

NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND SCOPING MEETING

Program Environmental Impact Report

Fairfield Forward 2050: City of Fairfield Comprehensive General Plan Update, Housing Element Update, and Climate Action Plan

Date: August 16, 2021

To: Responsible and Trustee Reviewing Agencies, Interested Parties, and Organizations

Project Title: Fairfield Forward 2050: City of Fairfield General Plan Update, Housing Element Update, and Climate Action Plan

Comment Period: August 16th-September 16th, 2021 by 5:00 PM PST

Scoping Meeting: Wednesday, September 8, 2021 at 6:00PM PST
Planning Commission Meeting
City Council Chambers, 1000 Webster Street, Fairfield CA, 94533

Lead Agency: City of Fairfield

Contact: Amy Kreimeier, Senior Planner
Planning Division
akreimeier@fairfield.ca.gov
Office 707-428-7450
1000 Webster Street, 2nd Floor
Fairfield, CA 94533

The City of Fairfield (City) is preparing an update of its General Plan, including the Housing Element, which will establish the City's overall approach to development, transportation, environmental quality, and other key topics through 2050. The City is also preparing a Climate Action Plan to address community greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Collectively, these activities are known as the proposed Project (Project). The City has determined that the Project requires 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. The City has prepared this Notice of Preparation (NOP) in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15082(a) and 15375.

The NOP solicits guidance from responsible, trustee, and federal agencies about the scope and content of environmental information to be included in the EIR related to the agencies' statutory responsibilities. The agencies will use the City's EIR when considering their permits or other

approvals related to the Project. The NOP also provides an opportunity for other interested parties to provide the City comments on environmental issues they see as being germane to the Program EIR.

The Project description, location, and topics of probable environmental effects that will be analyzed in the Program EIR are contained in the pages that follow. 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, you are encouraged to submit your response to this NOP before the close of the comment period. Comments must be received no later than 5:00 PM PST, September 16, 2021, as stated on the first page of this NOP. Written comments should be addressed to Amy Kreimeier at the City of Fairfield at the address listed above.

PROJECT SETTING

Fairfield is a diverse and growing community of approximately 117,000 residents, located in central Solano County in the Bay Area within the California Coastal Ranges at the southwestern edge of the Sacramento Valley, just north of the Suisun Bay and salt marsh. The City, which is the Solano County Seat, is located at strategic transportation crossroads at the convergence of interstates 680 and 80 (I-680 and I-80), two of the Bay Area's largest freeways, and at a mid-point between Sacramento and San Francisco (each 45 miles away). Fairfield also provides the eastern gateway to Napa Valley, which lies 15 miles to the west and is easily accessed via Highway 12. In addition, Fairfield is accessible via public transportation, including Fairfield and Suisun Transit (FAST) and Solano Express bus lines, and two Capital Corridor train stations that connect Fairfield to Auburn and San Jose via Sacramento and Oakland. The City is also home to Travis Air Force Base (AFB), which is located four miles east of downtown. Known as the "Gateway to the Pacific," Travis AFB is Fairfield's largest employer and handles more cargo and passenger traffic through its airport than any other military air terminal in the United States. Other important institutions and major employers in the City include the County of Solano; educational institutions like the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District and Solano Community College; medical organizations like NorthBay Healthcare Center, Partnership HealthPlan, and Sutter Fairfield Medical Campus; and food manufacturers like Anheuser Busch and Jelly Belly.

The Planning Area encompasses 278 square miles including the City of Fairfield (approximately 41 square miles) and its Sphere of Influence (SOI) (approximately 11 square miles). The SOI is generally coterminous with the City boundary but includes a handful of areas surrounding the City limits, with the largest section located in the northeast area of the City limits, adjacent to Travis Air Force Base. The Planning Area also includes the surrounding unincorporated areas in Green Valley and Suisun Valley, as in the current General Plan, and the Suisun Marsh Protection Plan area (225 square miles). Although the City of Fairfield does not have jurisdiction in areas outside of its City limits, what happens in those areas bears a relation to the City's planning and must be considered in the General Plan, per California Government Code Section 65300. The City is surrounded by undeveloped hills on its western and northern borders. To its east and northeast are grazing and prairie grasslands. Suisun Valley, one of the county's most productive and intensive agricultural

regions, adjoins Fairfield and separates the central city from the Cordelia planning area. Additionally, between Fairfield and nearby Vacaville to the northeast is the Fairfield-Vacaville-Solano Greenbelt. The Greenbelt was established in 1994 through a Joint Powers Authority between and the two cities and the County, and it prohibits development in the open space designated between the two cities' boundaries. To the south, beyond the neighboring city of Suisun City, is the largest remaining wetland around San Francisco Bay, the Suisun Marsh; the marsh is included in the Planning Area to affirm the City's position of maintaining this area as open space and to ensure its cohesive integration with the community.

The attached Figure 1 shows the City's regional location and Figure 2 shows the General Plan Planning Area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project involves a comprehensive update to all elements of the General Plan. The Housing Element will be updated to accommodate the City's 6th Cycle Regional Housing Need Assessment (RHNA) allocation. Additionally, a Climate Action Plan will be prepared that includes a community-wide inventory of GHG emissions and a strategy for reducing them to achieve State-mandated targets. The General Plan Update is underway, and significant community input has been gathered through community meetings and workshops, pop up outreach, and an online survey. Information on community input gathered and work completed to date are available at the project website: www.fairfieldforward.com.

The Fairfield General Plan Update will have all elements required by State law plus additional elements to incorporate strategies for achieving the plan vision, complying with new State law enacted since the Fairfield General Plan was last comprehensively updated, and addressing emerging trends and new technologies. The General Plan is anticipated to have the following elements: Land Use; Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation; Circulation; Economic Development; Health and Safety; Sustainability; Public Health; Public Services; Community Design; Agriculture; and Travis Air Force Base Protection; these elements may be combined or further separated out when the General Plan is drafted.

In June 2021, the City Council and Planning Commission reviewed and indicated support for the Draft Vision and Guiding Principles to guide the General Plan, including the following vision:

“Fairfield builds upon its strengths—a charming downtown, thriving and diverse neighborhoods, economic assets, and inviting and attractive natural surroundings and agricultural and ecological riches—to blossom into a complete, vibrant city, a place renowned for walkable, affordable, and pleasant neighborhoods with ample open space amenities; economic prosperity and opportunity; social stability and equity; and cultural, entertainment and recreation possibilities.”

Guiding principles for the future of the community include the following:

- Foster Fairfield as a community of vibrant, diverse, connected neighborhoods, with easy access to shopping, entertainment, and recreation.
- Improve Fairfield's transportation network with safe and connected walking and biking facilities, accessible and reliable public transit, and new transportation technology.
- Achieve a resilient, dynamic, and competitive local economy that offers opportunities across the economic spectrum.
- Promote housing and support a diverse array of housing types to meet the needs of all segments of the population.
- Preserve Fairfield's status as a distinctive community surrounded by and connected to open space and agriculture.
- Emphasize environmental sustainability.
- Achieve a healthy and safe community for all.
- Foster revitalization in the city's core and along key corridors, building on the momentum of recent planning efforts, including the Heart of Fairfield and Train Station specific plans.
- Create community cohesion and sense of place by celebrating and showcasing Fairfield's diversity.

PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The Program EIR will describe existing environmental resources and current conditions in the Planning Area, evaluate the environmental impacts of implementing the project, and identify feasible mitigation measures and project alternatives that may lessen or avoid adverse environmental impacts. The analysis will focus on the reasonably foreseeable direct and indirect physical environmental effects that could result from implementation of the project.

The following CEQA environmental issue areas will be addressed in the EIR:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise and Vibration
- Population and Housing

- Public Services, Recreation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Transportation and Traffic
- Wildfire Hazards

The Planning Area does not contain any land designated or zoned for timberland production or other forestry-related uses. Thus, the topics of Forestry Resources will be excluded from the EIR.

SCOPING MEETING

Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21083.9(a)(2), 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 at a regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting, on Wednesday, **September 8, 2021 starting at 6:00 PM in the City Council Chambers, 1000 Webster Street, Fairfield, CA 94533**. Verbal comments regarding the scope of the proposed Program EIR will be accepted at the meeting. Written comments can also be mailed or emailed to the above-mentioned address, addressed to Amy Kreimeier, before the close of the NOP public comment period.

Please contact Amy Kreimeier at 707-428-7450 or akreimeier@fairfield.ca.gov with any questions regarding this notice or the scoping meeting.

Amy Kreimeier

Amy Kreimeier
Senior Planner

8-16-21

Date

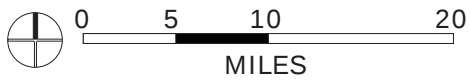
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Figure I -2: Planning Area

