

# 1 Introduction

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared on behalf of the City of Daly City in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This chapter outlines the purpose of and overall approach to the preparation of the EIR on the proposed City of Daly City General Plan Update (proposed General Plan). The City of Daly City is the lead agency responsible for ensuring that the proposed General Plan complies with CEQA.

## 1.1 Purpose of this EIR

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The purpose of this EIR is to inform decision makers and the public of the environmental impacts of the proposed General Plan and to meet the requirements of CEQA. Pursuant to the provisions of CEQA and related case law, general plans must include analyses of the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of their policies and proposals. CEQA was conceived primarily as a means to require public agency decision-makers to document and consider the environmental implications of their actions. This environmental assessment is designed to inform decision-makers, responsible and trustee agencies, and the general public of the range of potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed General Plan.

The proposed General Plan consists of policies, diagrams, tasks, and programs to guide the future development of the City of Daly City, as described in Chapter 2: Project Description. The EIR is a Program EIR, containing an analysis of the proposed General Plan and all potential environmental impacts expected to result from implementation of the various policies, transportation improvement programs, and tasks identified, as well as policy measures that serve to avoid or minimize the adverse environmental impacts. In accordance with CEQA requirements, this EIR also identifies and evaluates alternatives, as well as analyzes the “No Project” alternative, which represents the continued implementation of the current General Plan. An environmentally superior alternative is also identified as part of the alternatives analysis to inform decision-makers on this project.

This EIR will also be used as a reference document during subsequent environmental review processes associated with future development within the city. The EIR for the proposed Plan has three purposes:

- Satisfy CEQA requirements for analysis of environmental impacts by including a complete and comprehensive programmatic evaluation of the physical impacts of the proposed General Plan and its alternatives.

- Inform property owners, residents, tenants, interest groups, public agencies, members of the City Council, and the Planning Commission of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed General Plan prior to the Commission and Council taking action on the proposed General Plan. The information presented in this EIR will assist City officials in reviewing and adopting the proposed General Plan.
- Provide a basis for the review of subsequent development projects and public improvements proposed within the Planning Area. Subsequent environmental documents may be tiered from this EIR.

This Program EIR represents the best effort to evaluate the proposed General Plan given its planning horizon year of 2030. It can be anticipated that conditions will change; however, the assumptions used are the best available at the time of preparation and reflect existing knowledge of patterns of development.

## **EIR PROCESS**

The EIR process includes several steps: publication of Notice of Preparation of an EIR (NOP); EIR public scoping meeting; publication of a Draft EIR for public review and comment; preparation of responses to general public and other agency comments on the Draft EIR; and certification of the Final EIR.

The NOP for the EIR was published on March 9, 2012 (see Appendix A for the published NOP). The NOP and public comment period were advertised and a public scoping meeting was held March 29, 2012, to gather public input on the scope and content of the EIR. No community members or agencies attended the public scoping meeting. Written comments were also received during the public comment period (See Appendix A).

This Draft EIR will be reviewed by the public, agencies and the City during the 45-day public review process. The Final EIR, which will include responses to comments received during the Draft EIR comment period, and incorporate the Draft EIR by reference, will be certified by the City Council in conjunction with the proposed General Plan.

Comments on this Draft EIR may be submitted to:

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In several environmental issue areas, significant and unavoidable impacts remain after all feasible mitigation measures have been identified. If the City Council elects to proceed with the proposed General Plan despite these impacts, the City Council would be required to adopt a statement of overriding considerations with the adoption of the proposed General Plan. The statement of

overriding considerations will explain how the benefits of the proposed General Plan would outweigh any significant impacts identified.

## 1.2 Approach to the EIR

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### APPROACH

This Program EIR evaluates the potential environmental impacts associated with reasonable buildout of the proposed General Plan. A Program EIR is defined in the CEQA Guidelines Section 15168 as:

*“...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) as logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions; (3) in connection with the 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 impacts which can be mitigated in similar ways.”*

This Program EIR can be used as the basic, general environmental assessment for an overall program of projects proposed over the approximately 18-year planning horizon of the proposed Daly City General Plan. A Program EIR has several advantages. First, it provides a basic reference document to avoid unnecessary repetition of facts or analysis in subsequent project-specific assessments. Second, it allows the lead agency to look at the broad, regional impacts of a program of actions before its adoption and eliminates redundant or contradictory approaches to the consideration of regional and cumulative impacts.

As a Program EIR, this document focuses on the overall effects of the proposed General Plan in the city. Individual development projects will continue to require project level environmental assessment. The project-level environmental review will need to focus on project-scale impacts; cumulative and citywide impacts (such as air quality), would not need to be evaluated, provided the data and assumptions used in this EIR remain current and valid.

The proposed General Plan and the EIR have been prepared concurrently, and the impacts analysis factors into policy development of the proposed General Plan. The proposed General Plan is intended to be self-mitigating, in that the policies, tasks, and programs of the proposed General Plan are designed to mitigate environmental impacts. This EIR demonstrates how the impacts of future development in the city will be reduced or avoided through implementation of the policies and programs of the proposed Plan General Plan. Any residual impact after implementation of these proposed policies and programs is measured against the significance criteria established for each impact area. The significance criteria are identifiable quantitative, qualitative, or performance level thresholds and are based on the suggested criteria provided in CEQA Guidelines Appendix G and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District Guidelines, though they are tailored to be appropriate for this project.

### APPLICABILITY

As a Program EIR, this document focuses on the overall effects associated with adoption and implementation of the proposed General Plan; the analysis does not examine the effects of potential site-specific projects that may occur under the overall umbrella of this program in the future. When

specific development proposals submitted to the City, the City will determine whether the environmental effects of the proposed projects have been adequately addressed by this EIR. If the City finds that the proposals would not result in any additional potentially significant adverse environmental impacts beyond those considered in this EIR, no new environmental analysis may be required. If the City determines that a project could create potentially significant adverse environmental impacts that have not been studied in this EIR, or if the City determines that environmental conditions have changed substantially since the EIR was prepared, the City may require further environmental review to determine appropriate revisions to the project, conditions of approval, or additional mitigation measures. Additionally, any future changes to applicable environmental law could also trigger the need for project-level CEQA analysis.

### **1.3 Scope of the EIR**

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Information gathered about the environmental setting is used to define relevant planning issues, determine thresholds of significance, and evaluate potential impacts. Based on the initial analysis of environmental setting and baseline conditions, and comments on the NOP, the following issues are analyzed in this EIR:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural and Historic Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gases and Energy
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology, Flooding, and Water Quality
- Land Use and Housing
- Public Services and Facilities
- Traffic and Circulation
- Utilities and Service Systems

### **1.4 Other Relevant Plans and Studies**

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Documents most closely relevant to the proposed General Plan and this EIR, and are available from the City for review at the City's General Plan Update website:

- [http://www.dalycity.org/City\\_Hall/Departments/ECD/General\\_Plan\\_Update.htm](http://www.dalycity.org/City_Hall/Departments/ECD/General_Plan_Update.htm)

## 1.5 Organization of This EIR

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The Draft EIR is organized into the following chapters, plus appendices:

**Executive Summary.** The executive summary summarizes the EIR by providing an overview of the proposed General Plan, the potentially significant environmental impacts that could result from the project, the mitigation measures identified to reduce or avoid these impacts, alternatives to the project, and identification of the environmentally superior alternative.

1. **Introduction.** This chapter introduces the purpose for the EIR; explains the EIR process and intended uses of the EIR; the assumptions critical to the environmental analysis; and overall EIR organization.
2. **Project Description.** This chapter includes a detailed description of the proposed General Plan. It also includes project location, objectives, and the General Plan Land Use Diagram.
3. **Settings and Impact Analysis.** This chapter analyzes the environmental impacts of the proposed General Plan. Impacts are organized by major topic. Each topic area includes a description of the environmental setting, significance criteria, and impacts.
4. **Analysis of Alternatives.** This chapter presents a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed General Plan, provides discussion of environmental impacts associated with each alternative, compares the relative impacts of each alternative to those of the proposed project and other alternatives, discusses the relationship of each alternative to the project objectives, and identifies the environmentally superior alternative.
5. **CEQA Required Conclusions.** This chapter provides a summary of significant environmental impacts, including growth-inducing, cumulative impacts, unavoidable significant effects, and irreversible effects.
6. **Bibliography.** A list of documents used during EIR preparation.
7. **Report Authors.** Identifies EIR consultants and subconsultants, persons and organizations consulted during EIR preparation, and lists persons who contributed to report preparation.

**Appendices.** Technical appendices include the NOP and compilation of agency and public comments received on the NOP, as well as other technical appendices related to traffic and cultural resources.

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