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NOTICE OF PREPARATION DOCUMENTATION

DATE: December 1, 2025

PROJECT NAME: Vista Detention Facility

PROJECT NUMBER: 1026161

PROJECT APPLICANT: County of San Diego General Services

PURPOSE OF THE NOTICE OF PREPARATION:

The County of San Diego Department of General Services (County) is providing notice that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be prepared for the Vista Detention and Re-Entry Facility (hereafter, "project"). This Notice of Preparation (NOP) is the first step in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process. The County is seeking input from the public, stakeholders, and agencies on potential environmental impacts of the project, ways to mitigate those impacts, and alternatives that may lessen those impacts.

PROJECT BACKGROUND:

The Vista Detention Facility (VDF), located at 325 South Melrose Drive in Vista, California, is a Type II adult detention center operated by the San Diego County Sheriff's Department. It opened in 1978 and underwent a major expansion in 1989, increasing its rated capacity to over 800 beds across approximately 170,000 square feet (SF). VDF serves as the primary intake facility for male and female individuals arrested in northern San Diego County and is part of the North County Regional Center (NCRC) complex, which includes the North County Superior Courts and Vista Sheriff's Station. The population at VDF consists primarily of incarcerated persons awaiting court proceedings for North County cases. In addition, VDF houses those with medical challenges, those under psychiatric care, an administrative separation unit, as well as defendants facing high-publicity trials. It also includes specialized units such as the Veterans Module, established in 2013 in partnership with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The project proposes replacement of the VDF and ancillary facilities to provide housing and services to meet current and future facility demand. Existing structures to be demolished include the VDF and support facilities, County Sheriff's Vista substation, Law Library, County Department of General Services Facility Operations shop and Fleet Services fueling station, and the central utility plant. The project would replace the demolished facilities with a new Vista Sheriff Station, two parking structures, central utility plant, tunnel to south court, Facility Operations shops, fleet fueling station, outdoor courtyard, and detention and re-entry facility that will include replacement and future housing, intake/release, food services, medical, re-entry,

rehabilitation and recreational facilities, and other ancillary structures. The project proposes phased demolition and construction to minimize disruption of VDF's current operations, which would continue during project implementation.

The project would result in approximately 398,323 SF of demolition and 984,217 SF of construction, for a new net building area of 585,894 SF. The majority of the project's components are proposed to be provided in a single six-story building in the northwest corner of the property, referred to herein as the main VDF facility. The main VDF facility would total 448,116 SF with a maximum height of 69 feet and would provide approximately 318,983 SF of future housing space, which would increase the inmate capacity of the VDF from 807 to 1,412 by adding 605 new beds. Additional services in the main VDF facility would include security and staff areas, food services, medical and educational facilities, indoor recreation, and parking. The two-story, 36,000-SF sheriff station is proposed just south of the main VDF facility and would replace the existing 20,616-SF station. The project proposes a three-story, 96,000-SF parking structure in the northeast corner of the property and additional three-level parking structures in the lowest levels of the VDRF future housing portion. The project would remove 244 surface parking spaces and provide up to 820 new parking garage spaces, for a net increase of 576 parking spaces.

Completion of the project is anticipated to take approximately 12 years in total. Construction activities would include demolition of structures on the site, site preparation (clearing/grubbing), grading, installation of underground infrastructure and utilities, physical building construction, paving, or application of architectural coatings (e.g., painting), depending on the phase. Demolition activity is expected to involve the removal of approximately 269,883 SF of existing structures and approximately 128,440 SF of existing asphalt. Grading is expected to involve the export of approximately 214,200 cubic yards of soil.

CEQA REQUIREMENTS:

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that public agencies consider the potentially significant adverse environmental effects of projects over which they have discretionary approval authority before taking action on those projects (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21000 et. seq.). According to California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 14, Section 15064(f)(1), preparation of an EIR is required whenever a project may result in a significant adverse environmental effect. An EIR is an informational document used to inform public agency decision makers and the general public of the significant environmental effects of a project, identify possible ways to mitigate or avoid the significant effects, and describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project that could feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project while substantially lessening or avoiding any of the significant environmental impacts. Public agencies are required to consider the information presented in the EIR when determining whether to approve a project.

PROJECT LOCATION:

The project is located on County-owned property in the City of Vista in northwestern San Diego County (Exhibit 1). The VDF is part of the larger NCRC campus, which is bounded by South Melrose Drive to the east, Breeze Hill Road to the south, La Tortuga Drive on the west, and commercial properties off Hacienda Drive to the north. The approximately 19.84-acre VDF project site, comprising Assessor's Parcel Numbers 166-150-95-00 and 166-150-41-00, is

located on the northern portion of the NCRC at 325 South Melrose Drive, approximately 600 feet south of State Route (SR) 78 (Exhibit 2).

PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS:

The following is a list of the subject areas to be analyzed in the EIR:

- Aesthetics and Visual Resources
- Air Quality
- Cultural Resources
- Geology, Soils, and Paleontological Resources
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Public Services
- Transportation and Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Biological Resources
- Energy
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Mineral Resources
- Population and Housing
- Recreation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Wildfire

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING:

In accordance with Section 21083.9(a)(2) of the Public Resources Code and CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(c), the County will hold a public scoping meeting, where agencies, organizations, and members of the public will receive a brief presentation of the project and the CEQA process. Although the primary purpose of the scoping meeting is to meet with representatives of involved agencies to assist the lead agency in determining the scope and content of the environmental information that responsible or trustee agencies may require, members of the public will be provided with an opportunity to submit brief oral comments at this scoping meeting not exceeding two minutes. However, members of the public, stakeholders, and relevant agencies are requested to provide their comments in writing, via email or mail, to the contact address shown below. The scoping meeting will be held on December 15, 2025, from 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. at the Morris B. Vance Community Room, 200 Civic Center Dr, Vista, CA 92084

PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD

Comments on this Notice of Preparation document will be accepted for 46 days following the issuance of the first notice on December 4, 2025, and must be received no later than January 20, 2026. Comments on the Notice of Preparation document must be sent to County of San Diego, Department of General Services, Attn: Marcus Lubich, 5560 Overland Avenue, Suite 410, San Diego, CA 92123 or emailed to marcus.lubich@sdcounty.ca.gov and should reference the project name (Vista Detention and Re-Entry Facility).

Attachments:

[Exhibit 1 Regional Location](#)
[Exhibit 2 Project Boundary](#)



