



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: COUNTY MANAGER

File #: 20-106

Board Meeting Date: 3/10/2020

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Michael Callagy, County Manager
Adam Ely, Project Development Unit Director

Subject: Certification of the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Cordilleras Health System Replacement Project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act; Adoption of Statement of Overriding Considerations

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution certifying the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the Cordilleras Health System Replacement Project as complete and adequate pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act and adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations related to environmental impacts identified in the FEIR that cannot be mitigated to less than significant.

BACKGROUND:

The proposed project will construct the Cordilleras Health Campus located at 200 Edmonds Road in Redwood City. The project will replace the existing Cordilleras Mental Health Center, which is over 60 years old and has outlived its useful life, with new facilities offering a total of approximately 121 beds that meet modern standards of care for individuals experiencing severe mental illness.

Construction would include four single-story licensed and locked Mental Health Rehabilitation Center (MHRC) buildings, each with 16 beds, and one licensed and unlocked adult residential facility (co-housing), with 57 beds, on two floors, over a community center. Staffing levels would increase from 89 to 107 full time equivalents to accommodate the increase in facility capacity and to provide higher staff to patient care ratios consistent with current best practices for mental health care. The new facility would include parking for 110 cars to accommodate staff and guests.

A new 26 foot wide service and fire access loop road extending from Edmonds Road would provide access to the four new MHRC buildings. A new 318,000 gallon water storage tank is proposed to provide additional water service for the site to meet new demand and fire flow requirements. The new tank would be a 24 foot tall, 48 foot diameter bolted steel tank located adjacent to the existing 150,000-gallon tank serving the site.

Consistent with the County Municipal Green Building Policy, and in keeping with the County's goal of demonstrating leadership in sustainability, Cordilleras will be designed to operate at Zero Net Energy (ZNE) and to achieve certification in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED).

DISCUSSION:

Consistent with the CEQA Guidelines set forth in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) focuses on the potentially significant direct and indirect environmental impacts that could result from implementation of the proposed project. These potential impacts are outlined in the EIR, available at <https://cmo.smcgov.org/public-notifications> and are summarized below.

Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the EIR was published on July 1, 2015 to invite comment on the scope and content of the environmental review; the comment period closed on July 31, 2015. Two comment letters were received in response to the NOP and are included in the Draft EIR Appendix A. The County held a public scoping meeting on September 17, 2015 for the purpose of inviting public comments on the project. Public Notice of the scoping meeting was distributed to the adjacent property residents, homeowner and neighborhood associations, local community agencies, and interest groups. Notice was also published in the newspaper of local circulation. Three oral comments were received at the public meeting and are included in the Draft EIR Appendix A. No comment cards were received.

The Draft EIR became available for public review and comment for 45 days beginning November 1, 2019 and ending on December 23, 2019. Two comment letters were received. In addition, this Board held a Study Session and Public Hearing on December 3, 2019 to receive further comment on the Draft EIR. No comments were received.

The EIR identified the following categories of potentially significant environmental impacts associated with the Project: air quality, biology, geology, hazards, hydrology/water quality, noise, traffic, utilities, and wildfire risks.

The EIR identifies mitigation measures that are incorporated into the Project. Mitigation measures identified in the EIR include the following, among others:

- Utilization of on-site electrical hook-ups instead of diesel-powered equipment where feasible and construction equipment with a rated power output of 50 horsepower or greater meeting United States Environmental Protection Agency Tier III Emission Standards
- Protection of environmentally sensitive habitats
- Protection of special status plant and wildlife species
- Adherence to relevant California Fish and Game Code requirements relating to nesting bird and roosting bats
- Tree replacement and habitat conservation
- Geotechnical report recommendations
- Demolition debris management
- Storm water runoff detention facilities
- Noise reduction through attenuation window treatments and equipment controls
- Wildfire defensible space management and post event slope inspection

Adoption of the resolution includes adoption of a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (Exhibit A to the resolution) which will ensure project compliance with all mitigation measures identified in the EIR.

With the mitigation measures identified in the EIR, all potentially significant impacts of the Project would be reduced to a less than significant level, except for two impacts that may be significant and are unavoidable: 1) an increase in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by 18 new employees that exceed the regional average VMT; and 2) and increase in risk of wildfire by project construction in a high fire hazard area.

The EIR concluded that while the County does implement transportation demand management measures to reduce countywide VMT, due to the location of the Cordilleras facility, staffing shift requirements, and the limited high quality mass transit service in the project area, there are no feasible mitigation measures to reduce new employee VMT by 40 percent to a level less than the regional average.

The project site is located in a high fire hazard area. The project incorporates multiple measures to minimize the risk of wildfire including a fire loop access road, new water supply tank to meet fire flow requirements, fire-resistant building materials, and implementation of a 100 foot radius defensible space zone. The EIR concluded that the potential for project development to exacerbate wildfire risk remains significant unavoidable.

Because the project includes environmental impacts that cannot be mitigated to a less than significant level, pursuant to CEQA, the resolution certifying the FEIR incorporates a Statement of Overriding Considerations (Exhibit B to the resolution), which identifies the benefits of the proposed project that outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental impact.

As noted above, the County received multiple comment letters in response to the Draft EIR and has prepared responses to all comments as required by CEQA. The comment letters and responses are included as chapters 3 and 4, respectively, of the FEIR.

The FEIR included the following modifications to the Draft EIR:

- Additional information that clarifies and amplifies the project background, setting, description, and analysis
- Text changes clarifying the analysis, making minor text corrections, or fixing grammatical or typographic errors

These revisions do not constitute material changes in the project description, environmental setting, conclusions of the environmental analysis, or in the mitigation requirements incorporated into the project or otherwise provide significant new information that would require recirculation of the Draft EIR pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5.

County Counsel has reviewed and approved the resolution as to form.

CONCLUSION

Adoption of the resolution by the Board of Supervisors would result in no fiscal impact to Net County Cost.