



**City of Santa Ana**  
**20 Civic Center Plaza, Santa Ana, CA 92701**  
**Staff Report**  
**February 15, 2022**

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**TOPIC:** EIR No. 2020-03 and GPA No.2020-06 Santa Ana General Plan Update

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**AGENDA TITLE:**

Public Hearing - Final Recirculated Program Environmental Impact Report No. 2020-03 and General Plan Amendment No. 2020-06 for Santa Ana General Plan Update

**RECOMMENDED ACTION**

1. Adopt a resolution certifying Final Recirculated Program Environmental Impact Report No. 2020-03 (SCH No. 2020029087), including adoption of environmental findings of fact pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, adoption of a Statement of Overriding Considerations, and adoption of a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.
2. Adopt a resolution approving General Plan Amendment No. 2020-06.
3. Adopt a resolution of findings to overrule the John Wayne Airport Orange County Airport Land Use Commission's determination that the Proposed General Plan Update is inconsistent with the Airport Environs Land Use Plan.

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION & BACKGROUND**

At its regular meeting on November 8, 2021, and after receiving public testimony on the item, the Planning Commission voted 5-2 to recommend that the City Council certify the Final Recirculated Program Environmental Impact Report No. 2020-03, including adoption of environmental findings of fact pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, adoption of Statement of Overriding Considerations, and adoption of a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program; approve General Plan Amendment No. 2020-06; and approve findings to overrule the John Wayne Airport Orange County Airport Land Use Commission's determination that the Proposed General Plan Update is inconsistent with the Airport Environs Land Use Plan.

**DISCUSSION**

At the direction of the Mayor and City Council in late 2015, the Planning Division began efforts to complete a comprehensive update to the City's General Plan. The General Plan

is a state mandated document that includes goals, policies, implementation measures and maps that will guide Santa Ana's physical growth for the next 25 years. The State of California requires every city to prepare and adopt "a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the city, and any land outside its boundaries which is in the planning agency's judgement bears relation to its planning." The role of the General Plan is often referred to as the "Constitution of the City" as it serves as the guiding document by which all land use related decisions must be derived.

The City's current General Plan (with the exception of the Housing Element) was last comprehensively adopted in 1982 and is now 39 years old. The General Plan establishes a community vision and strategies to guide growth, change and community preservation within the City, providing goals and policies to enhance, preserve and protect the unique qualities that the Santa Ana community values. The General Plan is the single-most important tool used to guide communities achieve their vision. As the General Plan is a policy document, it differs from the Zoning Code in that the Zoning Code is a regulatory implementation document which will identify specific development standards (setbacks, parking, open space etc.) for each parcel in the City. Upon adoption of the General Plan, staff will begin the process to complete a comprehensive update to the Zoning Code to implement the land use policies of the General Plan and to ensure consistency between the General Plan and Zoning Code.

The comprehensive update to the General Plan document, known as "Golden City Beyond – A Shared Vision for Santa Ana," is comprised of two separate documents:

- The General Plan (comprised of three Sections and 12 Elements)
- Final Recirculated Program Environmental Impact Report

At the Planning Commission public hearing on November 9, 2020, concern was voiced regarding the City's need to address existing and future need for park and recreation resources, environmental health concerns, and broadening the community outreach to environmental justice (EJ) communities. Through the 2021 EJ community outreach described below, and collaboration with community serving organizations, neighborhood leaders, and interests parties; a number of Draft General Plan (August 2021) policies and programs were modified. These modifications, minor corrections to text and maps, and refinement to better align general plan land use density/ intensity with existing zoning were provided at the November 8, 2021 Planning Commission public hearing, and incorporated into the December 2021 Draft General Plan. Exhibit 4 provides Clarifications to the General Plan related to

aligning the proposed general plan land use intensity with the existing zoning, and other minor modifications, that have been incorporated in the December 2021. Additionally, other text corrections and implementation timeframes have been revised due to the delay in the adoption in the General Plan Update.

## **Community Engagement**

The City's General Plan is a community-wide vision document that is intended to address and respond to community needs. As such, the comprehensive update to the General Plan required staff to advertise and educate community members about the process to as wide an audience as possible.

Over the past six years, an extensive public outreach campaign was conducted to meaningfully engage the public and gather feedback and direction to create the vision for the future of Santa Ana and guide the update of the plan. These public outreach efforts included:

- Over 60 community meetings and workshops
- Individual community workshops within each of the five Focus Areas with over 300 residents, business leaders, and community stakeholders participating in the workshops.
- Distribution of an online community survey with over 650 respondents to collect input on the content of the General Plan
- Approximately 44,000 direct mailers sent to property owners and tenants in Focus Areas
- Development of a multi lingual videos on the General Plan Update
- A dedicated webpage ([santa-ana.org/general-plan](http://santa-ana.org/general-plan)) with continuous updates on the General Plan update process and related documents as well as information about Environmental Justice. Also includes an online web learning tool with a narrated presentation to help educate and increase awareness on Environmental Justice issues.
- Presentations at neighborhood Communication Linkages (Com-Link) meetings
- Meetings with Environmental Justice groups and roundtables (Madison Park Neighborhood Association, Logan Neighborhood Association, Artesia-Pilar Neighborhood Association, Orange County Environmental Justice)
- Attendance at approximately 100 CARES events (in neighborhoods and evening City Park events) from late-August through the end of October within Environmental Justice communities to discuss the General plan update with residents
- Planning Commission study sessions, most recently on April 12th, August 9th, August 23rd and September 13th
- City Council study sessions
- One-on-one meetings with the Planning Commission and City Council

### **General Plan Advisory Group**

Following direction from the City Council in 2015 to comprehensively update the General Plan, a 17-member General Plan Advisory Group (GPAG) was established to provide guidance to City staff and the consultant team early in the process. Building on the feedback from the prior community outreach, the GPAG was critical in developing goals and policies

that would serve as the foundation of the General Plan elements. The GPAG was also tasked with functions such as formulating a community vision, identifying area-wide and community-wide land use planning issues, and prioritizing economic development activities. The GPAG was comprised of representatives from various commissions, residents, business owners, interest groups, youth and property owners to represent the community's interests. The GPAG held several meetings through 2016, providing direction to staff on key matters that are now embodied in the updated General Plan.

### Environmental Justice Focus

As directed by Planning Commission public hearing on November 9, 2020, additional outreach was conducted to further provide Santa Ana's disadvantaged communities, or "environmental justice (EJ) communities", an opportunity to share their experiences and issues regarding environmental health and quality of life. Thus, Planning staff facilitated a multi-faceted outreach campaign during January through May 2021. The campaign began with the gathering of a General Plan Outreach Roundtable, with representatives from community serving organizations, neighborhood associations, and local stakeholders providing ideas and feedback on tools and strategies that could be used to effectively engage as many community members as possible. This effort included a multilingual EJ Survey (electronic and hard copy), which was publicized on various social media platforms, neighborhood yard signs, and collaboration with community groups and neighborhood leaders. Ten virtual community forums were held due to COVID-19; each focusing in on listening to the lived experiences of residents, property owners, and community stakeholders within specific geographic areas in the city that are identified as "EJ communities." Trilingual (English, Spanish and Vietnamese) flyers encouraging participation in the 10 community forums and EJ survey were mailed to over 40,000 property owners and residents/occupant within Santa Ana's EJ communities. Finally, in August 2021 one in-person EJ forum was held to share the results of the EJ survey and proposed general plan policy and program refinements, as well as to host a panel discussion with local EJ "champions" such a Madison Park, OCEJ and the Orange County Water District.

## **PROPOSED 2020-2045 GENERAL PLAN – SANTA ANA: GOLDEN CITY BEYOND**

### Development of Core Values

A variety of community issues and considerations were identified through the different community outreach activities. With this community input, and with the input of the GPAG, a Draft General Plan Policy Framework was created in December 2018. Included within the Framework was a set of Community "Core Values" that were created to collectively reflect the voice of the Santa Ana community and to express its environmental justice principals. These Core Values: Health, Equity, Sustainability, Culture and Education, serve as the foundation of the goals, policies and implementation items found throughout the General Plan Elements.

### Community Vision Statement

Through a robust dialogue with the community, including residents, business and property owners, and other interested citizens, a long-term General Plan Vision Statement was crafted. This Vision Statement is not only the foundation for the updated General Plan, but also for all long-term decision making in the City. The Vision Statement memorializes the community's aspirations and describes the "Santa Ana – Golden City Beyond" as embracing the following principles:

- Protect and enhance our cultural and community assets
- Create a land use pattern that promotes healthy and active lifestyles
- Ensure equitable outcomes and land use distributions
- Create a sustainable and livable city
- Promote lifelong education and prosperity

### Format and Content of the General Plan

The proposed General Plan is a comprehensive update and reorganization of the current General Plan Document, with the exception of Housing Element. The Housing Element is on a State mandated eight-year cycle and is being updated independently of this effort to comply with State law. The State mandated elements (Land Use, Circulation, Open Space, Conservation, Noise, Safety and Housing) and optional elements are organized into three Sections:

- **Services and Infrastructure (Section I)**
  - Community Element
  - Mobility Element
  - Economic Prosperity Element
  - Public Services Element
- **Natural Environment (Section II)**
  - Conservation Element
  - Open Space Element
  - Noise Element
  - Safety Element
- **Built Environment (Section III)**
  - Land Use Element
  - Historic Preservation Element
  - Housing Element (Undergoing standalone update process)
  - Urban Design Element

Senate Bill 1000 was signed into law in 2016 requires cities to identify “environmental justice” or “disadvantaged communities” within their jurisdiction as part of the general plan process. This law has several purposes, including facilitating transparency and public engagement in local governments’ planning and decision-making processes, and to identify objectives and policies to reduce the unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities that prioritize improvements and programs to address the needs of disadvantaged communities. It also requires that cities promote equitable access to health-inducing benefits, such as healthy food options, housing, public facilities, and recreation. Given that the environmental justice issues touches all aspects and all elements of the General Plan, it was determined early in the process that the best fit for the City is to incorporate environmental justice policies woven into the fabric of the various Elements.

To identify for the public and the reader, a unique identifying logo consisting of a colored tile with the letters “Eq” in the center and “EJ” in the upper right corner has been incorporated into the various General Plan policies and implementation measures that address environmental justice concerns in the City.

Additionally, the City prepared optional elements based on the input from the community to address special and unique community priorities. These elements include the Community, Economic Prosperity, Public Services, Historic Preservation, and Urban Design elements. Outlined below is an overview of the 11 Elements that are being updated, excluding the Housing Element as mentioned previously:

**Community Element.** The Community Element is a new element of the Santa Ana General Plan. The element reinforces the city’s values of recreation, culture, education, health and wellness, and cultivates opportunities for improved quality of life for all residents. The goals and policies of this element can be realized through partnerships with local agencies and organizations on facilities, activities and events throughout Santa Ana

This Element functions in tandem with other elements of the General Plan, such as Open Space, which contains policies related to parks and recreation facilities. Several plans and programs implemented by the City and other agencies and organizations overlap with the goals and policies of this Element, such as the Community Arts and Culture Master Plan, which establishes goals and strategies on topics such as cultural equity, infrastructure for the arts, communitywide access, youth programming, and place making.

There are 3 goals, 28 policies and 18 implementation items associated with this element. This element is not mandated by State law and is an optional element.

**Mobility Element.** The Mobility Element, known as the Circulation Element in the current General Plan, is the City’s blueprint for moving people, goods, and resources throughout the community. Moving beyond mere functionality, the City seeks to improve the quality of life in Santa Ana by providing more complete streets, offering ways to be more active, and conserving natural resources. In planning the City’s transportation system for the

21<sup>st</sup> Century, the City is also making the community safer, more affordable, and more livable.

Santa Ana envisions a balanced multimodal transportation system that supports community values. These values include a vibrant local economy, healthy neighborhoods, health and wellness, and an attractive environment. Context sensitive design solutions strengthen the livability, vitality and safety of our neighborhoods, districts, and corridors.

There are 5 goals, 46 policies and 45 implementation items associated with this Element. This Element is one of the State mandated elements.

***Economic Prosperity Element.*** The Economic Prosperity Element, identified as the Economic Development in the existing General Plan, will ensure Santa Ana's local economy. The Element defines Santa Ana's role in the broader regional economy, expands, maintains, and enhances job opportunities, attracts and retains a balance of business types, provides sufficient revenue for public services, and contributes to the overall quality of life experienced by the City's residents.

The goals and policies of this Element will inform and guide decisions across local government. The City intends that its allocation of resources, the operation of its agencies, and the application of its regulatory authority will grow and diversify the local economy. The City further intends that local economic growth and diversification will reduce poverty, increase overall prosperity, improve health and wellness outcomes, expand housing opportunities, and increase quality of life choices available to City residents.

There are 4 goals, 39 policies and 31 implementation items associated with this Element. This Element is not a State mandated element.

***Public Services Element.*** The Public Services Element, identified as the Public Facilities Element in the current General Plan, provides Santa Ana's diverse population with quality services and infrastructure, including accessible public facilities and enhanced public safety. Anticipated growth will require the City to fulfill community needs and to ensure proper management of those needs. It is important that public facilities and services are equitably distributed and maintained at sustainable levels throughout the community. A wide range of City entities and external agencies work closely together to provide the full spectrum of services and facilities.

There are 3 goals, 38 policies and 40 implementation items associated with this element. This Element is an optional General Plan Element.

***Conservation Element.*** The protection and management of Santa Ana's air, water, and energy resources are essential for a healthy, sustainable and equitable path forward. Additionally, the preservation of the remaining stretches of undisturbed plant and wildlife environment, such as in Santiago Park, is important to residents.

The Conservation Element identifies the community's natural resources and illustrates the benefits for retention, enhancement, and development of these resources towards

improving quality of life and the environment as a whole. This Element will guide the City in its efforts to prioritize sustainability and enhance the environment for current and future generations.

The Core Values reinforce the City's commitment to enable all persons to enjoy equal access to healthy environments, healthy food, parks and recreational facilities, and civic engagement opportunities. However, the City recognizes that throughout Santa Ana's communities, some bear a disproportionate burden of pollution and associated health risks. As a result, this element also addresses environmental justice issues within disadvantaged communities, which aims to correct inequity by reducing pollution and increasing public investment in the communities most affected while ensuring their participation and input is considered in decision making-process.

There are 4 goals, 39 policies and 39 implementation items associated with this element. This Element is a State mandated Element

**Open Space Element.** Open space is a limited and valuable resource, providing multiple benefits to those living and working in Santa Ana. Open space provides a place of relaxation and reprieve from the urban environment. Open space also offers places to gather, celebrate, learn or exercise, whether alone, with friends or family, or with other members of the community. Open space is so important that its presence or absence can profoundly shape the physical, social, mental and economic health, and overall well-being of the community.

The purpose of the Open Space Element is to identify and preserve open space areas that provide value to the community and enrich the quality of life. Such lands or waters provide value in the form of recreation, health, biodiversity, wildlife conservation and aesthetics. Additionally, open spaces are used for climate change, mitigation and adaption, flood risk reduction, managed natural resources production, agricultural production, and protection from hazardous conditions. The Open Space Element will guide the City in its efforts to plan for open space and public parklands in what is largely a built-out, urban environment. Through this element, opportunities for capturing additional open space and public parkland standards in the City is discussed.

There are 3 goals, 36 policies and 32 implementation items associated with this Element. This Element is a State mandated element.

**Noise Element.** The purpose of the Noise Element is to appraise noise levels in the community, prepare noise contours to guide land use decisions, and establish measures that address current and future noise impacts. This Element works to ensure that the City limits the exposure of the community to excessive noise levels in noise-sensitive areas and at noise-sensitive times of day. This Element works in tandem with other Elements of the General Plan, such as the Mobility Element, which contains policies related to the mitigation of transportation related noise.

There are 3 goals, 10 policies and 20 implementation items associated with this Element. This Element is one of the State mandated elements.

**Safety Element.** The Safety Element combines the Public Safety and Seismic Safety elements of the existing General Plan into one document. Public health and safety and protection from the risks of natural and human-induced disasters, emergencies, and hazards are vital in establishing a safe and healthy environment for Santa Ana's residents, workers, and visitors. The purpose of the Safety Element is to eliminate and minimize risks associated with natural and human-generated hazards such as floods, earthquakes, and hazardous materials. By assessing and preparing for levels of risk, the City can endure the range of safety hazards and adapt to changes over time.

This Element works in tandem with other elements of the General Plan, such as the Public Services Element, which contains goals and policies related to police, fire, and health services, as well as emergency planning and resiliency.

There are 4 goals, 24 policies and 27 implementation items associated with this Element. This is a State mandated element.

**Historic Preservation Element.** The Historic Preservation Element is a new element of the Santa Ana General Plan. Santa Ana was incorporated as a city in 1886 and designated the County seat in 1889. Historic preservation of the City's cultural and architectural heritage is an essential part of the City's economic vitality and identity. Residents take pride in the architectural heritage of the City, including its historical buildings and unique neighborhood character. Sites such as the Old Orange County Courthouse, Pacific Substation, Yost Theatre, and the Spurgeon Building reflect the City's rich cultural history and architectural diversity.

The purpose of the Historic Preservation Element is to provide guidance in developing and implementing activities that ensure that identification, designation and protection of architectural, historical, cultural and archaeological resources are part of the City's planning, development and permitting processes. Through historic preservation policies and programs, Santa Ana's heritage and diversity will continue to be a source of community pride.

There are 3 goals, 21 policies and 28 implementation items associated with this Element. This is an optional element of a General Plan.

**Land Use Element.** The Land Use Element provides a long-range guide for the physical development of the City, reflecting the community's vision for a high quality of life. This Element guides the distribution, location, and size of new development, ensuring that residential neighborhoods are protected, and future growth is sustainable and minimizes potential conflicts. Through its focus on the pattern of land use, this element is also a tool to promote public health, reduce infrastructure costs, enhance local economies, and address long-term environmental issues such as air quality, climate change and water resources.

The development, use and distribution of land are critical to achieving the City's vision and adhering to the Core Values. As stewards of the land, the City must plan for uses and development that creates a sustainable, healthy and livable City, ensures equitable

outcomes and land use distributions, protects and enhances cultural and community assets, and provides opportunities for growth and prosperity. As in other cities, land is a finite and valuable resource. Its use dictates the City's economic and fiscal future.

The Land Use Element preserves existing neighborhoods by directing new growth to major corridors and avoids land use changes in existing established neighborhoods. The five growth areas are identified as Focus Areas, and include: South Main Street, Grand /Seventeenth Street, West Santa Ana Boulevard (adjacent to the OC Streetcar line), 55 Freeway/Dyer Road, and South Bristol Street. The proposed Land Use Element will connect existing planning areas in the City (Transit Zoning Code, Harbor Boulevard Mixed-Use Corridor, Metro East Mixed Use Overlay Zone, etc.,) with the five proposed Focus Areas. Within these Focus Areas, the City anticipates the most potential for major development. A list of the parcels proposed for General Plan land use designation changes are included in Exhibit 7.

There are 4 goals, 42 policies and 58 implementation items associated with this element. This is one of the State mandated elements.

***Urban Design Element.*** Urban design is the process of shaping the physical character and organization of the City and defining the relationship between people and their environment. It respects the history of a place, considers existing organizational patterns and the form and character of existing buildings, supports healthy outdoor spaces, and is mindful of the natural environment. These considerations unite to define a distinct visual quality and sense of place that reflects community values.

The Urban Design Element establishes the long-range vision for the physical development, visual qualities, and sensory experience of the City. This Element, in coordination with other elements of the General Plan, orchestrates a safe, functional and aesthetically pleasing urban environment. Specifically, the Urban Design Element addresses the public realm, building form, and establishes programs and measures to improve the physical setting in which community life takes place while curtailing obsolete, dysfunctional, and chaotic development.

There are 7 goals, 50 policies and 30 implementation items associated with this Element. This is an optional element of the General Plan.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

### **California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)**

#### **Draft Programs Environment Impact Report (August 2020)**

The comprehensive update to the General Plan required extensive environmental review. Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and after completion of the Initial Study for the project, it was determined that CEQA required the preparation and certification of a Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for this project. The purpose of a PEIR is to identify and disclose the significant effects on the environment of a project, to identify alternatives to the project, and to indicate the way those significant effects can be mitigated or avoided. To determine what potential effects would be caused by the project, the Draft PEIR analyzes issues related to: Aesthetics; Air Quality; Biological Resources; Cultural Resources; Energy; Geology and Soils; Greenhouse Gas Emissions; Hazard and Hazardous Materials; Hydrology and Water Quality; Land Use and Planning; Mineral Resources; Noise; Population and Housing; Public Services; Recreation; Transportation; Tribal Cultural Resources; and Utilities and Service Systems. The Draft PEIR also studies alternatives to the General Plan Update, as well as direct and indirect impacts resulting from construction and operation of the proposed project.

The original Draft PEIR (August 2020) for the General Plan Update (GPU) was prepared and distributed for the required 45-day public review between August 3, 2020, and September 16, 2020. However, due to community request for additional time to review the document, the comment period was extended by an additional 20 days to October 6, 2020. At the public hearing on November 9, 2020, the Planning Commission voted to continue the consideration of the GPU and the certification of the Final PEIR (October 2020) to a future date to allow additional time for outreach to Santa Ana's environmental justice (EJ) communities.

#### **Recirculated Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (August 2021)**

In 2021, the City initiated an expanded outreach program focusing on environmental justice and specific community concerns raised in comments received. Pursuant to Draft PEIR comments, the Planning Commission public hearing, and the expanded community outreach program, the City made the decision to prepare a Recirculated Draft PEIR. The Recirculated document concluded that the recreation-related impacts of the proposed GPU would result in a significant impact and defined a new project alternative to reduce these impacts. It also further discussed and evaluated impacts related to environmental justice, including air quality, hazards, and recreation/open space.

Consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5, the Recirculated Draft PEIR does not need to include all the topical CEQA sections from the original Draft PEIR. Rather, the Recirculated Draft PEIR (August 2021) updates and supplements only the *three* topical

environmental topics of Air Quality, Hazards, and Recreation. The Recirculated Draft PEIR also includes an updated/supplemented Project Alternatives chapter containing a new Reduced Park Demand Alternative to reduce the significant recreation impacts associated with the proposed GPU, as well as an additional mitigation measure and reference to General Plan policy and implementation action refinements. The Recirculated Draft PEIR incorporates the previous Draft PEIR by reference, as appropriate. In particular, the previous Draft PEIR document and its appendices are referenced for long and/or technical descriptions of the environmental setting that remain applicable to the updated GPU.

Three project alternatives were analyzed within the Final PEIR (October 2020) document. These included a no project alternative, where the existing General Plan document would remain in effect (Alternative 1); a reduced intensity alternative with two focus areas (55 Freeway/Dyer Road and South Bristol Street) would be reduced to approximately 50 percent of the maximum densities allowed by their respective land use designation (Alternative 2); and build out of the site to be consistent with the Southern California's Association of Regional Government's (SCAG) RTP/SCS projections, which could result in an approximate 75 percent reduction in both the number of allowable units and commercial/industrial square footage (Alternative 3).

The Recirculated Draft PEIR (August 2021) introduces a reduced park demand project (Alternative 4) that reduces residential growth by 11,225 units by eliminating or reducing residential land uses and intensity in the five focus areas. Overall, nonresidential square footage would be reduced by a total of approximately 2.8 million square feet within the focus areas compared to the proposed GPU. New residential growth under this alternative would largely be in currently planned areas that are generally near a number of existing park facilities, with some residential growth would be introduced into two focus areas at substantially lower intensities to reduce the potential impact on park facilities.

As required, the Draft Recirculated PEIR (August 2021) was circulated for public review between August 6, 2021 and September 20, 2021, with the Notice of Availability (NOA) instructing reviewers to only submit comments on the three revised chapters included in the Recirculated Draft PEIR. The comments in the original Final PEIR adequately address comments received on portions of the Draft PEIR that have not been recirculated. During the review and comment period, staff held a public hearing to receive comments on the Draft Recirculated PEIR and a work-study session with the Planning Commission on September 13, 2021.

The Draft PEIR (August 2020), Final PEIR (October 2020), and Final Recirculated PEIR including all report appendices, are posted on the City's website. <https://www.santa-ana.org/general-plan>

The City has evaluated the comments received from persons and agencies for both the Draft PEIR (August 2020) and Recirculated Draft PEIR (August 2021), and completed

detailed Response to Comments, revisions to the Draft documents including clarifications and/or corrections to typographical errors, and a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP). The MMRP contains mitigation measures to address impacts to air quality, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, noise, tribal cultural resources, and recreation. The response to comments, MMRP and Final PEIR were published on November 2, 2021 for public review. The Draft PEIR (August 2020) and Draft Recirculated PEIR (August 2021) responses to comments document, revisions to the Draft PEIR, and the MMRP constitute the Final PEIR for the project.

The Final Recirculated PEIR identifies six significant and unavoidable impacts associated with this project, which pertain to Air Quality, Cultural Resources, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Noise, Population and Housing, and Recreation.

City of Santa Ana is within the South Coast Air Basin (Basin). Air quality in the Basin is already significantly impacted and even without any new projects, air quality issues are beyond mitigation. The impact to air quality as a result of General Plan implementation falls into two categories: Operational Emissions impacts which are project specific and cumulative; and Localized Criterial Pollutant and Toxic Air Contaminants (TAC) Impacts which are related to increased density and proximity of residential land uses to transit and commercial centers.

Cultural Resource impacts result from the proposed General Plan allowing development in areas that have historic resources identified by previous cultural resource surveys, with development in these areas potentially causing the disturbance of historic resources in the plan area.

Greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) impacts are project specific and cumulative. They are attributed to ongoing operational impacts of potential future businesses. The threshold for GHG would exceed established ratios thresholds under Executive Order S-03-05.

Noise impacts are also project specific and cumulative. They are attributed to ongoing operational impacts of potential future businesses, as well as the location of sensitive receptors in relationship to noise generating activities. Further, buildout of the General Plan update would expose residents to projects generating traffic noise.

Population and housing impacts associated with the General Plan buildout related to the anticipated growth both in population and housing units would exceed the Orange County Council of Government projections by up to 38 percent, with no feasible mitigation measure to address the issue.

Finally, Recreation impacts from the proposed General Plan may result in substantial physical deterioration of recreational resources and the need to construct or expand City's public parks and recreational facilities to address existing and future demand.

CEQA allows lead agencies to approve projects despite having significant and unavoidable impacts by adopting a statement of overriding considerations. A statement of overriding considerations documents the reasons why an agency chose to approve a project despite its significant and unavoidable impacts based on range of balancing factors, including economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits conveyed by project.

City staff is recommending adoption of a statement of overriding consideration for the General Plan and its implementation actions. In this instance, the economic, social, and other benefits of the General Plan implementation collectively outweigh the significant and unavoidable impacts noted above. Such benefits include the implementation of policies and programs preserving and enhancing community character, increasing community sustainability, providing high-quality and diverse housing opportunities, increasing economic vitality via new and business creation, supporting technological advancements, and maintaining compliance with current law. The acceptance of the noted significant and unavoidable impacts does not mean the City will forego efforts to mitigate the impacts to extent feasible. In addition, future projects will be subject to the discretionary review procedures through which the City will consider project specific environmental impacts and/or subject to regulations to offset impacts. As these reviews occur, decision makers will be updated on the status of application mitigation measures when making decision on such projects.

Public notices for the City Council public hearing were mailed to interested parties, as well as property owners and occupants/tenants in the five Land Use Focus Area and a 500-foot radius from the Focus Area boundaries. In addition, a newspaper posting was published in the Orange County Reporter on November 26, 2021.

### **Airport Land Use Commission Review**

The proposed changes to the Land Use Element to adopt the South Bristol and the 55 Freeway/Dyer Road Focus Areas required the General Plan update to be presented to the Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) for a determination of consistency with their Airport Environs Land Use Plan (AELUP). On October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 the ALUC determined that the General Plan update conflicts with the goals and objectives of the AELUP and voted 5:0 to find the General Plan update inconsistent with their plan. As a result, on October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020, at a special City Council meeting, the Council directed staff to file a Notice of Intent to Overrule the ALUC's determination. The draft City Council resolution for overruling the ALUC's determination has been attached at Exhibit 8.

Based on the analysis provided within this report, staff recommends that the City Council certifying Final Recirculated Program Environmental Impact Report No. 2020-03 (SCH No. 2020029087), including adoption of environmental findings of fact pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, adoption of a Statement of Overriding Considerations, and

adoption of a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program; and adopt a resolution of findings to overrule the John Wayne Airport Orange County Airport Land Use Commission's determination that the Proposed General Plan Update is inconsistent with the Airport Environs Land Use Plan.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact associated with approval of this action.

**EXHIBIT(S)**

1. EIR Resolution, including Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP)
2. General Plan Amendment Resolution
3. General Plan 2045 – Santa Ana Beyond Link (December 2021)
4. Clarifications to Draft General Plan
5. Final Recirculated Environmental Impact Report Link
6. Planning Commission staff report, exhibits, presentation, and written public comments of November 8, 2021 are incorporated herein by reference and can be viewed at the following link: [Item - PrimeGov Portal](#)
7. List of Parcel with General Plan Land Use Designation Changes
8. Orange County Airport Land Use Commission Override Resolution

Submitted By: Minh Thai, Executive Director, Planning and Building Agency

Approved By: Kristine Ridge, City Manager