NOTICE OF PREPARATION

DATE: April 4, 2013

TO: Responsible Agencies, Organizations, and Interested Parties

LEAD AGENCY: City of El Cerrito
Contact: Sean Moss
10890 San Pablo Avenue
El Cerrito, CA 94530

SUBJECT: Environmental Impact Report for the Eden Housing San Pablo Mixed-Use Senior Apartments Project

In discharging its duties under Section 15021 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the City of El Cerrito (as lead agency, hereinafter City) intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Eden Housing San Pablo Mixed-Use Senior Apartments Project (proposed project, project). In accordance with Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, the City of El Cerrito has prepared this Notice of Preparation to provide responsible agencies and other interested parties with sufficient information describing the proposal and its potential environmental effects. The City has determined that the preparation of an EIR is required and the City will not prepare an Initial Study as permitted in Section 15060(d) of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines (CEQA).

As specified by the CEQA Guidelines, this Notice of Preparation will be circulated for a 30-day review period. The City of El Cerrito welcomes public input during the review period. In the event no response or request for additional time is received by any responsible agency by the end of the review period, the lead agency may presume that the responsible agency has no response.

Comments may be submitted in writing during the review period and addressed to:

Sean Moss
City of El Cerrito
10890 San Pablo Avenue
El Cerrito, CA 94530
SMoss@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us
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The comment period closes on May 6, 2013.

Notice of Scoping Meeting

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15082 (Notice of Preparation and Determination of Scope of EIR), the City of El Cerrito will conduct a scoping meeting for the purpose of soliciting views of adjacent cities, responsible agencies, agencies with jurisdiction by law, trustee agencies, and interested parties requesting notice, as to the appropriate scope and content of the EIR. The scoping meeting for the project will be held on Monday, April 22, 2013, from 5:30 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. at the City of El Cerrito City Council Chambers, located at 10890 San Pablo Avenue in El Cerrito.
A. Project Location and Existing Uses

The 0.92-acre Eden Housing San Pablo Mixed-Use Senior Apartments project site is located in the midtown area of the City of El Cerrito, in Contra Costa County, California (Figure 1). The project site is located in proximity to two Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) stations (El Cerrito del Norte and El Cerrito Plaza), major bus lines, and direct access to Interstate 80.

The project site has a General Plan designation of Mixed Use/Commercial and is zoned Transit-Oriented Mixed Use (TOM). The project site (including APNs 503-010-003-5 and 503-010-014-2; 10860 and 10848 San Pablo Avenue, respectively) is bounded by Schmidt Lane to the northwest, Kearny Street to the northeast, Manila Avenue to the southeast, and San Pablo Avenue (California State Highway 123) to the southwest (Figure 2). The northern parcel is currently improved with an approximately 45,000-square-foot concrete, steel, and wood building, formerly used as a furniture warehouse store. The southern parcel is improved with two wood-frame structures totaling approximately 2,000 square feet, most recently used by the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce and in the past as a flower shop with attached residence (the former Contra Costa Florist/Mabuchi House). All of the buildings are vacant.

Project Characteristics

The project proposes a 63-unit mixed-use senior affordable housing community on a 40,000-square-foot site in El Cerrito’s midtown area, including 62 one-bedroom units and 1 two-bedroom unit. The design includes a commercial ground floor, establishes an articulated urban presence on San Pablo Avenue, and provides a public open space to serve as a gathering place for residents of El Cerrito. Open space on the project site consists of a 2,710-square-foot Heritage Plaza and 9,423 square feet of private open space. The public presence along San Pablo Avenue is also enhanced by a small ground-floor retail commercial space that opens directly onto the new public plaza, as well as a community clinic to be operated by Samuel Merritt University. Vehicular parking includes 32 residential spaces (25 standard, 2 accessible, 5 compact) and 3 commercial spaces on-site and 8 commercial spaces on San Pablo Avenue. The project also includes 16 long-term and 4 short-term bicycle parking spots.

The project includes nonresidential uses fronting San Pablo Avenue on the ground floor of the project. The uses include a 1,906-square-foot clinic and 1,156 square feet of retail space.

The single-story structure at 10848 San Pablo Avenue will be renovated in keeping with its original design to the greatest extent practical and will house some of Eden Housing’s community and management functions on the property. Project design incorporates a modified design adjacent to the stone-faced building where the new building steps down to meet the existing structure. Similarly, the building steps down along its north side as it meets City Hall to respect the building, which represents the local center of government and community leadership.

The building design and construction will maximize passive solar heating and cooling and will incorporate green design features, such as a tight building envelope, energy-efficient boiler and HVAC systems, energy-efficient lighting and appliances, water-conserving fixtures, solar hot water, and durable materials with recycled content and low volatile organic compound (VOC) content. The building will at minimum be pre-wired to receive a rooftop solar installation in the future. If it is financially feasible, a solar photovoltaic system will be installed.

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2.4.1 PRESERVATION OF THE CONTRA COSTA FLORIST BUILDING

Although the Contra Costa Florist/Mabuchi House is not currently listed in the California Register of Historic Resources, the Historic Resource Evaluation prepared for the project determined the Contra Costa Florist building to be potentially eligible for listing. Original plans calling for the removal of the building were revised to preserve the florist shop and altered the senior housing building design to step down to achieve a better visual scale with the florist shop. The project applicant has also committed to the following steps to further reduce potential effects on the resource:

- Prior to any demolition, the resources will be documented through a Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) following the HABS III criteria, including production of measured architectural drawings of the Mabuchi buildings, large-format photographs of the Mabuchi home and florist shop, a written history and description of the site, and field records.

- The project will include rehabilitation of the façade of the florist shop, including new doors and windows and landscaping that align with the historic character of the building.

- The project will incorporate an interpretive display or signage in front of the building describing the history of the site.

**Required Approvals**

**EL CERRITO APPROVALS**

Discretionary actions required to be taken by the City of El Cerrito may include, but are not limited to, the actions listed below.

- Certification of the Environmental Impact Report
- Adoption of a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
- Conditional Use Permit to allow a parking reduction and a height bonus pursuant to the Affordable Housing Density Bonus.
- Design Review

**OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCY APPROVALS**

The City of El Cerrito is the lead agency for the proposed project. Responsible and trustee agencies may include, but are not limited to:

- San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)
- Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD)
- California Department of Transportation (CalTrans)
Potential Environmental Effects

The EIR will evaluate whether the proposed project would potentially result in one or more significant environmental effects. The EIR will provide a quantitative analysis of the air quality and greenhouse gas emissions, noise, and traffic generated by the project. The EIR will also discuss potential effects on the Contra Costa Florist building. The following issues identified in CEQA Guidelines Appendix G will be addressed in the EIR:

- Aesthetics, Light, and Glare
- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology, Soils, and Seismicity
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Public Utilities
- Recreation
- Transportation

It is anticipated that some of the environmental issues would result in less than significant impacts and will be discussed in the EIR as Effects Found Not to be Significant.
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MATERIALS AND SYSTEMS

1. CEMENT PLASTER IN CONTROL JOINTS
2. HORIZONTAL CEMENT BOARD SIDING 9" EXPOSURE
3. VERTICAL CORRUGATED METAL SIDING
4. CEMENT BOARD PANELS AND VERTICAL BATTENS
5. CEMENT BOARD PANELS
6. PAINTED WOOD TRIM
7. ALUMINUM STOREFRONT WINDOW SYSTEM
8. WINDOW VINYL WINDOW
9. BUILDING & COMMERCIAL SIGNAGE & LIGHTING
10. WOOD TRELIS
11. METAL AWNING SYSTEM
12. SHEET METAL CLADDED OR PERFORATED METAL SUNSHADE
13. METAL GUARD RAIL SYSTEM
14. CONCRETE FLOW THROUGH INFILTRATION PLANTER
15. METAL PICKET FENCE 4' TALL
16. FIBERGLASS COMPOSITION SHINGLES "COOL COLOR"
17. PAINTED PARRAPET GAP
18. PAINTED PASCIA BOARD OR PASCIA GUTTER
19. ARCHITECTURAL HANG DRILL
20. ARCHITECTURAL CONCRETE