

## **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 - Overview of the CEQA Process**

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) is prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with the implementation of the Solano360 Draft Specific Plan Project (State Clearinghouse No. 2011092067). This document is prepared in conformance with CEQA (California Public Resources Code, Section 21000, et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15000, et seq.). This Draft EIR is intended to serve as an informational document for the public agency decision makers and the public regarding the proposed project.

#### **1.1.1 - Vision Plan Process/Project Background**

This Draft EIR analyzes the Solano360 Draft Specific Plan (Plan), which was developed as a result of the City of Vallejo, the Solano County Fair Association, and the County of Solano’s joint visioning process for the redevelopment of the Fairgrounds site culminating in the preparation of the Solano360 Vision Report.

#### **1.1.2 - Project-Level EIR**

This Draft EIR is a project-level environmental document that analyzes all phases of the proposed Entertainment Area and all phases of the proposed fairgrounds improvements at a project level. The County of Solano has commissioned the preparation of this Draft EIR to disclose the potential environmental effects that may result from the construction and operation of the project in accordance with the requirements of CEQA.

For the purposes of environmental review in this Draft EIR, the areas designated for public development, specifically the Fairgrounds parcels, are referred to as Fairgrounds throughout this document. The areas designated for private development, specifically the Entertainment Mixed Use (EMU) and Entertainment Commercial (EC) parcels and surrounding open space areas, are referred to as the Entertainment Area throughout this document.

#### **Entertainment Area**

The land use concept in the Plan is intended to facilitate upgrading and expansion of the Fairgrounds, development of “Entertainment- Mixed Use” venues and facilities that may be feasible in the near-term, and creation of a larger parcel for a future “Entertainment-Commercial” use as a new, major anchor or entertainment “gate.” The entertainment project area would authorize up to 327,571 square feet of retail, commercial, entertainment, and office space (as a substitute for other EMU uses) on 48.8 acres at time of full buildout. According to the Plan, three parking structures would also be constructed at the site. Section 2, Project Description provides a complete description of the project.

## **Fairgrounds**

The fairgrounds portion of the site would include up to 149,500 square feet of new building space at the time of full buildout including a new exposition hall and new concert arena/grandstand cover. All existing fair facilities would be demolished with the exception of Gibson Hall, McCormack Hall, the trash shed, the maintenance shed, the livestock building, sheep barn, and associated landscape, circulation, and loading areas. As stated above, a complete project description is provided in Section 2.

### **1.1.3 - Purpose and Authority**

This Draft EIR provides a project-level analysis of the environmental effects of the proposed Entertainment Area of the project and the proposed fairgrounds area of the project. The environmental impacts of the proposed project are analyzed in the EIR to the degree of specificity appropriate, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15146. This document addresses any potentially significant adverse environmental impacts that may be associated with the planning, construction, or operation of the project. It also identifies appropriate and feasible mitigation measures and alternatives that may be adopted to significantly reduce or avoid these impacts.

CEQA requires that an EIR contain, at a minimum, certain specific elements. These elements are contained in this Draft EIR and include:

- Table of Contents
- Introduction
- Executive Summary
- Project Description
- Environmental Setting, Significant Environmental Impacts, and Mitigation Measures
- Cumulative Impacts
- Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts
- Alternatives to the Proposed Project
- Growth-Inducing Impacts
- Effects Found Not To Be Significant
- Areas of Known Controversy

### **1.1.4 - Lead Agency Determination**

The County of Solano is designated as the lead agency for the project. CEQA Guidelines Section 15367 defines the lead agency as “. . . the public agency, which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project.” Other public agencies may use this Draft EIR in the decision-making or permit process and consider the information in this Draft EIR along with other information that may be presented during the CEQA process, including, but not limited to, the City of Vallejo. The City will serve as a responsible agency pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15381 because the project site is located within the City of Vallejo. As discussed above, the County of Solano is

designated as the lead agency for the project because they have principal responsibility for carrying out the Fairgrounds project.

This Draft EIR was prepared by Michael Brandman Associates, an environmental consultant. Prior to public review, it was extensively reviewed and evaluated by the County of Solano. This Draft EIR reflects the independent judgment and analysis of the County of Solano as required by CEQA. Lists of organizations and persons consulted and the report preparation personnel are provided in Section 8 of this Draft EIR.

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## 1.2 - Scope of the EIR

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This Draft EIR addresses the potential environmental effects of the proposed project. The County of Solano issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the proposed project on September 9, 2011 for the statutory 30-day public review period. In order to allow additional time for the submittal of public comments, the NOP was re-issued and the public review period was extended from October 10 to October 26, 2011.

### 1.2.1 - Scoping Meeting

A public scoping meeting was held on Thursday, September 22, 2011, at Vallejo City Hall Council Chambers. The scope of this Draft EIR includes the potential environmental impacts identified in the NOP and issues raised by agencies and the public in response to the NOP. The NOP is contained in Appendix A of this Draft EIR.

Eight comment letters were received in response to the NOP. They are listed in Table 1-1 and provided in Appendix A of this Draft EIR.

**Table 1-1: NOP Comment Letters**

Affiliation	Signatory	Date
<b>Public Agencies</b>		
California Department of Toxic Substances Control	Daniel Murphy, Contra Costa/Solano Unit Chief	October 6, 2011
Greater Vallejo Recreation District	Shane McAfee, General Manager	October 7, 2011
California Department of Fish and Game	Carl Wilcox, Regional Manager, Bay Delta Region	October 18, 2011
California Department of Transportation	Gary Arnold, District Branch Chief, Local Development – Intergovernmental Review	October 20, 2011
Solano Transportation Authority	Robert Macaulay, Director of Planning	October 25, 2011

**Table 1-1 (cont.): NOP Comment Letters**

Affiliation	Signatory	Date
<b>Private Parties</b>		
Vallejo Watershed Alliance	Elizabeth Wilkie	October 6, 2011
Citizen	Guillermo Herrera	October 7, 2011
Friends of Lake Chabot	Doug Darling	October 10, 2011
Source: County of Solano, 2011		

### 1.2.2 - Environmental Issues Determined Not To Be Significant

The NOP identified topical areas that were determined not to be significant. An explanation of why each area is determined not to be significant is provided in Section 7, Effects Found Not To Be Significant. These topical areas are as follows:

- Agriculture and Forestry
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Population and Housing
- Recreation
- Urban Decay

In addition, specific subjects within various topical areas were determined not to be significant. Other potentially significant issues are analyzed in these topical areas. However, the following issues are not analyzed:

- State Scenic Highways (Section 3.1, Aesthetics, Light, and Glare)
- Substantially Damage Scenic Resources Within a State Scenic Highway (Section 3.1, Aesthetics, Light, and Glare)
- Septic or Alternative Wastewater Disposal Systems (Section 3.5, Geology, Soils, and Seismicity)
- Public Airports (Section 3.7, Hazards and Hazardous Materials)
- Private Airstrips (Section 3.7, Hazards and Hazardous Materials)

An explanation of why each issue is determined not to be significant is provided in Section 7, Effects Found Not To Be Significant.

### 1.2.3 - Potentially Significant Environmental Issues

The NOP found that the following topical areas may contain potentially significant environmental issues that will require further analysis in the EIR. These sections are as follows:

- Aesthetics, Light, and Glare
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Noise
- Public Services
- Transportation/Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems

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### 1.3 - Organization of the EIR

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This Draft EIR is organized into the following main sections:

- **Section ES: Executive Summary.** This section includes a summary of the proposed project and alternatives addressed in the Draft EIR. A brief description of the areas of controversy and issues to be resolved, and an overview of the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, in addition to a table that summarizes the impacts, mitigation measures, and level of significance after mitigation, are also included in this section.
- **Section 1: Introduction.** This section provides an introduction and overview describing the purpose of this Draft EIR, its scope and components, and its review and certification process.
- **Section 2: Project Description.** This section includes a detailed description of the proposed project, including its location, site, and project characteristics. A discussion of the project objectives, intended uses of the Draft EIR, responsible agencies, and approvals that are needed for the proposed project are also provided.
- **Section 3: Environmental Impact Analysis.** This section analyzes the environmental impacts of the proposed project. Impacts are organized into major topic areas. Each topic area includes a description of the environmental setting, methodology, significance criteria, impacts, mitigation measures, and significance after mitigation. The specific environmental topics that are addressed within Section 3 are as follows:
  - **Section 3.1 – Aesthetics, Light, and Glare:** Addresses the potential visual impacts of development intensification and the overall increase in illumination produced by the project.
  - **Section 3.2 – Air Quality:** Addresses the potential air quality impacts associated with project implementation, as well as consistency with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District 2005 Ozone Strategy.
  - **Section 3.3 – Biological Resources:** Addresses the project’s potential impacts on habitat, vegetation, and wildlife; the potential degradation or elimination of important habitat; and impacts on listed, proposed, and candidate threatened and endangered species.

- **Section 3.4 – Cultural Resources:** Addresses the potential impacts of project development on known historical resources and potential archaeological and paleontological resources.
  - **Section 3.5 – Geology, Soils, and Seismicity:** Addresses the potential impacts the project may have on soils and assesses the effects of project development in relation to geologic and seismic conditions.
  - **Section 3.6 – Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** Addresses project emissions of greenhouse gases.
  - **Section 3.7 - Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** Addresses the potential for the presence of hazardous materials or conditions on the project site and in the project area that may have the potential to impact human health.
  - **Section 3.8 – Hydrology and Water Quality:** Addresses the potential impacts of the project on local hydrological conditions, including drainage areas, and changes in the flow rates.
  - **Section 3.9 – Noise:** Addresses the potential noise impacts during construction and at project buildout from mobile and stationary sources. The section also addresses the impact of noise generation on neighboring uses.
  - **Section 3.10 – Public Services:** Addresses the potential impacts upon service providers, including fire protection, law enforcement, schools, parks, and other public facilities.
  - **Section 3.11 – Transportation:** Addresses the impacts on the local and regional roadway system, public transportation, bicycle, and pedestrian access.
  - **Section 3.12 – Utility and Service Systems:** Addresses the potential impacts upon service providers, including water supply, wastewater, solid waste, and energy providers.
- **Section 4: Cumulative Effects.** This section discusses the cumulative impacts associated with the proposed project, including the impacts of past, present, and probable future projects.
  - **Section 5: Alternatives to the Proposed Project.** This section compares the impacts of the proposed project with three land-use project alternatives: the No Project Alternative, the Fair of the Future + Entertainment Commercial (EC) Only Alternative, and the Fair of the Future Only Alternative. An environmentally superior alternative is identified. In addition, alternatives initially considered but rejected from further consideration are discussed.
  - **Section 6: Other CEQA Considerations.** This section provides a summary of significant environmental impacts, including unavoidable and growth-inducing impacts. In addition, the proposed project’s energy demand is discussed.
  - **Section 7: Effects Found Not To Be Significant.** This section contains analysis of the topical sections not addressed in Section 3.
  - **Section 8: Organizations and Persons Consulted/List of Preparers.** This section contains a full list of persons and organizations that were consulted during the preparation of this Draft

EIR, as well as the authors who assisted in the preparation of the Draft EIR, by name and affiliation.

- **Section 9: References.** This section contains a full list of references that were used in the preparation of this Draft EIR.
- **Appendices:** This section includes all notices and other procedural documents pertinent to the Draft EIR, as well as all technical material prepared to support the analysis.

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## 1.4 - Documents Incorporated by Reference

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As permitted by CEQA Guidelines Section 15150, this Draft EIR has referenced several technical studies, analyses, and previously certified environmental documentation. Information from the documents, which have been incorporated by reference, has been briefly summarized in the appropriate section(s). The relationship between the incorporated part of the referenced document and the Draft EIR has also been described. The documents and other sources that have been used in the preparation of this Draft EIR include but are not limited to:

- City of Vallejo General Plan
- Vallejo Municipal Code
- Solano360 Vision Report
- Solano360 Draft Specific Plan

These documents are specifically identified in Section 9, References, of this Draft EIR. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15150(b), the referenced documents and other sources used in the preparation of the Draft EIR are available for review at the City of Vallejo and/or County of Solano offices at the address shown in Section 1.7 below.

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## 1.5 - Documents Prepared for the Project

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The following technical studies and analyses were prepared for the proposed project:

- Air Quality Analysis, prepared by Michael Brandman Associates. (The analysis is wholly contained in Section 3.2, Air Quality; modeling data is provided in Appendix B.)
- Phase I Cultural Resource Assessment (Appendix D.)
- Preliminary Geotechnical Exploration, prepared by ENGEO Consultants Incorporated (Appendix E.)
- Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, prepared by ENGEO Environmental Incorporated (Appendix F.)

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- Noise Analysis, prepared by Michael Brandman Associates. (The analysis is wholly contained in Section 3.9, Noise; modeling data is provided in Appendix G.)
- Public Service and Utility Response Letters (Appendix H.)
- Water Supply Assessment, prepared by Wagner & Bonsignore Consulting Civil Engineers (Appendix I.)

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**1.6 - EIR Preparation Concurrent with the Draft Specific Plan Preparation**

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The Solano360 Draft Specific Plan and this EIR were prepared concurrently so that project design could consider, address, and mitigate several environmental constraints, including traffic, parking, water quality, and flood control. As discussed above, this EIR is to serve as environmental clearance for both county and city project approvals.

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**1.7 - Review of the Draft EIR**

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Upon completion of the Draft EIR, the County of Solano filed a Notice of Completion (NOC) with the State Office of Planning and Research to begin the public review period (Public Resources Code, Section 21161). Concurrent with the NOC, this Draft EIR has been distributed to responsible and trustee agencies, other affected agencies, surrounding cities, and interested parties, as well as all parties requesting a copy of the Draft EIR in accordance with Public Resources Code 21092(b)(3). During the public review period, the Draft EIR, including the technical appendices, is available for review at the County of Solano offices, the City of Vallejo offices, and Vallejo Library. The address for each location is provided below:

County of Solano  
Resource Management Department  
Planning Services Division  
675 Texas Street, Suite 5500  
Fairfield, CA 94533  
Hours:  
Monday–Friday: 8:00 a.m. to 5 p.m.

City of Vallejo  
Economic Development Department  
Planning Division  
City Hall – Second Floor  
555 Santa Clara Street  
Vallejo, CA 94590  
Hours:  
Monday–Thursday: 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.  
and 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Friday: 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Solano County Library  
John F. Kennedy Branch  
505 Santa Clara Street  
Vallejo, CA 94590  
Hours:  
Monday, Wednesday: 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.  
Tuesday, Thursday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Friday, Saturday: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Sunday: 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Agencies, organizations, and interested parties have the opportunity to comment on the Draft EIR during the 45-day public review period. Written comments on this Draft EIR should be addressed to:

Michelle Heppner, Legislative, Intergovernmental and Public Affairs Officer  
County of Solano  
Solano County Government Center  
675 Texas Street, Suite 6500  
Fairfield, CA 94533  
Phone: 707.784.3002  
Email: mheppner@solanocounty.com

Submittal of electronic comments in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF format is encouraged. Upon completion of the public review period, written responses to all significant environmental issues raised will be prepared and made available for review by the commenting agencies at least 10 days prior to the public hearing before the Solano County Board of Supervisors on the project, at which the certification of the Final EIR will be considered. Comments received and the responses to comments will be included as part of the record for consideration by decision makers for the project.

