



CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH  
PLANNING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR) NO. 09-001  
(CIRCULATION ELEMENT UPDATE)  
OCTOBER 9, 2012

SUMMARY

- **Location:** Citywide
- **Proposed Project:** EIR No. 09-001 is a request by the City to analyze the potential environmental impacts associated with a proposal by the City to adopt and implement the General Plan Circulation Element Update.

The purpose of the Circulation Element Update is to evaluate the long-term transportation needs of the city and present a comprehensive plan to accommodate those needs. The proposed Circulation Element covers various circulation issues such as regional mobility; roadway circulation; neighborhood traffic management; public transportation; transportation demand management; parking; pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian paths; waterway facilities; and scenic corridors. The entire Circulation Element is being updated including goals, policies, and objectives pertaining to the issues above and Level of Service standards. The citywide traffic model was also updated. The traffic model identifies year 2030 projected average daily traffic volumes on the City's Arterial Highway Plan including 19 intersections that will require long-term improvements to accommodate projected traffic volumes. Several roadway segments are proposed for classification change and changes are proposed to the Master Plan of Arterial Highways. See the accompanying summary regarding the Circulation Element Update for more information on the proposed project.

- **Scope of EIR Analysis:** The following determinations were made for the issue areas listed:

Less than significant or no impacts and no further analysis required in EIR: Geology and Soils, Hydrology and Water Quality, Agricultural Resources, Mineral Resources, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Utilities and Service Systems, Aesthetics, and Recreation.

Analyzed in EIR with less than significant or no impacts: Air Quality, Biological Resources, Land Use and Planning, Noise, Public Services, Transportation and Traffic, and Greenhouse Gases/Climate Change

Analyzed in EIR with less than significant impacts with mitigation incorporated: Cultural Resources (Mitigation Measures require monitoring by archaeologist and paleontologist of street improvement projects that involve excavation into native soils.)

Analyzed in EIR with significant and unavoidable impacts: Population and Housing – Future intersection improvements identified in the Circulation Element Update traffic study could potentially involve the removal of a residential or business structure and displacement of the occupants.

- **Alternatives:** The following alternatives were analyzed in the EIR:

Alternative 1: No Project – This alternative assumes that the proposed Circulation Element Update would not be adopted and that the existing Circulation Element would be retained.

Alternative 2: Circulation Element Update with Existing Intersection Performance Standards – This alternative involves the proposed Circulation Element Update but continues the intersection performance standards of the existing Circulation Element.

Environmentally Superior Alternative – Generally, the impacts of the existing and proposed Circulation Elements would be the similar while the impacts of Alternative 2 would be greater. The EIR concludes that the Circulation Element Update is the environmentally superior alternative.

□ **EIR Public Participation**

1. EIR Scoping Meetings (2009) – Two meetings were held and only two people attended.
2. 30-day EIR Notice of Preparation (NOP) and Circulation Element Update public review period (2009) – A total of five letters were received in response to the NOP.
3. 45-day Draft EIR and Circulation Element Update public review period (ended September 17, 2012) – A total of eight letters were received. Response to Comments is being prepared.
4. Planning Commission Study Session and Public Hearing tentatively scheduled for November 13, 2012

□ **Attachment:**

1. Executive Summary of Draft EIR No. 09-001
2. Draft EIR No. 09-001 (Not attached but available at <http://www.surfcity-hb.org/Government/Departments/Planning/Environmentalreports.cfm>)

## 2.0 Executive Summary

### ***Project Summary***

The proposed project analyzed in this EIR is the adoption and long-term implementation of the update of the City of Huntington Beach General Plan Circulation Element. The Circulation Element update addresses all roadway segments, bikeways, scenic corridors, and other circulation infrastructure within the municipal city limits. Collectively, this is referred to as the "planning area".

The Circulation Element update consists of several chapters that satisfy the requirements of State law. California Government Code Section 65302(b) requires a circulation element in all general plans, as follows:

*A circulation element consisting of the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other local public utilities and facilities, all correlated with the land use element of the plan.*

The Circulation Element is a mandatory component of the General Plan to plan the routing of major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other local public utilities and facilities. Utilities are addressed within the Utilities Element of the General Plan. All other circulation issues are addressed in this Element, including:

- Regional Mobility
- Roadway Circulation
- Neighborhood Traffic Management
- Public Transportation
- Transportation Demand Management and Air Quality
- Parking
- Pedestrian, Bicycle, Equestrian, and Waterway Facilities
- Scenic Corridors

The Circulation Element addresses the physical circulation system consisting of streets, highways, bicycle routes, equestrian facilities, paths, and sidewalks, as well as available modes of transportation, including cars, buses, bicycles, and walking.

### ***Project Location***

The City of Huntington Beach is located in the extensively developed northwestern portion of Orange County abutting the Pacific Ocean. The municipal limits of Huntington Beach encompass approximately 27.7 square miles. The City of Huntington Beach is generally surrounded by the City of Westminster to the northeast, the City of Fountain Valley to the east, the City of Costa Mesa to the south, the Pacific Ocean to the west, and the City of Seal Beach to the northwest. The City is connected to the regional roadway network primarily through Interstate 405 and to a lesser degree State Route 1 (Pacific Coast Highway).

## **Environmental Setting**

The City of Huntington Beach is located in an urbanized portion of Orange County. Huntington Beach is a primarily built-out, coastal community characterized by residential development of which single-family residential dwelling units are the most prominent land use. According to the California Department of Finance (May 2009), Huntington Beach currently has an estimated 78,049 dwelling units housing a population of approximately 202,480. The City is a tourist destination because of its 3.5-mile stretch of shoreline that has earned Huntington Beach the nickname of 'Surf City'. Huntington City Beach attracts more than eight million visitors annually that come for a number of cultural, recreational, and entertainment opportunities. Huntington Beach Pier extends more than 1,800 feet into the ocean and provides shopping, dining, and fishing opportunities. Commercial development serving the pier and general tourist population is located at the base of the pier, extending a couple blocks in each direction on Pacific Coast Highway, and along Main Street in Downtown. Huntington State Beach begins near the intersection of Beach Boulevard at Pacific Coast Highway and extends south to the mouth of the Santa Ana River. Bolsa Chica State Beach begins near the intersection of Seapoint Avenue at Pacific Coast Highway and extends north to Sunset Beach.

Multiple-family housing units are generally concentrated in four areas of the City: in the northwest near Huntington Harbour, to the south near the Pacific Ocean at Downtown, in the north on Warner Avenue between Goldenwest Street and Springdale Street, and along Beach Boulevard. The major commercial areas of the City are concentrated along Beach Boulevard and Edinger Avenue with other shopping centers located at major intersections such as Brookhurst Street at Adams Avenue, Goldenwest Street at Warner Avenue, and Garfield Avenue at Magnolia Street. Industrial uses are primarily concentrated in the northwestern portion of the City generally bounded by Edinger Avenue, Springdale Street, a Federal railway, and Bolsa Chica Street. Another concentration of industrial activities is located along Gothard Street, generally between Edinger Avenue and Ellis Avenue.

## **Environmental Impacts**

Based on an Initial Study (see Appendix A) and a public scoping process, the City determined that the adoption and long-term implementation of the updated Circulation Element has the potential to result in significant environmental effects with regard to the following environmental issues areas:

- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Transportation and Traffic
- Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change

This EIR examines each of these issues areas in separate sections in addition to other required topics specified in the State CEQA Guidelines. Table 2-1 at the end of this section summarizes the environmental impacts associated with the project and lists the mitigation measures required to reduce or avoid impacts.

An Initial Study was prepared for the proposed Circulated Element update and circulated for public review with the Notice of Preparation on July 30, 2009. The Initial Study includes analysis of the potential environmental impacts of the Circulation Element update in the context of each environmental issue included in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. The Initial Study found that the proposed Circulation Element would have a less than significant impact or no impact regarding a number of environmental issues, as summarized in Section 7.0 (Effects Found Not to be Significant) and detailed in Appendix A (Notice of Preparation and Responses Thereto). Each environmental issue area where potentially significant impacts were identified is examined in full detail in Section 4.0. Each impact discussion concludes with a statement regarding the level of impact significance remaining with the benefit of the mitigation measures.

### **Areas of Potential Controversy**

No areas of controversy were identified during the initial scoping process for the EIR and none have been identified during preparation of this document. At this time, there are no issues to be resolved.

### **Alternatives to the Proposed Project**

CEQA requires that an EIR examine alternatives that are capable of eliminating or substantially avoiding any significant effects that would occur with the project. Significant and unavoidable impacts related to the displacement of housing and businesses were identified in the assessment of the proposed amendments to the Circulation Element. Assessment of alternative circulation networks is considered unwarranted as those alternatives would be infeasible or could result in more substantial impacts, particularly with respect to right-of-way needs and effects on adjacent land uses; therefore, two alternatives were examined in Section 5.0:

- Alternative 1: No Project/Existing Circulation Element
- Alternative 2: Existing Performance Standard

Regarding Alternative 1, similar environmental impacts would occur with the existing or updated Circulation Element; however, the updated Element would eliminate planned arterial segments in the existing Element that could potentially affect sensitive wetlands resources. Furthermore, the updated Element would achieve better levels of roadway system performance, in terms of congestion management, than the existing Element.

2.0 Executive Summary

Alternative 2 would keep the existing intersection performance standards of LOS D for peak hour performance and LOS C for the links daily performance. In general, Alternative 2 would result in more substantial impacts than the proposed project because the decreased performance standard at secondary intersections (from LOS C to LOS D) would result in increased impacts related to air quality, public services, transportation and traffic, and climate change.

**Table 2-1  
Environmental Impact Summary**

Impact Classes		Summary	Mitigation	Level of Significance
Significant and Unavoidable	4.6.A	Future intersection improvements identified in the Circulation Element update traffic study could potentially involve the removal of a residential or business structure and displacement of the occupants.	None	Significant and Unavoidable
	4.6.B			
Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	4.3.A	With as-needed construction monitoring, potentially significant impacts to archaeological resources will be avoided.	4.3.A-1	Less than Significant
	4.3.B	With as-needed construction monitoring, potentially significant impacts to paleontological resources will be avoided.	4.3.B-1	Less than Significant
Less than Significant Impact	4.1.A	Implementation of the Circulation Element update would not violate or substantially contribute to any existing or projected violation of the NAAQS or CAAQS.	None	Less than Significant
	4.1.B	The updated Circulation Element would not result in significant emissions of toxic air contaminants or creation of Carbon Monoxide "hotspots."	None	Less than Significant
	4.1.C	Implementation of the updated Circulation Element would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the 2003/2007 Air Quality Management Plan.	None	Less than Significant
	4.1.D	The updated Circulation Element would result in a less than significant increase in PM10, PM2.5 VOC, or NOX and would not result in a cumulatively considerable long-term increase in nonattainment criteria pollutants in the South Coast Air Basin.	None	Less than Significant

Impact Classes	Summary	Mitigation	Level of Significance
4.4.A	The proposed Circulation Element would result in minor and less than significant inconsistencies with other General Plan elements. These will be resolved in subsequent general plan amendments.	None	Less than Significant
4.5.A 4.5.C	Projected long-term traffic volumes would increase noise levels near land uses already exposed to significant traffic noise by a less than significant amount. This would occur with or without the proposed revisions to the Circulation Element, as a result of anticipated population growth.	None	Less than Significant
4.5.B	Construction of future street improvements would result in less than significant groundborne vibration impacts.	None	Less than Significant
4.7.A	Emergency response times for fire suppression and paramedic services would not be adversely affected by the proposed amendments to the Circulation Plan.	None	Less than Significant
4.8.A	Proposed Critical, Principal, and Secondary Intersection performance standards will effectively manage projected traffic volumes to achieve desired levels of service.	None	Less than Significant
4.8.B	The proposed Circulation Plan is designed to achieve CMP performance standards at all CMP intersections in the planning area. Impacts to the CMP network would be less than significant.	None	Less than Significant
4.8.C	Elimination of previously planned/unbuilt segments of the arterial network will result in less than significant impacts related to emergency access within the planning area.	None	Less than Significant
4.9.A 4.9.B	The updated Circulation Element would have a less than significant impact involving greenhouse gas emissions and global climate change.	None	Less than Significant

2.0 Executive Summary

Impact Classes	Summary	Mitigation	Level of Significance
No Impact	4.2.A.1 Bolsa Chica Wetlands resources near the intersection of Warner Avenue and Pacific Coast Highway would not be adversely affected as a result of the proposed Circulation Element.	None	No Impact
	4.2.A.2 Future intersection capacity improvements at Pacific Coast Highway/Brookhurst Avenue would not affect the Brookhurst or Talbert Marshes.	None	No Impact
	4.2.A.3 Existing riparian vegetation along Coldwater Lane would not be affected by the proposed re-classification of Coldwater Lane as a Collector Street.	None	No Impact

