

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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This Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) has been prepared to present an assessment of the potentially significant environmental effects of the proposed Altamont Motorsports Park Rezoning (AMP Rezoning or proposed project). As required by the California Environmental Quality Act, Public Resources Code Sections 21000 et seq. (CEQA), this Draft EIR (1) assesses the potentially significant environmental effects of the proposed project, including cumulative impacts of the proposed project in conjunction with other development; (2) identifies feasible means of avoiding or substantially lessening significant adverse impacts; and (3) evaluates a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed project, including the No Project Alternative. Alameda County (the County) is the “lead agency”<sup>1</sup> for the project evaluated in this EIR. Following review and recommendation by the Alameda County Planning Commission, the Board of Supervisors (the Board) has the principal responsibility for taking action on this project.

## 1.1 PURPOSE OF THIS EIR

The County has commissioned this Draft EIR for the proposed project for the following purposes:

- To inform the general public, the local community, and responsible,<sup>2</sup> trustee,<sup>3</sup> and other public agencies of the nature of the proposed project, its potentially significant environmental effects, feasible measures to mitigate those effects, and its reasonable and feasible alternatives.
- To enable the County to consider the environmental consequences of approving the proposed project.
- For consideration by responsible agencies in issuing permits and approvals for the proposed project.
- To satisfy CEQA requirements.

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<sup>1</sup> “Lead Agency” means the public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project. The Lead Agency will decide whether an EIR or Negative Declaration will be required for the project and will cause the document to be prepared.

<sup>2</sup> “Responsible Agency” means a public agency which proposes to carry out or approve a project, for which a Lead Agency is preparing or has prepared an EIR or Negative Declaration. For the purposes of CEQA, the term “Responsible Agency” includes all public agencies other than the Lead Agency which have discretionary approval power over the project.

<sup>3</sup> “Trustee Agency” means a state agency having jurisdiction by law over natural resources affected by a project which are held in trust for the people of the State of California. Trustee Agencies include

- (a) The California Department of Fish and Game with regard to the fish and wildlife of the state, to designated rare or endangered native plants, and to game refuges, ecological reserves, and other areas administered by the department;
- (b) The State Lands Commission with regard to state owned “sovereign” lands such as the beds of navigable waters and state school lands;
- (c) The State Department of Parks and Recreation with regard to units of the State Park System; and
- (d) The University of California with regard to sites within the Natural Land and Water Reserves System.

As described in CEQA and the California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Sections 15000 et seq. (*State CEQA Guidelines*), public agencies are charged with the duty to avoid or substantially lessen significant environmental effects, where feasible. In discharging this duty, a public agency has an obligation to balance the project's significant effects on the environment with its benefits, including economic, social, technological, legal, and other benefits. This Draft EIR is an informational document, the purpose of which is to identify the potentially significant effects of the proposed project on the environment and to indicate the manner in which those significant effects can be avoided or significantly lessened; to identify any significant and unavoidable adverse impacts that cannot be mitigated; and to identify reasonable and feasible alternatives to the proposed project that would eliminate significant adverse environmental effects or reduce the impacts to a less than significant level.

The lead agency is required to consider the information in the EIR, along with any other relevant information in making its decisions on the proposed project. Although this Draft EIR does not determine the ultimate decision that will be made regarding implementation of the proposed project, CEQA requires the County to consider the information in the EIR and make findings regarding each significant effect identified in the EIR. The Board must certify the Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR) prior to approving the proposed project. Other agencies may also use the EIR in their review and approval processes.

## 1.2 SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The AMP opened in 1963 as a half-mile dirt oval raceway and was paved and reconfigured in 1966 to feature three separate racetracks integrated within the perimeter of the half-mile oval. Currently, 35 acres of AMP's 83-acre site are developed with paved racetracks, a pit/paddock area, grandstands, and other supporting infrastructure. The proposed project includes rezoning the site from "A-General Agriculture" to "PD-Planned Development," to provide for the continued operation of the facility,<sup>4</sup> with further definition of currently permitted uses and operations, including authorized motorsports activities, and to provide for the installation of a roof over a portion of the existing grandstand, the installation of two caretakers residences, and the installation of freeway signage.

## 1.3 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

Alameda County has filed a Notice of Completion (NOC) with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research State Clearinghouse indicating that this Draft EIR has been completed and is available for review and comment by the public and interested parties, agencies, and organizations.

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<sup>4</sup> AMP currently operates under the provisions of a Conditional Use Permit issued by the County in 1996.

This Draft EIR is available for review by the public and interested parties, agencies, and organizations for a period of 45 days, as required by California law. In reviewing this Draft EIR, reviewers should focus on the document's adequacy in identifying and analyzing significant effects on the environment and ways in which the significant effects of the project might be avoided or mitigated. To ensure inclusion in the Final EIR and full consideration by the lead agency, comments on this Draft EIR must be received during the 45-day public review period at the following address:

Jana Beatty, Senior Planner  
Alameda County Planning Department  
224 W. Winton Avenue, Room 111  
Hayward, California 94544  
jana.beatty@acgov.org

Pursuant to state law (Public Resources Code Section 21091(d)(3)), the County will accept e-mail comments in addition to mailed comments or oral comments made at the Draft EIR public hearing. The Planning Commission (the Commission), which is an advisory commission to the Board, will conduct a public hearing to receive comments on this Draft EIR during the 45-day review period. Following the close of the 45-day review period, responses to comments on the Draft EIR will be prepared and published as a separate document. The Draft EIR text and appendices, together with responses to comments and any text changes made to the original Draft EIR, will constitute the Final EIR.

The Commission will review the Final EIR and make a recommendation on its adequacy to the Board. The Commission will separately review the proposed project during the course of a public hearing, following its review of the Final EIR, and make a recommendation to the Board on the disposition of the project.

The Board, the decision-making body for the County for the proposed project, will review the Final EIR for adequacy and consider it for certification pursuant to the requirements of Section 15090 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*. If the Board certifies the Final EIR, it will then separately consider the proposed project for approval or denial. If the Board chooses to approve the project, findings on the feasibility of reducing or avoiding significant environmental effects will be made and, if necessary, a Statement of Overriding Considerations will be prepared. If the Board approves the project, a Notice of Determination (NOD) will be prepared and will be filed with the County Clerk, and if necessary, the State Clearinghouse. The NOD will include a description of the project, the date of approval, an indication of whether findings were prepared and a Statement of Overriding Considerations was adopted, and the address where the Final EIR and record of project approval are available for review.

### 1.3.1 Type of EIR

This environmental analysis presented in this Draft EIR is defined as a Project EIR, as defined by Section 15161 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*. The guidelines state that a Project EIR

*should focus primarily on the changes in the environment that would result from the development project. The EIR shall examine all phases of the project including planning, construction, and operation.*

### 1.3.2 Public and Agency Review

On May 23, 2007, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) was published for the EIR. The 30-day comment period ended on June 22, 2007. A copy of the NOP is included in **Appendix 1.0**. All comments received on the NOP are available and on file with the County.

An EIR scoping meeting was held at the Alameda County Planning Commission chambers on June 4, 2007. The meeting served the purpose of informing the public and interested agencies of the proposed project, soliciting comments, and identifying areas of concern.

Copies of this Draft EIR are available for review at the following location:

- Alameda County Planning Department, 224 W. Winton Avenue, Room 111, Hayward, California 94544

### 1.3.3 Intended Uses of this Draft EIR

This document serves two purposes. The County will use this Draft EIR to evaluate the environmental implications of approving the proposed project. Secondly, this document may be used as a source of information by responsible or trustee agencies with permitting or approval authority over the project.

## 1.4 SCOPE OF THIS EIR

The County completed a preliminary review of the project, as described in Section 15060 of the *State CEQA Guidelines* and determined that an environmental review was required. The County did not prepare an Initial Study because the Board determined that an EIR was necessary. Based on the county's direction and comments received at the scoping meeting and in response to the NOP, it was determined that the EIR would evaluate the following environmental topics in further detail:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality and Global Climate Change
- Agricultural Resources
- Biological Resources

- Cultural Resources
- Geology, Soils, and Seismicity
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation and Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems

## 1.5 REPORT ORGANIZATION

This Draft EIR is organized into the following sections:

**Section 1.0, Introduction**, provides an introduction and overview describing the purpose and scope of topics addressed in this Draft EIR and the environmental review process.

**Section 2.0, Executive Summary**, summarizes environmental consequences that would result from the proposed project, provides a summary table that denotes anticipated significant environmental impacts, describes identified mitigation measures, and indicates the level of significance of impacts before and after mitigation.

**Section 3.0, Project Description**, describes the proposed project.

**Section 4.0, Environmental Impact Analysis**, describes the environmental setting, including applicable plans and policies; provides an analysis of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project and identifies mitigation measures to reduce their significance.

**Section 5.0, Alternatives**, summarizes alternatives to the project and the comparative environmental consequences and benefits of each alternative. This section includes an analysis of the No Project Alternative, among others, as required by CEQA.

**Section 6.0, Other CEQA Considerations**, discusses the cumulative impacts of the proposed project in combination with other approved, pending, or reasonably foreseeable projects in the vicinity; includes a discussion of the potential for growth inducement from the project; provides a brief description of the environmental effects that were found not to be significant and, therefore, not evaluated in further detail; and addresses the potential use of nonrenewable resources during the project and project features that would commit future generations to similar uses (?).

**Section 7.0, Organizations and Persons Consulted**, provides a list of organizations and individuals who were contacted in the preparation of this Draft EIR.

**Section 8.0, Report Preparation**, provides a list of the individuals involved in the preparation of this Draft EIR.

**Section 9.0, Acronyms and Abbreviations**, identifies and defines frequently used acronyms and abbreviations used in this Draft EIR.

**Section 10.0, References**, provides a list of references cited in this Draft EIR.