

Notice of Preparation

To: EIR & Notice of Preparation Mailing List

SUBJECT: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report

Lead Agency:

Consulting Firm: (if applicable)

Agency Name: City of San Luis Obispo

EIR to be prepared by:

Department Name: Community Development

Firm Name: To be determined

Street Address: 919 Palm Street

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip: San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

City/State/Zip: _____

Contact: Shawna Scott (781-7176; sscott@slocity.org)

Contact: _____

The City of San Luis Obispo will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an environmental impact report (EIR) for the project identified below. We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information, which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for this project. The project description, location, and the potential environmental effects are summarized in the attached materials. A copy of the Initial Study and additional background information is available here:

www.slocity.org/government/department-directory/community-development/documents-online/environmental-review-documents/-folder-1911.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date, but **not later than 30 days** after receipt of this notice. Please send your response to the attention of Shawna Scott, Associate Planner for the City of San Luis Obispo Community Development Department, at the address shown above. We will need the name of a contact person in your agency.

Project Title: Froom Ranch Specific Plan Project

Project Location: The Froom Ranch Specific Plan Area consists of two parcels located at 12165 and 12393 Froom Ranch Way, totaling approximately 110 acres (ANP 067-241-030 and 067-241-031) within unincorporated San Luis Obispo County, and adjacent to City of San Luis Obispo city limits. The site is located immediately west of Los Osos Valley Road between U.S. 101 and the Irish Hills Plaza.

Project Description: The project includes a Specific Plan, General Plan Amendment, and related actions that would allow for the development of the Froom Ranch Specific Plan Area, which is identified as Specific Plan 3 (SP-3), Madonna on LOVR, in the City's General Plan. The Land Use Element requires that a Specific Plan be adopted prior to annexation. The project will be primarily residential with some commercial development in the northeast portion of the site closest to Los Osos Valley Road and the adjacent Irish Hills Plaza. A major component of the planned residential uses is a Life Plan Community (LPC) known as Villaggio. Villaggio would provide a variety of different unit types for independent senior housing as well as access to higher levels of care such as Assisted Living, Memory Care, and Skilled Nursing, when needed. Additional residential uses in the northern portion of the site will be multiple-family. As required by the Land Use Element, a minimum of 50% of the project site must be designated Open Space; the current Plan designates approximately 51% of the site as Open Space. The Specific Plan also includes a Neighborhood Trailhead Park to connect to the Irish Hills Natural Reserve, which may incorporate onsite historic structures. The treatment and potential use of the historic structures is currently under evaluation by the applicant.

Date: July 10, 2017

Signature: 

Title: Associate Planner, City of San Luis Obispo Community Development Department

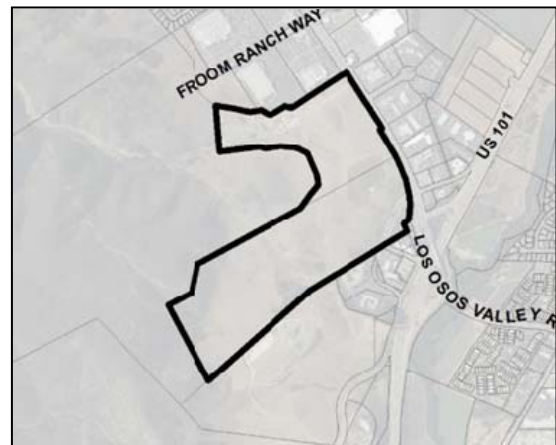
Reference: California Administrative Code, Title 14 (CEQA Guidelines) Sections 15082(a), 15103, 15375 (Revised October 1989)

NOTICE OF PREPARATION ATTACHMENT FROOM RANCH SPECIFIC PLAN PROJECT

The City of San Luis Obispo, as Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), is requesting comments on the scope and content of an environmental impact report (EIR) being prepared for the Froom Ranch Specific Plan Project, as described in this Notice of Preparation. Anticipated project entitlements are described below and issues anticipated being analyzed in the EIR are listed below and described in the Initial Study. The Initial Study and additional background information is available here: www.slocity.org/government/department-directory/community-development/documents-online/environmental-review-documents/-folder-1911. The City requests your written comments on the NOP by August 14, 2017 and also invites you to attend a public scoping meeting to be held on July 26, 2017, as detailed below. Please contact Shawna Scott, Associate Planner at (805) 781-7176 or sscott@slocity.org or Contract Planner and Project Manager Emily Creel at (805) 543-7095 x6814 or ecreel@swca.com if you have any questions.

Project Location

The Froom Ranch Specific Plan Area consists of two parcels located at 12165 and 12393 Froom Ranch Way, totaling approximately 110 acres (APN 067-241-030 and 067-241-031) within unincorporated San Luis Obispo County, and adjacent to City of San Luis Obispo city limits. The site is located immediately west of Los Osos Valley Road between U.S. 101 and the Irish Hills Plaza. Based on a preliminary review, the project site is not on the list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and there are no records of previous or existing sources of hazardous materials onsite.



Discretionary Permits

In order to implement development on the site consistent with the proposed project, the following entitlements will need to be processed:

1. General Plan Amendment/Pre-Zoning
 2. Specific Plan
 3. Development Plan/Tentative Tract Map(s)
 4. Architectural Review
 5. Annexation
1. **General Plan Amendment and Pre-Zoning.** The applicant envisions a Specific Plan that differs somewhat from the performance standards identified in the Land Use Element; therefore, the project would require a General Plan Amendment to accommodate some aspects of future development under the Specific Plan. Because the site is currently unincorporated, it will need to be pre-zoned before annexation to the City could be approved.
 2. **Specific Plan.** The City of San Luis Obispo Land Use and Circulation Elements (LUCE) identifies Froom Ranch as a Specific Plan Area (SP-3, Madonna on LOVR) that requires the adoption of a Specific Plan prior to any development. The applicant is preparing a Specific Plan to accommodate the proposed development consistent with guidance for development contained in Section 8.1.5 of the Land Use Element.

3. **Development Plan/Tentative Tract Map(s).** The applicant will submit tract maps to implement the provisions of the Specific Plan. The Tract Map establishes the proposed lot lines to allow individual ownership of properties and to layout the required infrastructure and utilities.
4. **Architectural Review** – Ultimately final architectural review of housing, commercial buildings, and some site facilities will be needed. The ARC will take an early look at design guidance in the development plan and provide comments.
5. **Annexation.** If the project is approved, the City would initiate the annexation process with the San Luis Obispo Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo). Annexation will depend on the City's ability to address key issues to LAFCo, including the ability to provide public services to the site (including water) and the nature of a tax-sharing arrangement with San Luis Obispo County.

In addition, the project will need to be formally reviewed by the Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) for consistency with the Airport Land Use Plan. Other advisory bodies that will weigh in on aspects of the project development include the Parks & Recreation Commission reviewing park proposals, Cultural Heritage Committee regarding the proposed use/treatment of historic structures, and the Bicycle Advisory Committee advising on the proposed bicycle trail network.

Probable Environmental Effects/Issues Scoped for EIR

The EIR will be a full-scope document, which covers all environmental issue areas as summarized in the preliminary Initial Study and as required by State CEQA Guidelines Article 9, Contents of Environmental Impact Reports. Issue areas identified in the Initial Study as requiring evaluation in the EIR and that may be determined to be potentially significant include:

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

In addition, the following anticipated key issues are highlighted and summarized below.

Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources Due to Development Above the 150-foot Elevation

The applicant's request includes a General Plan Amendment to modify the current language presented in City of San Luis Obispo Land Use Element (LUE) Policy 6.4.7.H to allow for hillside development above the 150-foot elevation. The EIR will evaluate the potential impacts to visual, biological, and hydrological resources, potential geologic and soils hazards, and consistency with plans and policies specifically identified to protect these sensitive resources. Additional analysis including photo simulations of the proposed development within the hillside context will be necessary to determine if the project could be designed to protect hillside views, consistent with LUE hillside development policies and LUE resource protection policies, Open Space Policies protecting scenic vistas, and Circulation Element policies which call for the protection of views from roadways designated as having scenic value.

Potential Impacts as a Result of Froom Creek Realignment

The proposed project includes the realignment and restoration of Froom Creek within the property boundaries, and construction of pathways. City creeks and wetlands management objectives applicable to Froom Creek include:

- A. Maintaining and restoring natural conditions and fish and wildlife habitat;
- B. Preventing loss of life and minimizing property damage from flooding;
- C. Providing recreational opportunities which are compatible with fish and wildlife habitat, flood protection, and use of adjacent private properties.
- D. Recognizing and distinguishing between those sections of creeks and Laguna Lake which are in urbanized areas, such as the Downtown core, and sections which are in largely natural areas. Those sections already heavily impacted by urban development and activity may be appropriate for multiple use whereas creeks and lakeshore in a more natural state shall be managed for maximized ecological value (LUE Section 6.6.1 Creek and Wetlands Management Objectives).

City staff and the applicant have met with resource agencies including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries, Regional Water Quality Control Board, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife to review conceptual plans and determine preliminary information that will be required for the agencies to formally respond to the project. Key considerations include review of hydrological modeling to determine the gradient and width necessary to provide suitable conditions for steelhead migration from the upper pools of Froom Creek, through the project site, and connecting with San Luis Creek. Additional project details and technical information will be provided by the applicant. Additional analysis will be required to ensure consistency with regulations specific to floodway and floodplain management.

Potential Impacts to Historic Resources

The Froom Ranch Historic Complex is located within the project site, approximately at and below the 150-foot elevation line. This complex is not currently accessible to the public, and is generally blocked from public view. The applicant submitted an evaluation of prehistoric and historic resources present on the project site (First Carbon Solutions 2015), which determined that the Froom Ranch complex (seven structures) is historically significant under National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources, and City of San Luis Obispo Historic Resources criteria. The LUE states that the proposed project design should be sensitive to environmental constraints, including historic structures, and adjust accordingly through design. The City Conservation and Open Space Element (COSE) provides additional specific policy direction including the following:

- Significant historic and architectural resources should be identified, preserved, and rehabilitated.
- Historically or architecturally significant buildings shall not be demolished or substantially changed in outward appearance, unless doing so is necessary to remove a threat to health and safety and other means to eliminate or reduce the threat to acceptable levels are infeasible.
- Buildings and other cultural features that are not historically significant but which have historical or architectural value should be preserved or relocated where feasible. Where preservation or relocation is not feasible, the resource shall be documented and the information retained in a secure but publicly accessible location. An acknowledgement of the resource should be incorporated within the site through historic signage and the reuse or display of historic materials and artifacts.
- Changes or additions to historically or architecturally significant buildings should be consistent with the original structure and follow the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Buildings. New buildings in historical districts, or on historically significant sites, should reflect the form, spacing and materials of nearby historic structures. The street appearance of buildings which contribute to a neighborhood's architectural character should be maintained" (COSE Section 3.2 and 3.3, Historical and Architectural Resources and Policies).

Full analysis of historic resources in the EIR will be necessary. The EIR will include an evaluation of the proposed project, in addition to feasible alternatives to mitigate potential impacts to historic resources. The EIR will also provide a preliminary assessment of the project's consistency with the General Plan and Historic Preservation Ordinance and Guidelines.

Development of a Reasonable Range of Alternatives

Factors that will influence the formulation of alternative project configurations include considerations of project objectives, site suitability, economic viability, availability of infrastructure, General Plan consistency, and the proponent's control over alternative sites. The EIR will discuss the rationale for selection of alternatives that are feasible and therefore, merit in-depth consideration, and which are infeasible (e.g., failed to meet Project objectives or would not avoid significant environmental effects) and therefore rejected. As directed by the City Council, the EIR will include a project alternative that locates all development below the 150-foot elevation line. The City has requested this design alternative from the applicant for incorporation and analysis in the EIR. The Alternatives Analysis will also include an Alternative that retains and restores Froom Creek in its current location. In order to present actionable alternatives in the EIR, the alternatives chapter will be comprehensive, provide clear descriptions and graphics, and clearly identify potential impacts, associated levels of significance, and identification of the mitigation measures that would be required to reduce potential impacts. Additional alternatives are likely, but are not identified at this time.

Public Scoping Meeting

A public scoping meeting has been scheduled to allow for any interested persons to provide input on issues to be discussed in the EIR:

Date and Time: July 26, 2017 at 6:00 p.m.

Place: 990 Palm Street (City Council Chamber upstairs)

The meeting is an opportunity for City staff to gather information from the public regarding the potential environmental impacts of the project that need to be evaluated in the EIR. It is not intended to be a hearing on the merits of the project. Therefore, members of the public should keep their comments focused on potential significant changes to the environment that may occur as a direct result of project development.