impacts related to hydrology and water quality will have reduced impacts compared to the Original Proposed Project due to the reduced number of residential units. Construction and operation of the Revised Proposed Project would be subject to the same stormwater and water quality standards as those alternatives. Less than significant impacts are expected.

Land Use and Planning: The Revised Proposed Project would reduce the number of residential lots and reduce the public park size. The primary circulation road in the Southern subarea would move northeast and away from the Alexander Village condominium and single family communities. The project would

still activate streets and enhance pedestrian activity, contributing to the overall community. Entitlement approvals would remain the same at the Original Proposed Project. No new impacts would occur.

Noise: The Revised Proposed Project would result in the development 386 units, less than the Original Proposed Project of 429 units. The low density residential use would reduce noise related impacts on the project site and in the vicinity. The expected reduction in noise impacts is attributed to a lower amount of vehicle trips generated by the project. Less than significant impacts would result from the Revised Proposed Project.

Population and Housing: The Revised Proposed Project would result in lower density than the Original Proposed Project. However, residential development would still occur and add to the City's General Plan housing goals. As with the Original Project, this Revised Project would not displace any existing housing and would still result in an increase to the City's population. Less than significant impacts are expected.

Public Services: The residential density of the Revised Proposed Project is less than that of the Original Proposed Project. The Revised Project would still be required to annex into the City of Palm Springs Community Facilities District (CFD) to help off-set costs for fire and police services, as a result of additional new development. Construction impact fees would still be paid to the PSUSD for school impacts. There would be no new impacts to library service. Therefore, overall impacts would be considered less than significant.

Recreation: The residential density of the Revised Proposed Project is slightly less than that of the Original Proposed Project. The development would still provide recreation in the form of private open space with public walkways and a trail for CV-link. The Land for the public park would be dedicated to the City but the park would now be smaller which results in an increased loss in open space. In addition, only one smaller retention basin would be constructed to protect the area from problematic soil erosion and flooding. Less than significant impacts are anticipated.

Transportation: The Revised Proposed Project would generate fewer peak hour and daily trips and consequently have a smaller traffic impact. However, the off-site mitigation associated would be the same as the Original Proposed Project. Less than significant impacts would be anticipated following implementation of Mitigation Measures and Standard Conditions as outlined in the Final EIR.

Utilities and Service System: The Revised Proposed Project represents a reduced size residential project. This reduced size residential option would require similar utilities and services to the Original Proposed Project. The impacts to utilities and service systems are expected to be less than significant.

Environmental Conclusion

No new impacts are presented as a result of the Revised Proposed Project and no additional mitigation measures have been added. The analysis and overall significance conclusions identified within the Draft and Final EIR will not be materially altered nor will the severity of a potential impact increase with the implementation of the Revised Proposed Project.