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NOTICE OF PREPARATION DOCUMENTATION

DATE: September 5, 2025

PROJECT NAME: Rams Hill Specific Plan Amendment

PROJECT NUMBER(S): PDS2024-SPA-24-001, VAC-24-001, REZ-24-001, DA-24-001

PROJECT APPLICANT: T2 Borrego, LLC

ENV. REVIEW NUMBER: PDS2024-ER-19-11-001A

PURPOSE OF THE NOTICE OF PREPARATION:

The County of San Diego (County) is sending notice that a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (Supplemental EIR) will be prepared for the Rams Hill Specific Plan Amendment (hereafter, “proposed Specific Plan” or “project”). This Notice of Preparation is the first step in the CEQA process. The County is seeking input from the public and agencies on potential environmental impacts of the project, ways to mitigate those impacts, and alternatives that may lessen those impacts.

PROJECT BACKGROUND:

The Rams Hill Specific Plan (“Specific Plan”) was approved by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors in 1980 and subsequently amended in 1986. The Specific Plan addresses uses for the 3,140.5-acre site, including (existing and future) residential, hotel and commercial uses, golf courses and golf-related uses, open space, and recreation areas. The Specific Plan provides site-specific guidance for future development, including permitted uses, maximum residential development potential, design standards and guidelines, and detailed circulation network to connect and serve the community. Some critical elements of the existing Specific Plan have already been built and are in use. The approved Specific Plan and project assumed up to 1,570 residential units, as well as 364.4 acres of commercial recreational uses, including golf facilities, the tennis center, and approximately 1,832 acres of on-site dedicated passive open space, of which 233 acres were in existing biological open space. Of those, 264 homes, golf facilities (18-hole golf course, and golf clubhouse, driving range, and golf-related uses), tennis center, a 6,300-square foot clinic, and a wastewater treatment facility have been constructed.

In 1980, the County certified an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) (80-01) for the original Specific Plan (SP 80-01) and the first phase of development. The County subsequently adopted minor modifications to the Specific Plan in 1983 (SPA 83-05). A Supplemental EIR was prepared in 1986 to address amendments to the Specific Plan (SPA 86-006), including rezoning 616 out of 928 acres previously designated as “future planning areas.”

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The project proposes a Specific Plan Amendment, Rezone, Major Use Permit Modifications, Open Space Easement Vacation, and Development Agreement to reconfigure the remaining development of the site including the remaining dwelling units, hotel complex, commercial areas, recreation areas, and fire station, as well as change the layout of one or both of the golf courses. Of the 1,570 homes in the approved Specific Plan, 264 existing homes and 236 vacant lots (500 units total) are outside of the Specific Plan Amendment area. The amendment therefore addresses the remaining 1,070 homes, which would primarily be single-family units on varying lot sizes. In addition, the overall project would contain non-residential uses, which could include a combination of commercial, hotel, golf clubhouse, and golf-related uses, 346.37 acres of golf course uses, and both community and natural open space. The existing open space easement will be replaced with a new open space easement. Primary access to the project site will continue to be provided by Rams Hill Road, which is connected to Yaqui Pass Road. New secondary access roads are proposed for the northeast portion of the project site with connections to Borrego Springs Road. The project site is proposed to be re-zoned into a single zone, S-88 (Specific Plan Area). Each development area will also have provisional zoning to allow for single-family detached dwelling units, non-residential uses, golf course facilities, open space, recreational areas, and infrastructure uses. The provisional zoning will be implemented upon approval of a final map or implementing permit. The proposed zone would be consistent with Specific Plan area’s General Plan Land Use Designation, and approval of the project would not require future rezones.

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.

The environmental document will supplement the 1986 Supplemental EIR. CEQA Guidelines sections 15162 through 15164 set forth the requirements for additional environmental review when there is a previously certified EIR covering the project for which a subsequent discretionary action is required. CEQA Guidelines, Sections 15162(a) and 15163, state that

when an EIR has been certified for a project, no subsequent or supplement to an EIR shall be prepared for that project unless the lead agency determines, on the basis of substantial evidence in light of the whole public record, one or more of the following:

1. Substantial changes are proposed in the project which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or Negative Declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects; or
2. Substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or Negative Declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects; or
3. New information of substantial importance, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the previous EIR was certified as complete or the Negative Declaration was adopted, shows any of the following:
 - a. The project will have one or more significant effects not discussed in the previous EIR or Negative Declaration; or
 - b. Significant effects previously examined will be substantially more severe than shown in the previously adopted Negative Declaration or previously certified EIR; or
 - c. Mitigation measures or alternatives previously found not to be feasible would in fact be feasible, and would substantially reduce one or more significant effects of the project, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative; or
 - d. Mitigation measures or alternatives which are considerably different from those analyzed in the previous EIR would substantially reduce one or more significant effects on the environment, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative.

The project will require a Supplemental EIR pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15163 because the project proposes modifications to the development patterns analyzed in the 1986 Supplemental EIR, which constitutes a substantial change that could result in new or more severe environmental impacts.

PROJECT LOCATION:

The community of Borrego Springs is in the northeast corner of the County of San Diego, which is located in the southwestern corner of the State. Borrego Springs is west of the Salton Sea and surrounded by Anza-Borrego Desert State Park on all sides. The County is bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the west, Riverside County to the north, Imperial County to the east, Orange County at the northwest corner, and the Republic of Mexico to the south (Exhibit 1).

The planning area for the proposed Specific Plan is the same 3,140.5-acre planning area considered for the current Specific Plan (Exhibit 2).

PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS:

The County may utilize some or all of the measures in the 1980 EIR and 1986 Supplemental EIR as reduction measures for the project, or other measures. The 1986 Supplemental EIR identified significant impacts from implementation for Aesthetics; Biological Resources; Cultural Resources; Geology/Soils; Hydrology/Water Quality; Noise; Public Services; Transportation; and Utilities/Service Systems.

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

Aesthetics/Visual Resources	Agriculture/Forestry
Air Quality	Biological Resources
Climate Change/GHG	Cultural Resources and Tribal Cultural Resources/Historical Resources
Energy	Fire Safety/Protection
Geology/Soils	Hazards and Hazardous Materials
Hydrology/Water Quality	Land Use
Noise	Paleontological Resources
Population and Housing	Public Services and Utilities
Transportation/Traffic	

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 virtual 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 three minutes. However, members of the public and relevant agencies are requested to provide their comments in writing, via email or mail, to the contact address shown below.

The virtual scoping meeting will be held on Tuesday September 16, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at the following virtual meeting link:

<https://sdcounty-ca.gov.zoom.us/j/83376056305>

Meeting ID: 833 7605 6305

Comments on this Notice of Preparation document will be accepted for 30 days following the issuance of the first notice on September 5, 2025, and must be received no later than October 6, 2025. Comments on the Notice of Preparation document must be sent to the Project Manager, Daniella Hofreiter, at Planning & Development Services (PDS) via email at DaniellaT.Hofreiter@sdcounty.ca.gov or to the address listed below and should reference the project numbers (PDS2024-SPA-24-001, VAC-24-001, REZ-24-001, DA-24-001) and project name (Rams Hill Specific Plan Amendment).

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Attachments:

Exhibit 1 Regional Location
Exhibit 2 Project Vicinity



