



NOTICE OF PREPARATION

Program Environmental Impact Report Irvine 2045 Focused General Plan Update

Date: July 21, 2023

To: Reviewing Agencies, Interested Parties, and Organizations

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Program Environmental Impact Report for the Irvine 2045 General Plan Update

Scoping Meeting: Tuesday, August 1, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.
Virtual meeting accessible at the following link:
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85141324890?pwd=eWdCN2NQaURTN21Vd245VmRHWE8zZz09>
Passcode: 085026

Comment Period: July 21, 2023 to August 21, 2023

The City of Irvine (City) is preparing the 2045 Focused General Plan Update (project) that will serve as the long-range vision of the City for the next 20 to 25 years. The City as the lead agency has determined that the project will require the preparation of a Program Environmental Impact Report (Program EIR) in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA; California Public Resources Code, Section 21000 et seq.), and Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR; hereafter CEQA Guidelines, 14 CCR 15000 et seq.). The City has prepared this Notice of Preparation (NOP) in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15082(a) and 15375.

We need to know your views or the views of your agency or organization as to the scope and content of the environmental information that is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the project. If applicable, your agency will need to use the Program EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit(s) or other approval(s) for the project. The project description, location, and the potential environmental effects are contained in the attached materials. Since the City has determined that a Program EIR is required for the project, pursuant to Section 15060(d) of the CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR 15000 et seq.), preparation of an Initial Study is not required and, therefore, one has not been prepared. Due to time limits mandated by state law, your response to this NOP must be submitted at the earliest possible date but no later than the close of the NOP review period, which runs as follows: July 21, 2023 to August 21, 2023. Written comments should be addressed to:

Marika Poynter
City of Irvine
1 Civic Center Plaza
Irvine, CA 92606-5207
mpoynter@cityofirvine.org

Project Title: Irvine 2045 Focused General Plan Update

Project Applicant: City of Irvine

PROJECT SETTING

The City and its sphere of influence (SOI) encompass over 66 square miles located within the coastal and foothill region of central Orange County. Irvine is adjacent to the cities of Newport Beach, Lake Forest, Tustin, Santa Ana, Laguna Hills, Laguna Woods, and Laguna Beach. The City is a growing community with an increasing need for housing to accommodate its population. According to the California Department of Finance (DOF), the City has a total population of 303,051 (including 16,432 living in group quarters), which represents a 43 percent increase since 2010 and a 112 percent increase since 2000. The City of Irvine is the second largest jurisdiction in the County of Orange.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

With the adoption of the certified 2021-2029 Housing Element in May 2022, the City is required to update the appropriate elements of the General Plan to accommodate the residential site inventory from the 2021-2029 Housing Element. This includes updates to the land use element and the circulation element. Additionally, the City would update the open space element, safety element, and noise element to address statutory requirements. The City would introduce an environmental protection and climate action element and would also incorporate health and wellness throughout the updated General Plan. The project would provide long-term policy direction and communicate the vision, values, and goals for the City's physical development and overall quality of life. The project would serve to identify areas of opportunity and provide options to enhance development in key focus areas of the City.

Consistent with the 2021-2029 Housing Element, the project would update the General Plan land use element to support the City's Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) of 23,610 units. To ensure consistency with housing statute, including no-net loss and affirmatively furthering fair housing requirements, the 2021-2029 Housing Element identified adequate sites to accommodate 57,656 new residential units. The City's existing General Plan has a significant amount of unbuilt non-residential square footage available throughout the planning areas identified in the 2021-2029 Housing Element site inventory that would be available to convert to residential at a rate of 60 percent. This results in a residential equivalent of 23,113 units. Additionally, there are a remaining 4,249 units entitled throughout the City in the General Plan. As a result, the City would need to add an additional 30,294 new units to the General Plan. Specifically, to accommodate the City's RHNA requirement for new residential units, the project would implement 2021-

2029 Housing Element through the introduction of additional residential and/or mixed-use development throughout the City using overlay zones and/or specific plans to allow greater flexibility for property owners and developers. The overlays would promote higher density residential and mixed use in three main focus areas, targeted retail centers, conversion of hotel/motel, and on religious and school sites. The majority of the future residential growth would occur in the three main focus areas that are most suited for new growth and development as they are located near existing job centers, are along major travel corridors with access to existing and future public transit opportunities. Descriptions of these three key focus areas with the majority of the future residential potential are presented below:

- Focus Area 1 – Greater Irvine Business Complex Area: Planning Area 36 (Irvine Business Complex) and Planning Area 19 (Rancho San Joaquin) : Focus Area 1 includes expanding a residential and/or mixed-use overlay to the entire Irvine Business Complex (IBC) and the specific sites identified in the 2021-2029 Housing Element site inventory located in Rancho San Joaquin. Over the past 20 years, the IBC has transitioned from predominantly non-residential uses to a mixed-use area that is currently governed by the 2007 IBC Vision Plan. Under the existing General Plan, the IBC has a maximum of 15,000 units. The IBC continues to be one of the two employment centers located within the City and remains an opportunity area for high density residential. The IBC is connected to the Tustin Transportation Center (Metrolink and OCTA transit service) through the iShuttle and has direct access to Interstate 405, State Route 73, and State Route 55. The project proposes a new residential overlay and/or specific plan that would increase the total number of residential permitted in the Greater Irvine Business Complex Area by an additional 15,000 units.
- Focus Area 2 - Greater Spectrum Area: Planning Area 13 (Irvine Spectrum 4), Planning Area 31 (Irvine Spectrum 6), Planning Area 32 (Irvine Spectrum 3), and Planning Area 33 (Irvine Spectrum Center): The Greater Spectrum Area incorporates three non-residential planning areas (13, 31, and 32) that are located adjacent to the Irvine Spectrum Center area, are emerging employment centers, are located near the Irvine Transportation Center (ITC – Metrolink, Amtrak, and OCTA transit service), and with the introduction of a residential overlay and/or specific plan could transition to a network of micro-villages or residential nodes, connected by a variety of multi-modal and complete street strategies that provide new opportunities for residents and businesses in Irvine. The project proposes a new residential overlay and/or specific plan that would introduce a total number of 20,000 residential units to the Greater Spectrum Area.
- Focus Area 3 – Great Park Neighborhood Transit Village: Planning Area 51 (Great Park Neighborhood): The Great Park Neighborhood is an existing mixed-use planning area that features a mix of residential products at varying densities surrounding the Irvine Great Park. There are approximately 1,900 units remaining in the existing General Plan intensity, but a significant amount of the planning area remains vacant with no additional residential intensity. The project would increase

the number of residential units permitted in the Great Park with a focus on higher density product located near or adjacent to the ITC. The Great Park Neighborhood Transit Village area would have direct access to Focus Area 2, the Greater Spectrum Area through a network of proposed multi-modal improvements. The project would increase the residential intensity in Planning Area 51 by an additional 13,989 residential units.

The remaining units required by the City's RHNA assessment would be accommodated outside of the aforementioned focus areas, throughout the City, using the same residential overlays and/or specific plans. The project would encourage a micro-village approach, building upon the City's current approach to master planning in the City of Irvine. Utilizing a micro-village approach to planning would ensure that future development is balanced with a mix of uses including neighborhood supporting square footage, open space, and non-residential square footage that are connected through multi-modal transportation and complete street strategies. Figure 1 presents the boundaries of the three focus areas.

PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The City has determined that a Program EIR will be prepared for the project. Section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines states that a Program EIR 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 issuance of rules, regulations, plans, or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program; (4) as individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar environmental effects that can be mitigated in similar ways.

The Program EIR will be prepared in accordance with the requirements of CEQA Statute and Guidelines, as amended. Pursuant to Section 15146 of the CEQA Guidelines, the degree of specificity in the Program EIR will correspond to the degree of specificity involved in the project. The Program EIR will focus on the primary effects that can be expected to follow from adoption of the project and would allow future development in the three specific focus areas to move forward with streamlined environmental review. Specific development or construction projects within the three focus areas may be required to prepare subsequent site-specific analysis as required by the Program EIR, including traffic and/or access related studies. Based on the preliminary analysis of the project, the following environmental impact categories and their associated impact thresholds will be examined in the Program EIR: Aesthetics, Agricultural/Forest Resources, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Energy, Geology and Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazard/Hazardous Materials, Hydrology/Water Quality, Land Use/Planning, Mineral Resources, Noise, Population/Housing, Public Services, Recreation, Transportation, Tribal Cultural Resources, Utilities/Service Systems, and Wildfire.

The Draft Program EIR will address the short- and long-term effects of the project on the environment. A mitigation framework will be proposed for impacts that are determined to

be significant. A mitigation monitoring program will also be developed as required by Section 15100 of the CEQA Guidelines.

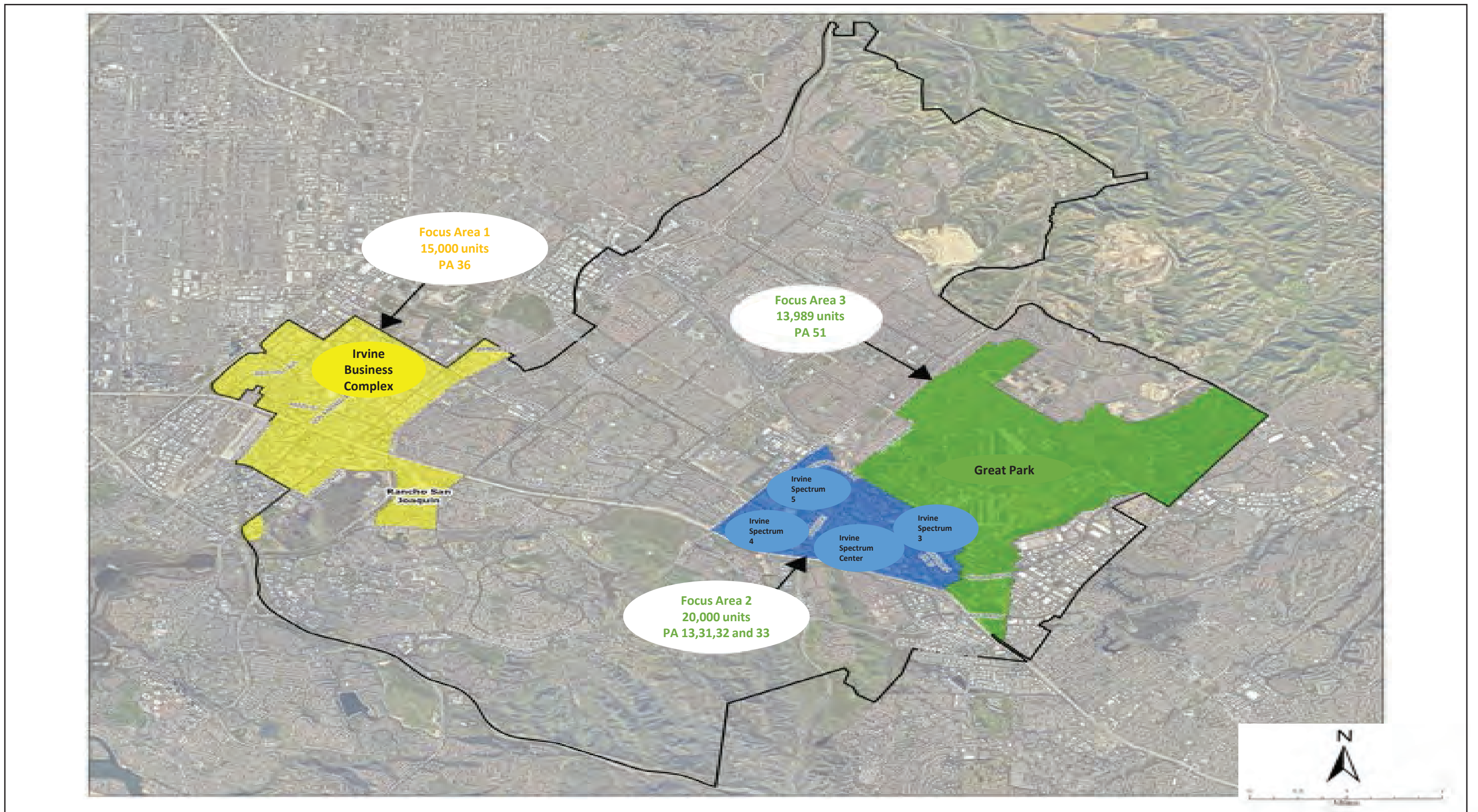
SCOPING MEETING

Pursuant to Section 21083.9(a)(2) of CEQA (California Public Resources Code, Section 21000 et seq.), scoping meetings are required for projects that may have statewide, regional, or area-wide environmental impacts. The City has determined that this project meets this threshold. A public scoping meeting has been scheduled and will be held by the City on Tuesday, August 1, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. The meeting will be virtual and can be accessed at the link provided above. Verbal and written comments regarding the scope of the proposed Program EIR will be accepted at the meeting. Written comments can also be mailed to the above-mentioned address, addressed to Marika Poynter, before the close of the NOP public comment period.

Please contact Marika Poynter at mpoynter@cityofirvine.org with any questions regarding this notice or the scoping meeting.


Marika A Poynter
Manager of Planning Services


Date



Legend

	Focus Area 1 - PA 36 and 19
	Focus Area 2 - PA 13, 31, 32 and 33
	Focus Area 3 - PA 51

FIGURE 1
2045 Focused General Plan Update Focus Areas