

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Del Hombre Apartments Project (project) has been prepared in accordance with—and complies with—criteria, standards, and procedures of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as amended (California Public Resources Code [PRC], § 21000, *et seq.*) and the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations [CCR], Title 14, § 15000, *et seq.*). In accordance with Sections 21067, 15367, and 15050–15053 of the CEQA Guidelines, Contra Costa County (County) is the lead agency under whose authority this document has been prepared. As an informational document, this EIR is intended for use by the County and other public agency decision makers and members of the public in evaluating the potential environmental impacts of the project.

1.1 - Project Overview

The 2.37-acre project site consists of five parcels and is largely undeveloped but contains two single-family homes and an attached garage approximately 0.38 mile east of Interstate 680 (I-680) and 0.15 mile east of the Pleasant Hill/Contra Costa Centre BART station (see Exhibit 2-2). Several trees are located within the project site.

The project includes development of 284 new apartment units within a six-story podium apartment community. The existing two single-family homes and attached garage would be demolished, Del Hombre Lane and Roble Road would be widened, and Del Hombre Lane would be brought up to County public road standards. Primary vehicle access to the project site would be granted from Del Hombre Lane via the ground floor parking garage.

1.2 - Environmental Review Process

An EIR is an informational document used by a lead agency (in this case, the County) when considering approval of a project. The purpose of an EIR is to provide public agencies and members of the public with detailed information regarding the environmental effects associated with implementing a project. An EIR should analyze the environmental consequences of a project, identify ways to reduce or avoid the project's potential environmental effects, and identify alternatives to the project that can avoid or reduce impacts. Pursuant to CEQA, State and local government agencies must consider the environmental consequences of projects over which they have discretionary authority. This EIR provides information to be used in the planning and decision-making process. It is not the purpose of an EIR to recommend approval or denial of a project.

Before approval of the project, the County, as lead agency and the decision-making entity, is required to certify that this EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA, that the information in the EIR has been considered, and that the EIR reflects the independent judgment of the County. Pursuant to CEQA, decision makers must balance the benefits of a project against its unavoidable environmental consequences. If environmental impacts are identified as significant and unavoidable, the County may still approve the project if it finds that social, economic, or other benefits outweigh the unavoidable impacts. The County would then be required to state in writing the specific reasons for approving the project, based on information in the EIR and other information

sources in the administrative record. This reasoning is called a “statement of overriding considerations” (PRC § 21081; CEQA Guidelines § 15093).

In addition, the County as lead agency must adopt a mitigation monitoring and reporting program (MMRP) describing the measures that were made a condition of project approval to avoid or mitigate significant effects on the environment (PRC § 21081.6; CEQA Guidelines § 15097). The MMRP is adopted at the time of project approval and is designed to ensure compliance with the project description and EIR mitigation measures during and after project implementation. If the County decides to approve the project, it would be responsible for verifying that the MMRP for this project is implemented. The EIR will be used primarily by the County during approval of future discretionary actions and permits.

This EIR provides a project-level analysis of the environmental effects of the Del Homb्रे Apartments Project. The environmental impacts of the project are analyzed in the EIR to the degree of specificity appropriate, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15146. This document addresses the potentially significant adverse environmental impacts that may be associated with the planning, construction, or operation of the project. It also identifies appropriate and feasible mitigation measures and alternatives that may be adopted to significantly reduce or avoid these impacts.

CEQA requires that an EIR contain, at a minimum, certain specific components. These components are contained in this EIR and include:

- Table of Contents
- Introduction
- Executive Summary
- Project Description
- Environmental Setting
- Significant Environmental Impacts
- Mitigation Measures
- Cumulative Impacts
- Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts
- Alternatives to the Proposed Project
- Growth-Inducing Impacts
- Effects Found Not to be Significant
- Areas of Known Controversy

Contra Costa County is designated as the lead agency for the project. CEQA Guidelines Section 15367 defines the lead agency as “. . . the public agency, which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project.” Other public agencies may use this EIR in the decision-making or permit process and consider the information in this EIR along with other information that may be presented during the CEQA process.

This EIR was prepared by FirstCarbon Solutions (FCS), an environmental consultant. Prior to public review, it was extensively reviewed and evaluated by Contra Costa County. This EIR reflects the

independent judgment and analysis of Contra Costa County as required by CEQA. Lists of organizations and persons consulted and the report preparation personnel is provided in Chapter 7 of this EIR.

1.3 - Purpose and Legal Authority

1.3.1 - Notice of Preparation and Public Scoping Process

In accordance with Sections 15063 and 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, Contra Costa County, as lead agency, sent the Notice of Preparation (NOP) to responsible and trustee agencies and interested entities and individuals on October 29, 2018, thus beginning the formal CEQA scoping process. The purpose of the scoping process is to allow the public and government agencies to comment on the issues and provide input on the scope of the EIR. The scoping period began on October 29, 2018, and ended on November 28, 2018, representing the statutory 30-day public review period. Three comment letters were received in response to the NOP. The NOP is contained in Appendix A. Comments are summarized in Table 1-1, with cross-references to applicable EIR sections where comments are addressed.

Pursuant to Section 15083 of the CEQA Guidelines, the Contra Costa County held a public scoping meeting on November 19, 2018, starting at 3:30 p.m. at Contra Costa County Department of Conservation and Development, 30 Muir Road, Martinez, California 94553. Attendees were given an opportunity to provide comments and express concerns about the potential effects of the project. No individuals provided verbal comments on the content of the EIR at the scoping meeting.

Table 1-1: Summary of EIR Scoping Comments

Agency/Organization	Author	Date	Comment Summary	Coverage in the DEIR
Public Agencies				
Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC)	Sharaya Souza, Staff Services Analyst	11/06/2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discusses compliance with Assembly Bill (AB) 52 and Senate Bill (SB) 18 NAHC recommendations for Cultural Resource Assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 3.16, Tribal Cultural Resources
Organizations				
Walden District Improvement Association	Jeffrey Peckham, President	11/30/2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requests that the number of units be reduced to comply with current zoning Project acreage is not adequate for number of units Requests that the height be kept to six stories to comply with current zoning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 3.10, Land Use and Planning Section 3.15, Transportation

Table 1-1 (cont.): Summary of EIR Scoping Comments

Agency/Organization	Author	Date	Comment Summary	Coverage in the DEIR
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expresses concern related to vehicle access and notes that an entrance via Roble Road may be required • Requests the project incorporate 15 to 20 percent affordable housing units instead of the proposed 5 percent • Requests the project be broken down into condominiums (comment does not address a specific environmental issue.) • Requests the architecture blend with the surrounding neighborhoods • Requests the project be required to contribute to the Walden I maintenance fund 	
Individuals				
N/A	Rebecca Gehres	11/04/2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disagrees with removing right turn only lane off Interstate 680 • Requests an updated traffic study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 3.15, Transportation
Source: Compiled by FCS 2018				

1.3.2 - Public Review

Upon completion of the public Draft EIR, Contra Costa County filed a Notice of Completion (NOC) with the State Office of Planning and Research to begin the public review period (PRC § 21161). Concurrent with the NOC, the Draft EIR has been distributed to responsible and trustee agencies, other affected agencies, surrounding cities, and interested parties, as well as all parties requesting a

copy of the Draft EIR in accordance with Public Resources Code 21092(b)(3). During the public review period, the Draft EIR, including the technical appendices, is available for review at Contra Costa County website (<http://www.contracosta.ca.gov/delhombre>), the office of Contra Costa County Department of Conservation and Development, and two alternative locations. The address for each location is provided below:

Contra Costa County
Department of Conservation and Development
30 Muir Road
Martinez, CA 94553-4601
Hours:
Monday through Thursday: 7:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
Friday: 7:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday: Closed

Pleasant Hill Library
Contra Costa County Main Branch
1750 Oak Park Boulevard
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523
Hours:
Monday: 12:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m.
Tuesday: 1:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m.
Wednesday and Thursday: 11:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.
Friday and Saturday: 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
Sunday: Closed

Office of County Supervisor Karen Mitchoff
2151 Salvio Street, Suite R
Concord, CA 94520
Hours:
Monday through Friday: 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.;
closed 12:00 p.m.–1:00 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday: Closed

Agencies, organizations, and interested parties have the opportunity to comment on the Draft EIR during the 45-day public review period. Written comments on the Draft EIR should be addressed to:

Jennifer Cruz, Senior Planner
Contra Costa County
Department of Conservation and Development
30 Muir Road
Martinez, CA 94553-4601
Phone: 925.674.7790
Fax: 925.674.7258
Email: Jennifer.cruz@dcd.cccounty.us

Submittal of electronic comments in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF format is encouraged. Upon completion of the public review period, written responses to all significant environmental issues raised will be prepared and made available for review by the commenting agencies at least 10 days prior to the public hearing before the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors on the project, at which the certification of the Final EIR will also be considered. Comments received and the responses to comments will be included as part of the record for consideration by decision makers for the project.

1.3.3 - Environmental Issues Determined Not To Be Significant

The NOP identified topical areas that were determined not to be significant. An explanation of why each area is determined not to be significant is provided in Chapter 4, Effects Found Not To Be Significant. These topical areas are as follows:

- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Mineral Resources

1.3.4 - Potentially Significant Environmental Issues

The NOP found that the following topical areas may contain potentially significant environmental issues that will require further analysis in the EIR. These sections are as follows:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire

1.4 - EIR Document Organization

This EIR is organized into the following main sections:

- **Chapter ES: Executive Summary.** This Chapter includes a summary of the project and alternatives to be addressed in the EIR. A brief description of the areas of controversy and issues to be resolved, and overview of the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program—in addition to a table that summarizes the impacts, mitigation measures, and level of significance after mitigation—are also included in this Chapter.
- **Chapter 1: Introduction.** This Chapter provides an introduction and overview describing the purpose of this EIR, its scope and components, and its review and certification process.
- **Chapter 2: Project Description.** This Chapter includes a detailed description of the project, including its location, site, and project characteristics. A discussion of the project objectives, intended uses of the EIR, responsible agencies, and approvals that are needed for the project are also provided.
- **Chapter 3: Environmental Impact Analysis.** This Chapter analyzes the environmental impacts of the proposed project. Impacts are organized into major topical areas. Each topical area includes a description of the environmental setting, regulatory framework, significance criteria, methodology, specific thresholds of significance, impact analyses, mitigation measures (when applicable), and significance conclusions as well as cumulative impacts associated with the

project, including the impacts of past, present, and probable future projects. The specific environmental topical sections that are addressed within Chapter 3 are as follows:

- **Section 3.1—Aesthetics:** Addresses potential visual impacts related to intensification and the overall increase in illumination produced by the project.
- **Section 3.2—Air Quality:** Addresses potential air quality impacts associated with project implementation and emissions of criteria pollutants. In addition, the section also evaluates project emissions of toxic air contaminants.
- **Section 3.3—Biological Resources:** Addresses potential impacts on habitat, vegetation, and wildlife; the potential degradation or elimination of important habitat; and impacts on listed, proposed, and candidate threatened and endangered species.
- **Section 3.4—Cultural Resources:** Addresses potential impacts related to historical resources, archaeological resources, and burial sites.
- **Section 3.5—Energy:** Addresses potential project impacts related to energy usage.
- **Section 3.6—Geology and Soils:** Addresses potential impacts related to soils and assesses the effects of project-related development in relation to geologic and seismic conditions. Also addresses potential impacts related to paleontological or unique geologic resources.
- **Section 3.7—Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** Addresses potential project emissions of greenhouse gases.
- **Section 3.8—Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** Addresses potential for the presence of hazardous materials or conditions on the project site and in the project area that may have the potential to impact human health and evaluates potential impacts related to wildfires.
- **Section 3.9—Hydrology and Water Quality:** Addresses potential impacts related to local hydrological conditions, including drainage areas and changes in flow rates.
- **Section 3.10—Land Use and Planning:** Addresses potential land use impacts associated with division of an established community and consistency with the Contra Costa General Plan and the Contra Costa County Ordinance Code.
- **Section 3.11—Noise:** Addresses potential noise impacts during construction and at project buildout related to mobile and stationary sources. The section also addresses the impact of noise generation on neighboring uses.
- **Section 3.12—Population and Housing:** Address potential impacts related to local housing and displacement.
- **Section 3.13—Public Services:** Addresses potential impacts related to public services, including fire protection, law enforcement, schools, parks, recreational facilities, and library facilities.
- **Section 3.14—Recreation:** Addresses potential impacts related to parks and park usage.
- **Section 3.15—Transportation:** Addresses potential impacts related to the local and regional roadway system, public transportation, bicycle, and pedestrian access.
- **Section 3.16—Tribal Cultural Resources:** Addresses potential project impacts related to tribal cultural resources.
- **Section 3.17—Utilities and Services Systems:** Addresses potential impacts related to service providers, including water supply, stormwater, wastewater, solid waste, and energy providers.
- **Section 3.18—Wildfire:** Addresses potential impacts related to wildfire including lands within State responsibility areas and lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones.

- **Chapter 4: Effects Found Not To Be Significant.** This Chapter contains analysis of the topical sections not addressed in Chapter 3.
- **Chapter 5: Alternatives to the Proposed Project.** This Chapter compares the impacts of the project with two land-use project alternatives: the No Project Alternative and the Reduced Scale Alternative. An environmentally superior alternative is identified. In addition, alternatives initially considered but rejected from further consideration are discussed.
- **Chapter 6: Other CEQA Considerations.** This Chapter provides a summary of significant environmental impacts, including unavoidable and growth-inducing impacts as well as significant irreversible environmental changes.
- **Chapter 7: Persons and Organizations Consulted/List of Preparers.** This Chapter contains a full list of persons and organizations that were consulted during the preparation of the EIR. This Chapter also contains a full list of the authors who assisted in the preparation of the EIR, by name and affiliation.
- **Appendices.** The EIR appendices include notices and other procedural documents pertinent to the EIR, as well as supporting technical materials. The following supporting materials and technical studies and analyses were prepared for the project in support of preparation of this EIR:
 - NOP and EIR Public Scoping Comments (Appendix A)
 - Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Modeling Outputs, prepared by FirstCarbon Solutions (Appendix B)
 - Biological Resources Assessment, prepared and compiled by FirstCarbon Solutions (Appendix C)
 - Cultural Resources Assessment and Assembly Bill 52 consultation, prepared and compiled by FirstCarbon Solutions (Appendix D)
 - Geotechnical Report, prepared by ENGEO, Inc. (Appendix E)
 - Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessments, prepared by ENGEO, Inc. (Appendix F)
 - Preliminary Stormwater Control Plan and Drainage Memorandum and, prepared by BKF (Appendix G)
 - Noise Modeling Outputs, prepared by FirstCarbon Solutions (Appendix H)
 - Transportation Impact Assessment, prepared by Fehr & Peers (Appendix I)
 - Utility Due Diligence Memorandum, prepared by BKF (Appendix J)

1.5 - Documents Incorporated by Reference

As permitted by CEQA Guidelines Section 15150, this EIR has referenced several technical studies, analyses, and previously certified environmental documentation. Information from such documents, which have been incorporated by reference, has been briefly summarized in the appropriate section(s). The relationship between the incorporated part of the referenced document and the EIR has also been described as part of those summaries in the appropriate section(s). Documents and other sources that have been used in the preparation of this EIR include but are not limited to:

- Contra Costa County General Plan
- Contra Costa County Code of Ordinance

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15150(b), the Contra Costa County General Plan, Contra Costa County Code of Ordinances, and the referenced documents and other sources used in the preparation of the EIR are available for review at the Contra Costa County Department of Conservation and Development at the address shown in Section 1.3.2, Public Review.

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