



STAFF REPORT

TO: PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: Chip Griffin, AICP, Consulting Planner

REVIEWED BY: Terry Blount, AICP, Planning Manager

DATE: November 18, 2010

SUBJECT: Alhambra Highlands Project (2008) Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report Review and Comment

GENERAL INFORMATION

APPLICANT/OWNER: Richfield Investment Corporation

LOCATION: Multiple parcels within the Alhambra Hills Specific Plan area (APNs: 366-010-007, 366-060-007, 164-010-025, 164-010-019, 164-150-016, 164-150-022, 164-150-030, 164-010-026)

GENERAL PLAN: Alhambra Hills Specific Plan (1987)

ZONING: R-10 (Single Family Residential: 10,000 sq. ft. minimum lot area)

ENVIRONMENTAL: Subsequent Environmental Impact Report pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (Article 7. EIR Process)

PROPOSAL: Request to allow 112 residential lots, developing 76.2 acres of a 297.5 acre project site

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission:

- 1) Accept public testimony on the Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (Draft SEIR).
- 2) Direct staff to continue to accept written comments in response to the Draft SEIR through December 6, 2010, at 5 P.M.

- 3) Direct staff to prepare a Final Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (Response to Comments) at the conclusion of the public comment period.

PURPOSE OF DRAFT SUBSEQUENT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT REVIEW SESSION

The purpose of the Draft SEIR review session is to present an overview of the environmental document for the proposed project to the Planning Commission and the public and to receive comments on the Draft SEIR. This is not an evidentiary hearing nor is it a required hearing. However, it is typical for a public agency to hold a public meeting to provide a forum for interested persons to state their comments verbally and/or submit them in writing regarding the Draft SEIR.

Although members of the public (and Commissioners) are free to comment on any aspect of the proposed project, staff suggests that comments be focused on the sufficiency of the document regarding the identification of environmental impacts and methods to avoid or mitigate those impacts. The City is only required, when responding to comments on the Draft SEIR, to respond to those comments specifically related to the environmental analysis of the proposed project.

The review session will include a short presentation of facts including CEQA milestones and an overview of the environmental document. The overview will include short descriptions or summaries of the proposed project, report organization and included topics, impacts and mitigation measures, and alternatives. Following the presentation the Planning Commission will have the opportunity to ask points of clarification prior to accepting public comments.

FINAL ENVIRONMENT IMPACT REPORT

The City, and its consultants, must prepare a Final EIR responding to all environmental comments received regarding the Draft SEIR during the 45 day review period. The responses to the comments received on the Draft SEIR must include good faith, well reasoned responses. Following this, the Planning Commission will then be asked to certify the Final EIR and hold a public hearing on the project.

DRAFT SUBSEQUENT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

Prior Environmental Review

A summary of the prior environmental review for the proposed project is included in Chapter I: Introduction (pp. 3-6). The Alhambra Hills Specific Plan and EIR contemplated development of the Alhambra Highlands project as one of several residential development projects proposed within the Specific Plan boundaries. The City certified the Alhambra Hills Specific Plan Final EIR in June 1986 and adopted the

Alhambra Hills Specific Plan in March 1987. In February 1989, following adoption of a Negative Declaration, the City Council approved an amendment to the City's General Plan and the Alhambra Hills Specific Plan relating to slope criteria applicable to the Specific Plan area.

Following these approvals, three different subdivisions relative to the current project proposal were approved by the City between 1990 and 1993. They were the Alhambra Highlands Units I and II subdivisions, and the Images subdivision. These approvals are collectively referred to as the "1990 project." In approving the 1990 project, the City relied on the Specific Plan EIR and the 1989 Negative Declaration.

Although the 2008 project is similar to the 1990 project, the City, as lead agency for the project, believes that the projects differ sufficiently enough from one another to result in the need for modifications and revisions to the prior Specific Plan EIR. Because of this, preparation of a Subsequent EIR is warranted.

Findings of the Initial Study

The City prepared an Initial Study to evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with the 2008 project (see Volume 2 of the Draft SEIR, Appendix A). The Initial Study identified project changes, changes in regulations or new information not otherwise available since the Alhambra Hills Specific Plan EIR was prepared which would result in impacts to the following environmental topics:

- Agricultural and Timber Resources
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Mineral Resources
- Public Services
- Geology and Soils
- Land Use and Planning
- Population and Housing
- Recreation
- Utilities
- Transportation/Traffic

Project Description

A complete description of the project and all its component parts are contained in Chapter III: Project Description. This chapter also includes information on the project's site conditions/ location, background, and objectives.

Environmental Topics Covered by the Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report

Comments received in response to the Notice of Preparation (NOP) and Initial Study raised a number of issues that were taken into consideration and have been addressed in the Draft SEIR. The issues raised by these comments are summarized in Chapter II: Summary and further addressed in Chapter IV: Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures, Chapter V: Alternatives, and/or in the Initial Study. The following topics are the focus of study in the Draft SEIR:

- Aesthetics

- Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Hydrology/Water Quality
- Noise

Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Below is an overview of the analysis contained in Chapter IV: Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures. CEQA requires that the Draft SEIR include a discussion of: (1) significant impacts and proposed mitigation measures; (2) cumulative impacts; (3) significant irreversible and unavoidable impacts; and (4) alternatives to the proposed project. Each of these topics is summarized below.

Significant Impacts and Significant and Unavoidable Impacts

Under CEQA, a significant impact on the environment is defined as “a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance.” Information in Table II-1, Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures (pp. 17-39 of the Draft SEIR), summarizes the impacts and mitigation measures discussed in Chapter IV. Implementation of the proposed project would not result in any significant and unavoidable project-level impacts. Implementation of the 2008 project would result in several significant project-level impacts that would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of the recommended mitigation measures, as discussed in Chapter IV.

Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are discussed within each environmental topic section within Chapter IV: Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures. The project in conjunction with other foreseeable projects would result in a significant unavoidable cumulative impact related to greenhouse gas emissions. Mitigation measures are recommended to reduce this impact; however, the mitigation measures would not reduce the project’s contribution to this cumulative impact to a less-than-significant level.

Alternatives to the Proposed Project

The Alhambra Hills Specific Plan EIR includes an analysis of project alternatives. As an SEIR, the alternatives analysis in this document relies in part upon the alternative analysis provided in the Specific Plan EIR. The alternatives considered in the Specific Plan EIR are discussed in Chapter V: Alternatives. In addition to these alternatives, a mitigated alternative to the 2008 project is also evaluated (the Mitigated/Alternative Access Alternative). The Mitigated/Alternate Access Alternative is identified in the Draft SEIR as the environmentally superior alternative.

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

Pursuant to Public Resources Code Sections 21092(b) and 21092.6, and Sections 15087 and 15105 of the CEQA Guidelines, the Notice of Availability and Public Meeting (NOA) was released on October 21, 2010, to announce the initiation of the Draft SEIR review period. The NOA was also posted at the Contra Costa County Clerk Recorder's Office, published in the Martinez Gazette on Thursday, October 21, 2010, and mailed to property owners within ¼ mile of the project boundary.

A copy of the Draft SEIR is available at the City's Community and Economic Development Department counter, and is available as a download on the City's website (cityofmartinez.org).

NOTICE OF COMPLETION

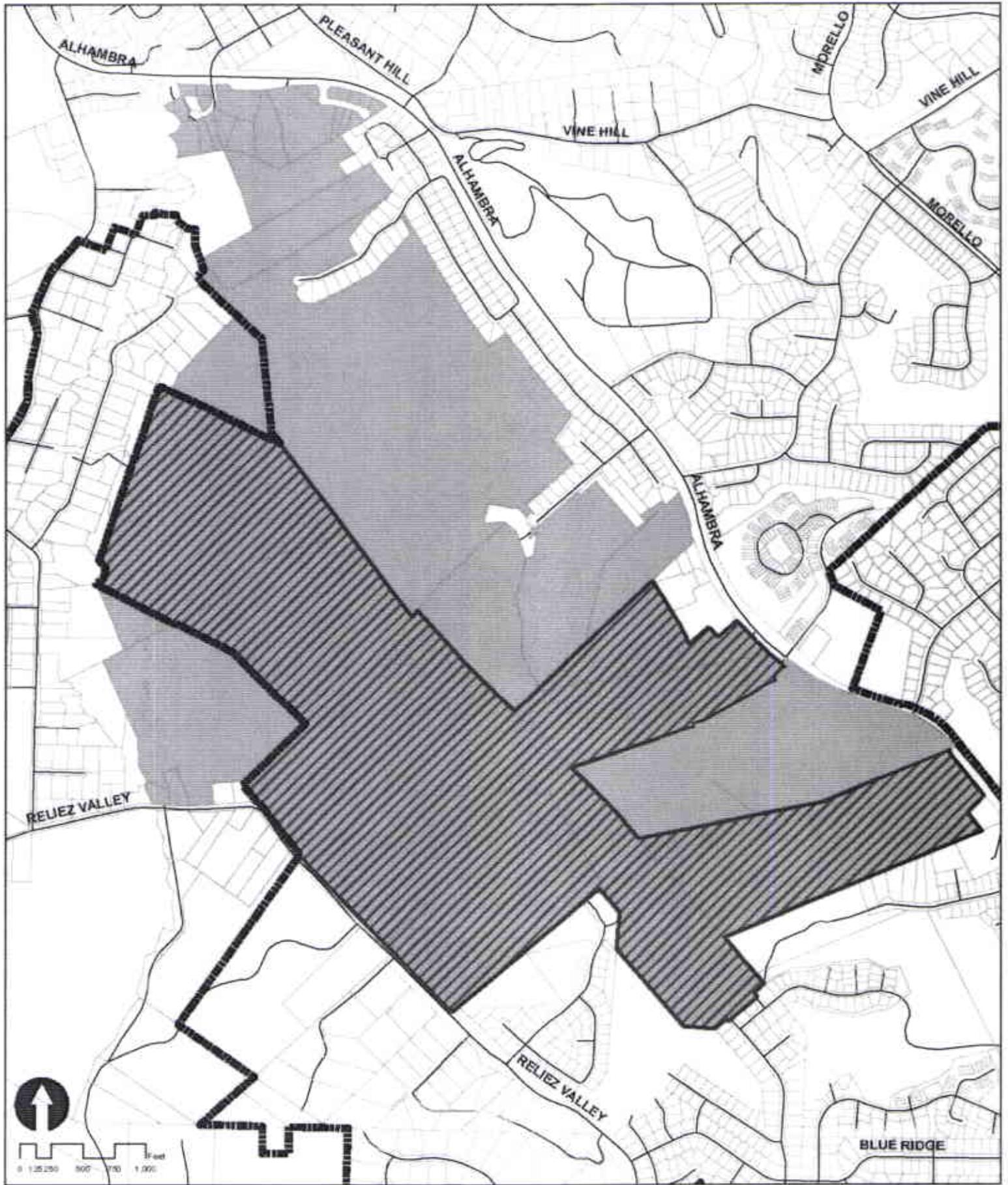
Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 15085 of the CEQA Guidelines, a Notice of Completion was electronically filed with the State Clearinghouse (SCH) along with the Draft SEIR on October 21, 2010.

MILESTONES

Date	Milestone	Status / Notes
2/18/10	Publish NOP	Done / SCH 2010022053
3/9/10	SEIR Scoping Session	Done
10/21/10	Publish Draft SEIR	45 day review period began
11/18/10	Planning Commission Draft SEIR review and comment	In process
12/6/10	Draft SEIR public review period ends	All comments must be submitted by 5 P.M. this date
To be announced	Planning Commission hearing on project and Final SEIR certification	PC to hold hearing on VTM, PUD, and UP, and consider and certify Final SEIR

EXHIBITS

1. Alhambra Highlands Specific Plan and Current Project Boundary Map
2. Notice of Availability (NOA)
3. Notice of Completion (NOC)
4. Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (previously provided to the Planning Commission)



Legend

-  MARTINEZ CITY LIMITS
-  1990 - 2008 PROJECT SITE
-  1987 SPECIFIC PLAN AREA

Source: 1987 Alhambra Hill Specific Plan, 2008 VTM Project Submittal

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City of Martinez

525 Henrietta Street, Martinez, CA 94553-2394

(925) 372-3515
FAX (925) 372-0257

**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY
CITY OF MARTINEZ
THE ALHAMBRA HIGHLANDS RESIDENTIAL PROJECT
DRAFT SUBSEQUENT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
PUBLIC MEETING – NOVEMBER 18, 2010
State Clearinghouse # 2010022053**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Martinez, as Lead Agency, has completed a Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (Draft SEIR) for the Alhambra Highlands Residential Project.

PUBLIC MEETING: The Planning Commission is scheduled to receive public comments on the Draft SEIR on **November 18, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. at Martinez City Hall, 525 Henrietta Street, Martinez, CA 94553.**

PUBLIC REVIEW TIMELINE: The public review period for the Draft SEIR begins **October 21, 2010** and ends **December 6, 2010**. The City must receive all written comments regarding the adequacy of the Draft SEIR within this time period. Written comments may be submitted in person, by mail, by e-mail, or by fax. The mailing address is Martinez City Hall, 525 Henrietta Street, Martinez, CA 94553. The email address is cgriffin@mms-inc.net and the fax number is 925.293.1030. Direct all comments to the attention of Chip Griffin, AICP, Consulting Planner.

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY: Copies of the Draft SEIR are available for review Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., at Martinez City Hall, Community & Economic Development Department, 525 Henrietta Street, Martinez, CA 94553 except on specified holidays. The Draft SEIR is also available online at http://www.cityofmartinez.org/depts/planning/alhambra_highlands.asp.

PROJECT LOCATION: The project site is located at the southern edge of Martinez, Contra Costa County, in an unsectioned portion of Townships 1 and 2 North, Range 2 West, on the U.S.G.S. 7.5-minute quadrangle for Walnut Creek. It is bounded by Alhambra Avenue to the north, Alhambra Valley Road to the west, Reliez Valley Road to the south, and Skyline Drive to the east. The project site includes multiple parcels including the following Assessor Parcel Numbers: 366-010-007, 366-060-007, 164-010-025, 164-010-019, 164-150-016, 164-150-022, 164-150-030, and 164-010-026. A review of regulatory databases maintained by the State (Cortese) and the federal government (CERCLIS) indicate no recorded documentation of hazardous materials violations or discharge on the project site.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The proposed project includes site grading and construction of new roadways, infrastructure, and 112 new single-family custom home sites on an undeveloped hilltop plateau in the Alhambra Hills.

SIGNIFICANT ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS: The Draft SEIR provides an evaluation of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project and recommends mitigation measures to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level. With the implementation of the mitigation measures

proposed, no significant impacts would result through implementation of the proposed project, except for one cumulative impact associated with greenhouse gas emissions. This cumulative impact would remain significant and unavoidable, since the mitigation measures identified would not reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level.

QUESTIONS: If you have any questions about this project, please contact Chip Griffin, AICP at 925.293.1025 or cgriffin@mms-inc.net. The City's Planning Manager is Terry Blount, AICP. He can be reached at 925.372.3534 or via email at tblount@cityofmartinez.org.

Notice of Completion & Environmental Document Transmittal

Mail to: State Clearinghouse, P.O. Box 3044, Sacramento, CA 95812-3044 (916) 445-0613
 For Hand Delivery: Street Address: 1400 Tenth Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

SCH #2010022053

Project Title: Alhambra Highlands Residential Project

Lead Agency: City of Martinez Contact Person: Chip Griffin, Consulting Planner
 Mailing Address: 525 Henrietta Street Phone: (925) 293-1025
 City: Martinez Zip: 94553 County: Contra Costa

Project Location: County: Contra Costa City/Nearest Community: Martinez

Cross Streets: Alhambra Avenue and Valley Glen Lane Zip Code: 94553

Longitude/Latitude (degrees, minutes and seconds): 37 ° 58 ' 15.85" N / 122 ° 06 ' 59.65" W Total Acres: 298

Assessor's Parcel No.: see attached Section: _____ Twp.: 1 and 2 Range: 2 West Base: _____

Within 2 Miles: State Hwy #: 4 Waterways: _____

Airports: _____ Railways: Union Pacific Railroad Schools: see attached

Document Type:

CEQA: NOP Draft EIR NEPA: NOI Other: Joint Document
 Early Cons Supplement/Subsequent EIR EA Final Document
 Neg Dec (Prior SCH No.) _____ Draft EIS Other: _____
 Mit Neg Dec Other: _____ FONSI

Local Action Type:

General Plan Update Specific Plan Rezone Annexation
 General Plan Amendment Master Plan Prezone Redevelopment
 General Plan Element Planned Unit Development Use Permit Coastal Permit
 Community Plan Site Plan Land Division (Subdivision, etc.) Other: _____

Development Type:

Residential: Units 112 Acres _____ Transportation: Type _____
 Office: Sq.ft. _____ Acres _____ Employees _____ Mining: Mineral _____
 Commercial: Sq.ft. _____ Acres _____ Employees _____ Power: Type _____ MW _____
 Industrial: Sq.ft. _____ Acres _____ Employees _____ Waste Treatment: Type _____ MGD _____
 Educational: _____ Hazardous Waste: Type _____
 Recreational: _____ Other: _____
 Water Facilities: Type _____ MGD _____

Project Issues Discussed in Document:

Aesthetic/Visual Fiscal Recreation/Parks Vegetation
 Agricultural Land Flood Plain/Flooding Schools/Universities Water Quality
 Air Quality Forest Land/Fire Hazard Septic Systems Water Supply/Groundwater
 Archeological/Historical Geologic/Seismic Sewer Capacity Wetland/Riparian
 Biological Resources Minerals Soil Erosion/Compaction/Grading Growth Inducement
 Coastal Zone Noise Solid Waste Land Use
 Drainage/Absorption Population/Housing Balance Toxic/Hazardous Cumulative Effects
 Economic/Jobs Public Services/Facilities Traffic/Circulation Other: _____

Present Land Use/Zoning/General Plan Designation:

General Plan Designation: Alhambra Hill Specific Plan; Zoning Designation: R-10, One-Family Residential Minimum 10,000 SF

Project Description: (please use a separate page if necessary)

The proposed project includes site grading and construction of new roadways, infrastructure and 112 new single-family custom and semi-custom home sites on an undeveloped hilltop plateau in the Alhambra Hills.

Note: The State Clearinghouse will assign identification numbers for all new projects. If a SCH number already exists for a project (e.g. Notice of Preparation or previous draft document) please fill in.

Reviewing Agencies Checklist

Lead Agencies may recommend State Clearinghouse distribution by marking agencies below with and "X".
If you have already sent your document to the agency please denote that with an "S".

- Air Resources Board
- Boating & Waterways, Department of
- California Highway Patrol
- Caltrans District # _____
- Caltrans Division of Aeronautics
- Caltrans Planning
- Central Valley Flood Protection Board
- Coachella Valley Mtns. Conservancy
- Coastal Commission
- Colorado River Board
- Conservation, Department of
- Corrections, Department of
- Delta Protection Commission
- Education, Department of
- Energy Commission
- Fish & Game Region # _____
- Food & Agriculture, Department of
- Forestry and Fire Protection, Department of
- General Services, Department of
- Health Services, Department of
- Housing & Community Development
- Integrated Waste Management Board
- Native American Heritage Commission

- Office of Emergency Services
- Office of Historic Preservation
- Office of Public School Construction
- Parks & Recreation, Department of
- Pesticide Regulation, Department of
- Public Utilities Commission
- Regional WQCB # _____
- Resources Agency
- S.F. Bay Conservation & Development Comm.
- San Gabriel & Lower L.A. Rivers & Mtns. Conservancy
- San Joaquin River Conservancy
- Santa Monica Mtns. Conservancy
- State Lands Commission
- SWRCB: Clean Water Grants
- SWRCB: Water Quality
- SWRCB: Water Rights
- Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
- Toxic Substances Control, Department of
- Water Resources, Department of
- Other: _____
- Other: _____

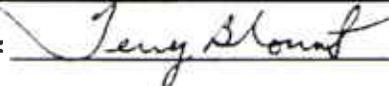
Local Public Review Period (to be filled in by lead agency)

Starting Date October 21, 2010 Ending Date December 6, 2010

Lead Agency (Complete if applicable):

Consulting Firm: Urban Planning Partners, Inc
 Address: 350 Frank Ogawa Plaza Fifth Flor
 City/State/Zip: Oakland, CA 94612
 Contact: Lynette Dias, AICP, Principal
 Phone: (510) 251-8210

Applicant: Richfield Development, Ricardo Sabella
 Address: 10001 Westheimer Road, Suite 2888
 City/State/Zip: Houston, TX 770042
 Phone: (713) 975-6288

Signature of Lead Agency Representative:  Date: 10/20/2010

Authority cited: Section 21083, Public Resources Code. Reference: Section 21161, Public Resources Code.

**Alhambra Highlands Residential Project SEIR
NOC Attachment**

Assessor Parcel Numbers: 366-010-007, 366-060-007, 164-010-025, 164-010-019, 164-150-016, 164-150-022, 164-150-030, and 164-010-026.

Schools within 2 miles: Forest Hills Preschool, Hidden Valley Elementary School, John Swett Elementary School, and Diablo Valley College