



PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Date of Notice: September 30, 2016

PUBLIC NOTICE OF A

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR)/ ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)

I.O. No.: 11003302

PUBLIC NOTICE: The City of San Diego Planning Department has prepared a Draft EIR/EIS for the following project and is inviting your comments regarding the adequacy of the document. The Draft EIR/EIS and associated technical appendices have been placed on the City of San Diego Planning Department website under the heading “Draft CEQA Documents” and can be accessed using the following link:

<https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/programs/ceqa>

The Draft EIR/EIS public notice has also been placed on the City Clerk website at:

<http://www.sandiego.gov/city-clerk/officialdocs/notices/index.shtml>

Your comments must be received by December 1, 2016 to be included in the final document considered by the decision-making authorities. Please send your written comments to the following address: **Myra Herrmann, Environmental Planner, City of San Diego Planning Department, 1010 Second Avenue, East Tower, Suite 1200, MS 413, San Diego, CA 92101** or email your comments to PlanningCEQA@sandiego.gov with the Project Name (Vernal Pool HCP) and Project Number (441044) in the subject line. Please note, only written comments received either via US Mail, hand-delivered, or via email, will be considered official comments in the Final PEIR.

PROJECT NAME: Vernal Pool Habitat Conservation Program (VPHCP)

PROJECT No. 441044 / **SCH No.** 2011111075

COMMUNITY AREAS: Citywide

COUNCIL DISTRICTS: All Council Districts

PROJECT LOCATION: The VPHCP Plan Area is the geographical area for which the protections provided under the VPHCP are afforded to the seven covered species and for which the Section 10 permit applies. The VPHCP Plan Area includes lands subject to the City of San Diego’s (CITY) jurisdiction within the jurisdictional boundary of the City, as well as three areas owned

by the City's Public Utilities Department (PUD) in the unincorporated portion of San Diego County. The VPHCP Plan Area also includes preserved lands within San Diego that are under the ownership of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) or the California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW). The VPHCP Plan Area's extent is, by design, the same area covered by the City's Multiple Species Conservation Program Subarea Plan (MSCP SAP), and includes lands inside and outside the Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL and ADOPTION of the VPHCP, the Vernal Pool Management and Monitoring Plan (VPMMP), Amendments to the City's General Plan, the Kearny Mesa Community Plan, the Otay Mesa Community Plan, as well as Amendments to the Land Development Code (LDC) Environmentally Sensitive Lands Regulations (ESL), and the Land Development Manual (LDM) Biology Guidelines (the discretionary actions under CEQA). Issuance of a federal Incidental Take Permit (ITP) under Section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA; the federal action under the National Environmental Policy Act "NEPA") will be required by the USFWS after the City's approval process is complete.

The VPHCP is a conservation plan for vernal pools and seven threatened and endangered vernal pool species that do not currently have federal coverage under the City of San Diego's MSCP SAP. The VPHCP would be compatible with, and would expand upon, the City's existing MSCP SAP to conserve additional lands with vernal pools that are occupied with threatened and endangered vernal pool species. The VPHCP Plan Area encompasses 206,124 acres. Once fully implemented, the VPHCP would expand the City's existing MHPA by adding approximately 275 acres of lands with valuable vernal pools resources. The VPHCP would conserve an additional eight vernal pool complexes and additional 226 pools (approximately 9% more), totaling 2.8 acres of basin area, over what is currently conserved. Once adopted, vernal pool lands within the MHPA would be subject to the provisions of the VPHCP, in addition to the City's MSCP SAP and other existing land use and biological resource plans, policies, and regulations.

Approval of the Project would provide for the conservation of the vernal pool resources within the existing City of San Diego Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA) and conserved lands plus additional core lands containing the seven focal species (San Diego fairy shrimp, Riverside fairy shrimp, San Diego button celery, spreading navarretia, San Diego mesa mint, California Orcutt grass, and Otay mesa mint) and associated vernal pool habitat. This proposal would provide a comprehensive approach to the protection and management of the vernal pool preserve areas.

This document has been prepared as a joint EIR/EIS due to the combined local, state, and federal discretionary actions and permits associated with the Project. Co-lead agencies are the City, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and the USFWS pursuant to NEPA, as further described in the Draft EIR/EIS. The City and USFWS also coordinated with the CDFW on the scope and analysis of this EIR/EIS to support subsequent processing/issuance of any required amendments to and/or findings of consistency with the City's incidental take authorization (California Endangered Species Act [CESA]/Permit No. PRT-830421) that was received in 1997 with adoption of the City's MSCP in order to maintain

state coverage for vernal pool habitat and the seven covered vernal pool species addressed in the VPHCP, and to meet the requirements under California Fish and Game Code Section 2800 et seq. for listed and non-listed species conserved under a Natural Communities Conservation Plan (NCCP).

The VPHCP; VPMMP; Amendments to the General Plan, Kearny Mesa Community Plan, Otay Mesa Community Plan; and Amendments to the LDC and LDM, can be found on the Planning Department – MSCP website at:

<https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/programs/mscp/vphcp>

Applicant: City of San Diego Planning Department

Recommended Finding: The Draft EIR/EIS concludes that the proposed project would result in significant environmental impacts in the following area: **Historical Resources (including Historic Properties, Archaeological and Tribal Cultural Resources)**. All other impacts analyzed in this Draft EIR were found to be less than significant.

Availability in Alternative Format: To request this Notice, the Draft EIR/EIS and/or supporting documents in alternative format, call the Planning Department at (619) 235-5200 (800) 735-2929 (TEXT TELEPHONE).

Additional Information: For environmental review information, contact Myra Herrmann at (619) 446-5372 or by email, mherrmann@sandiego.gov. If you are interested in obtaining additional copies of the Compact Disk (CD) or a hard-copy of the EIR/EIS, they can be purchased for the cost of reproduction, at the Planning Department. A hard copy of the Draft EIR/EIS may be reviewed in the office of the Planning Department with appointment only. For information regarding public meetings/hearings on this project, contact the Project Manager, Jeanne Krosch, at (619) 236-7225 or via email: jkrosch@sandiego.gov.

This notice was published in the SAN DIEGO DAILY TRANSCRIPT and distributed on **September 30, 2016**.

Alyssa Muto
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Planning Department