

Chapter 1 Introduction

The City of Anaheim has prepared this Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to inform the public, local community, organizations, responsible agencies, trustee agencies, and other interested public agencies about potential significant environmental effects resulting from implementation of OC River Walk Project (project) and possible measures to mitigate those significant effects and alternatives to the project. This EIR was prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (California Public Resources Code, Section 21000 et seq.), CEQA Guidelines (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15000 et seq.), and the City of Anaheim’s procedures for implementing CEQA. This EIR is a “Project EIR” pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15161. A Project EIR examines the environmental impacts of a specific project. This EIR focuses on the environmental effects particular to the project as contemplated by the CEQA Guidelines.

1.1 Project Overview

The OC River Walk Conceptual Master Plan consists of various multi-purpose improvements that have been identified to transform the Santa Ana River corridor and portions of the existing Santa Ana River Trail (SART) into an iconic location and experience in of itself (project). The project will take place within and adjacent to the Santa Ana River. Specifically, the project site is located along the Santa Ana River corridor, generally extending from Orangewood Avenue north to Ball Road and the existing Anaheim Coves at Burris Basin, encompassing approximately 111 acres. The main components of the OC River Walk Conceptual Master Plan involve creating two water impoundments by installing three inflatable rubber dams, modifying the riverbanks, constructing two pedestrian/bike bridges, providing new trails, improving existing trails, creating new and protection of existing access ramps, constructing two new undercrossings on the west bank at the UPRR and the Metrolink railroad (LOSSAN Corridor), and providing enhanced community recreation amenities (e.g., terraced seating, nature play areas, parklets, plazas, gathering areas for large-scale events, festivals, and other activities, water access, kayak launch, etc.).

1.2 Project Background

The Santa Ana River corridor offers a potential network of trails and recreation open space for the public, including the currently available SART. The OC River Walk Engineering Feasibility Study (Feasibility Study), completed in 2021, identified 17 design opportunities to expand the Santa Ana River Corridor public access and recreational amenities. The design opportunities identified included developments related to pedestrian/bike facilities, community amenities such as upland habitat restoration and cantilever decks, and river activation systems such as impoundment structures and river recreation. The opportunities outlined in the study align with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Operating Principles, as well as the Coastal Conservancy’s Santa Ana River Conservancy Program Goals. The project consists of several multi-purpose

improvements that are consistent with the Feasibility Study’s design opportunities. Implementation of the project would further Coastal Conservancy’s Santa Ana River Conservancy Program Goals to protect and preserve water resources; preserve and enhance wildlife and habitat; and provide equitable education and recreation access.

1.3 Purpose and Use of the Environmental Impact Report

The City of Anaheim has prepared this EIR for the following purposes:

- To satisfy the requirements of CEQA, pursuant to California Public Resources Code, Section 21080
- To inform the public, local community, organizations, and responsible, trustee, and other interested public agencies of the nature of the project, its potentially significant environmental effects, its potentially feasible measures to mitigate those impacts, and the reasonable potentially feasible alternatives to the project
- For consideration by responsible agencies in issuing permits and approvals for the development that would occur from the implementation of the project

CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines require the decision-making agency to balance, as applicable, the economic, social, technological, legal, or other benefits of a project against its unavoidable environmental risks when determining whether to approve a project. As noted previously, this EIR is an informational document, the purpose of which is to identify the potentially significant effects of the project on the environment and to indicate the manner in which those significant effects can be avoided or reduced to a less than significant level, to identify any significant and unavoidable adverse impacts that cannot be mitigated to below a level of significance, and to identify reasonable and potentially feasible alternatives to the project that would avoid or substantially lessen any significant, adverse environmental effects associated with the project.

The CEQA lead agency (i.e., City of Anaheim) is required to consider the information in this EIR and any other relevant information in the administrative record in making its decision on the project. This EIR does not determine the ultimate decision that will be made regarding the project. Nevertheless, CEQA requires the City of Anaheim to consider the information in this EIR before approving the project and to make Findings of Fact regarding each significant effect identified in this EIR.

This EIR will be circulated to responsible and trustee agencies with jurisdiction over resources affected by the project, including local, state, and federal agencies, and interested parties and individuals. In reviewing this EIR, reviewers should focus on the sufficiency of the document in identifying and analyzing potentially significant effects on the environment and avoiding or mitigating the significant effects of the project.

This EIR will be used by the City of Anaheim to evaluate the environmental implications of adopting the project. If certified, this EIR will be relied upon by agencies with permitting or approval authority over the project.

1.4 Lead, Responsible, and Trustee Agencies

1.4.1 Lead Agency

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines, Sections 15050 through 15053 and 15367, the City of Anaheim is the designated lead agency, which is defined as the “public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project.” The lead agency is also responsible for determining the scope of the environmental analysis, preparing the EIR, and responding to comments received on the Draft EIR. Before making a decision to approve a project, the lead agency is required to certify that the EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA, the decision-making body has reviewed and considered the information in the EIR, and the EIR reflects the independent judgment of the lead agency.

1.4.2 Responsible and Trustee Agencies

Responsible agencies are state and local public agencies, other than the lead agency, that have some authority to carry out or approve a project or that are required to approve a portion of a project or a permit for which a lead agency is preparing or has prepared an EIR or Negative Declaration (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15381). Trustee agencies are designated public agencies with legal jurisdiction over natural resources that are held in trust for the people of California and that would be affected by a project, whether or not the agencies have authority to approve or implement the project (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15386). The following agencies would potentially act as responsible and/or trustee agencies for the purposes of the project:

- **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).** The project involves approval of Sections 7 and 10(a) of the Endangered Species Act compliance. Section 7 ensures that federal agencies, in carrying out their programs, utilize their authorities to conserve endangered and threatened species and prevent their actions from jeopardizing listed species or destroying or adversely modifying their critical habitat. It applies to actions that federal agencies fund, authorize, or carry out, where there is discretionary federal involvement or control, and it requires the applicant to submit a permit application to the USFWS. Section 10(a) of the Endangered Species Act allows for incidental take permits for activities that might otherwise be illegal, provided a HCP is in place.
- **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).** Approval of Section 404 Permit, Section 408 Permit. Section 404 establishes a permit program administered by the USACE that regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, including wetlands. Section 408 program allows the City of Anaheim to alter a UCACE civil works project. The Santa Ana River is UCACE’s civil works project.

- **California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).** The project site includes the Santa Ana River and surrounding area, which is valuable habitat for biological resources. The project would be subject to review by CDFW for activities that may impact biological resources. The CDFW would also provide biological expertise to review and comment on the CEQA documents prepared. The project could alter streambeds and/or riparian habitats and would require approval of a California Fish and Game Code Section 1602 permit which requires that for such projects, any entity, including any state or local governmental agency, provide written notification to the CDFW before beginning any construction project.
- **California Department of Transportation (Caltrans).** The Project site is within the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) facilities, including State Route 57. Caltrans' approval would be required for any encroachments or construction of facilities in a Caltrans right-of-way associated with the project's conditions of approval.
- **State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).** For projects with federal funding or requiring federal approvals, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended by U.S. Code, Title 16, Section 470 et seq., and the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 36, Section 800, includes provisions for protection of significant archaeological and historical resources. The SHPO is the administering agency of Section 106 compliance. The project is federally funded and would be subject to approval with Section 106.
- **California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC).** CPUC regulates the construction, alteration, and maintenance of railroad crossings, including undercrossings. The CPUC has jurisdiction over the design, construction, alteration, and maintenance of rail crossings (both at-grade and grade-separated), therefore, approval of railroad undercrossings at UPRR north of Katella and at Metrolink/LOSSAN adjacent to ARTIC will be required.
- **California Department of Water Resources (DWR).** DWR provides oversight, support, and evaluation of Groundwater Sustainability Agencies and Groundwater Sustainability Plans under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. DWR will provide review and oversight support on groundwater issues if not covered by OCWD.
- **California State Water Board, Division of Drinking Water (DDW).** DDW is responsible for regulating potable water use under Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations. DDW reviews the engineering report for GWRS water and issues permits related to potable reuse. The project will require approval of a Title 22 Reuse Permit Amendment for GWRS water to ensure public health protection.
- **Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB).** The Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board regulates water quality through the federal Clean Water Act Section 401 Certification process and oversees the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit No. CAS612008. The RWQCB is responsible for implementing permitting, compliance, and other activities to reduce pollutants in

- municipal, construction, and industrial stormwater runoff, including overseeing the development and implementation of Water Quality Improvement Plans as required by the Regional Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit for the Santa Ana region, which includes the City, as well as ensuring that all other Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit requirements are met. Regional Water Quality Control Board's Division of Drinking Water oversees the use of recycled water in the State of California by issuing waste discharge permits to ensure compliance with water quality standards and environmental regulations. The OCWD GWRS Waste Discharge Requirements and Master Recycling Permit will be amended to include the impoundments within the Santa Ana River for groundwater recharge and potential recreational activities within the SAR.
- **Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA).** The SCRRA operates Metrolink, a commuter rail system in the Southern California region. The project site intersects with Metrolink rail lines. SCRRA approval would be required for encroachment related to Metrolink facilities associated with the project.
 - **City of Orange.** The City of Orange is the local permitting agency for incorporated portions of Orange, California. Portions of the project site are within the City of Orange. The City of Orange's approval would be required for any encroachments or access associated with the Project.
 - **Orange County Flood Control District (OCFCD).** The OCFCD is responsible for regional and local drainage and flood control facilities throughout the County. The project site would involve connections to OCFCD drainage and flood control facilities. OCFCD approval would be required for any encroachments, construction, or use of facilities associated with the project.
 - **Orange County Public Works (OCPW).** The OCPW is responsible for the approval of construction and general use permits for projects within Orange County. Projects are required to obtain permits prior to the start of construction. OCPW's approval would be required for construction activities associated with the project.
 - **Orange County Parks.** Orange County Parks is responsible for the maintenance and operation of Orange County's parkland, open space, and shorelines. Portions of the SART that are within Orange County Parks' jurisdiction are also within the project site. Orange County Parks' approval would be required for any use of facilities associated with the project.
 - **Orange County Water District (OCWD).** OCWD is a groundwater wholesaler agency responsible for management and protection of the Orange County Groundwater Basin. The project involves the creation of river impoundments that would result in additional groundwater recharge in the Orange County Groundwater Basin. OCWD's review and approval would be required to ensure that the project would not impact groundwater quality as well as consent to own and operate the inflatable dams.

- **Orange County Sanitation District (OCSAN).** The OCSAN is responsible for sewer facilities operation and maintenance throughout Orange County. The project includes on and offsite sewer improvements. OCSAN’s approval would be required for encroachment or use of OCSAN facilities associated with the project.
- **Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA).** OCTA is the public transportation provider for Orange County and is responsible for public bus and train services. Rail lines operated by OCTA, including Metrolink and Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor, intersect the project site. OCTA’s approval would be required for encroachment and access of OCTA rail lines associated with the project, including those located on the project site.

1.5 Environmental Impact Report Review Process

1.5.1 Notice of Preparation

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines, Section 15082, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) was circulated for public and public agency reviews from March 23, 2023, through April 24, 2023 (included as Appendix A). The purpose of the NOP is to provide notification that an EIR for the project is being prepared and to solicit guidance on the scope and content of the document.

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15082, the lead agency held a public scoping meeting on March 29, 2023. Public agencies and members of the public were invited to attend and provide input on the scope of this EIR. Comments from the public and public agencies in response to the NOP are provided in Appendix B and summarized in Table 1-1, NOP Comment Summary.

Table 1-1. NOP Comment Summary

Commenting Agency	Summary of Comments	Responses/EIR Sections Where Issues Addressed
City of Orange	No comment.	N/A
City of Irvine	No comment.	N/A
City of Fullerton	No comment.	N/A
Orange County Water District (OCWD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include discussion of conveyance facilities. • Include discussion of groundwater replenishment system (GWRS) water in Santa Ana River. 	Description of the OCWD GWRS turnout structure is included in Section 2.3.1, Orange County Water District Groundwater Replenishment System Turnout Structure.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include an assessment of GWRS water quality compatibility with the project area/features needs. • How will the project seek to control/eliminate algae growth? • Any potential chemical addition, polishing treatment, or other modifications to GWRS water quality will need to be addressed. 	Refer to Section 4.7, Hydrology and Water Quality. Specifically, refer to Section 4.7.4.6, Threshold HYD-5: Water Quality Control Plan.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will the project create new wildlife habitat and any associated new obligations for Anaheim and/or OCWD? 	<p>The project will not create permanent new wildlife habitat, as the impoundments will be periodically emptied with the deflation of the rubber dams. Improvements to the river corridor's ecology will result from cleaner water and landscaping along the river corridor. The project would not impose new obligations on Anaheim and/or OCWD.</p>
<p>Orange County Public Works (OCPW)</p>	<p>OC Flood Program/Floodplain Management – Engineering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hydrology and Hydraulics – design standards will meet USACE and OCFCD criteria, including levee design, vegetation, freeboard, etc. The Channel is designed to function and accommodate flows as part of the Santa Ana River Mainstem (SARM) system that includes Prado Dam, Prado Basin, Seven Oaks Dam and various dike features. 	<p>The project would be designed to meet design standards of USACE and Orange County Flood Control District (OCFCD) through the 408 permitting process. See Section 2.4, Project Components, and Appendix G, Hydrology and Hydraulics, Chapter 6.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impoundment of water must demonstrate no impact to local drainage and/or interior drainage to the surrounding areas during any storm events. Explain and address any effects of the impoundment on the Collins Channel (OCFCD Facility No. E07). This channel contains deficient segments that may require future improvements. The potential development should not worsen the existing conditions or shift flooding deficiencies to this channel. Similarly, please explain how these improvements would impact the Chantilly Storm Channel (OCFCD Facility No. E01S02). Further discussions are also needed for the proposed structures for urban storm water treatment and their effects on the functions of these flood control facilities. 	<p>Refer to Section 4.7, Hydrology and Water Quality, and Appendix G, Hydrology and Hydraulics.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structural and Bridges – design standards will meet USACE and OCFCD criteria, including freeboard, scour, debris, etc. Improvements and structures will need to withstand the velocity of the water from Prado Dam releases. 	<p>Refer to Section 2.4, Project Components, and Appendix G, Hydrology and Hydraulics, Chapter 2.</p>

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	<p>Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project will require OCFCD Encroachment, Section 408 and 404 Permits. Prior to OCFCD's participation in the Section 408 Permit process, the cities of Anaheim and Orange are required to enter into a cooperative agreement with OCFCD and OC Parks for the OC River Walk Project, which will be approved and executed by an authorized representative of the County of Orange Board of Supervisors. 	<p>Refer to Section 2.5.1, Other Agency Approvals, and Appendix G, Hydrology and Hydraulics, Chapter 3.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary Construction Easements needs to be identified and secured for the duration of the project. 	<p>Various stakeholders for the temporary construction easements are listed in Section 2.5.1, Other Agency Approvals.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A flood contingency plan will be required for review and approval by OCFCD and USACE. 	<p>Review and approval of a flood contingency plan are listed under UCACE and OCFCD in Section 2.5.1, Other Agency Approvals.</p>
	<p>Public Services Impacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project has features proposed within areas of the Channel that are owned by OCFCD and that are outside of public right-of-way. These areas are currently not publicly accessible due to concerns for safety, hazard prevention and public health. The Initial Study should mention that the public is not authorized to be on the Channel's grouted riprap currently, as it would be considered trespassing and hazardous. 	<p>Refer to Section 2.1.2, Existing Land Uses. It states that the public is currently not authorized to be within the Santa Ana River channel or on the channel's grouted riprap embankments.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Initial Study also did not acknowledge the need to analyze the project impacts on public services. Due to the project increasing accessibility to the public on the Channel, it is appropriate for the EIR to analyze an increased reliance on local police and reflect that the respective cities' police forces will mitigate such impacts by perhaps increasing personnel, increasing patrols, improving lighting, taking efforts to prevent overnight encampments, perform debris and graffiti removal. 	<p>Refer to Section 6.4, Effects Found Not to Be Significant. Also, the City of Anaheim would be required to enter into a separate Maintenance and Operations Agreement with the City of Orange, County of Orange, and Orange County Water District for the long-term maintenance and operation of the project. See Mitigation Measure HYD-1.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Similarly due to the project increasing accessibility to the public on the Channel, it is appropriate for the EIR to analyze impacts to performance of flood control and protection activities. The existing Channel is currently eligible for Public Law 84-99 program coverage. When flood conditions exceed, or are predicted to exceed, the response capability of levee and drainage districts and local or state governments, the USACE has the authority under Public Law 84-99 to provide emergency flood response 	<p>Refer to Section 2.4, Project Components. The project would not affect the eligibility status under PL 84-99.</p>

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	<p>assistance without further specific authorization of Congress. The USACE can furnish assistance for flood emergency preparation, flood fighting, and the repair and restoration of certain flood damage reduction projects damaged or destroyed by flood. Assistance also includes providing flood fighting personnel for technical advice, sandbags, plastic sheeting, pumps, or other materials and equipment for an imminent or actual flood emergency to protect against substantial loss of life and property. The City will need to ensure that the project will not change the Channel's Public Law 84-99 eligibility status and ensure that the City will be responsible for any flood control feature replacements not covered by PL 84-99.</p>	
	<p>Right-of-Way:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permittee is required to identify ROW needed for the project construction phase and post construction, if any. The City will need to offer to purchase from OCFCD ROW necessary for the project based upon a market appraisal, and acquire said rights, interest or authorizations to use of OCFCD land and/or facilities prior to commencing work for the project on OCFCD land and/or facilities. Any ROW interest or use agreement with include terms for the City to be fully responsible for any increased fiscal obligations incurred by OCFCD or the County and shall include indemnification and hold harmless terms for City to assume all liability and risk associated with the project. Each ROW document and agreement will include terms stating that the primary function of the Channel is flood control for SARM system that serves other counties upstream. As it may be found inappropriate for the project to hinder receipt of water flows in a storm event, impacting communities all along the Channel, the EIR will need to show it is not offending basic water rights. 	<p>Appropriate rights-of-way will be identified for the construction phase of the project prior to the initiation of each project element. Section 2.5.1, Other Agency Approvals, lists the agencies and discretionary actions anticipated for the project. Additionally, this comment does not pertain to the physical environmental effects of the project. The City of Orange is actively negotiating with the County of Orange for a long-term easement agreement.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any proposed bridges for the project may require new bridge and highway easement(s) and/or other ROW agreement that the City would be responsible for the operation and maintenance of said bridge, including pier noses and footings, and that City will be responsible for any damages to flood features caused by the structure's presence in the Channel. 	<p>The City acknowledges the comment and will acquire the easement(s) necessary to implement the project. The City would also be responsible for maintenance and operation, as specified in the future maintenance and operations agreement(s) (refer to Mitigation Measure HYD-1 in Section 4.7, Hydrology and Water Quality).</p>

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	<p>Operations & Maintenance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Santa Ana River’s primary function is flood control; therefore, the permittee will be required to operate and maintain all functions of the OC River Walk components, including but not limited to, any levee bank modifications/benches, vegetation, trails, bridges, water impoundment features, lighting, access to and from trails, fencing, gates, etc. 	<p>The City concurs with the comment.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permittee is required to enter into a cooperative agreement with OCFCD and OC Parks and/or a Lease Agreement with OCFCD for the use of OC River Walk. 	<p>The City acknowledges the comment and will enter into a cooperative and/or lease agreements with appropriate agencies. Section 2.5.1, Other Agency Approvals, lists the agencies and discretionary actions anticipated for the project. Additionally, the City of Orange is actively negotiating with the County of Orange for a long-term easement agreement.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A flood contingency plan may be required to address water impoundment and unexpected release(s) from Prado Dam. 	<p>The need for a flood contingency plan would be determined as part of the future maintenance and operations agreement.</p>
	<p>Environmental:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the environmental and hydrological impacts of multiple impoundments operating at same time? 	<p>Refer to Section 4.7, Hydrology and Water Quality.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any and all resource agency or regulatory permits, agreements, or other instruments which may impact OCFCD must be approved prior by the Director of OC Public Works. City shall obtain reasonable and appropriate regulatory advance guidance on approved “safe harbor” performance allowable for all stages of the project and when applicable, make earnest effort to facilitate agreements with specific regulatory agencies, such as a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement or California Endangered Species Act Incidental Take Permit, to safeguard District regarding liability issues for Channel operation and maintenance impacted by the project. 	<p>Section 2.5.1, Other Agency Approvals, lists the agencies and discretionary actions anticipated for the project, which includes regulatory permits from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, to safeguard the OCFCD regarding liability issues for the Santa Ana River channel operation and maintenance impacted by the project. Furthermore, the City of Anaheim would be required to enter into a separate Maintenance and Operations Agreement with the City of Orange, County of Orange, and Orange County Water District for the long-term maintenance and operation of the project. See Mitigation Measure HYD-1, Section 4.7, Hydrology and Water Quality.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address any public health concerns regarding recreational use of the water in the Channel; include water quality and post-storm event procedures in an Operation and Maintenance Manual provided to OCFCD via encroachment permit for review and approval. 	<p>The City of Anaheim would be required to enter into a separate Maintenance and Operations Agreement with the City of Orange, County of Orange, and Orange County Water District for the long-term maintenance and operation of the project. See Mitigation Measure HYD-1, Section 4.7, Hydrology and Water Quality.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An assessment should be carried out to identify specific opportunities that can be incorporated into the project to benefit wildlife and specifically wildlife that relies upon riverine and riparian conditions. For example, there are opportunities to: (1) include vegetated bioengineered solutions on the riverbank to encourage native vegetation rather than just reinforcing the slopes with hard engineering solutions, (2) provide better connectivity to adjacent basins to improve habitat for wildlife, (3) establish better quality in channel habitats at the upper limits of the proposed impoundments, as the water becomes shallow, potentially with a reduced need to entrain the river for recharge if greater recharge is occurring in the basins. The assessment should consider these and other habitat and environmental improvement opportunities. The LA River Master Plan is a good reference for identifying and incorporating multifunctional benefits into a development such as this. 	<p>The project is required to be designed to comply with the USACE's Guidelines for Landscape Planting and Vegetation Management at Levees, Floodwalls, Embankment Dams, and Appurtenant Structure (ELT 1110-2-583). Section 4, Design Considerations. Suitable vegetation will be determined through the 408 permitting processes. While there are opportunities to include vegetated bioengineered solutions on the riverbank to encourage native vegetation, the project is required to adhere to the options outlined in the USACE document such as the use of planter boxes.</p>
	<p>River Bank Modifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a significant opportunity for this project to enhance the biological diversity of the river and especially the river banks in a manner that is conducive with the wider aims of the project. Section 1.4.1.2 only discusses hard engineering solutions for bank modifications. There is an opportunity to utilize both hard engineering solutions and soft bio-engineering solutions to create attractive riparian vegetated areas, provide habitat for wildlife and can help with water quality treatment. 	<p>The project would be designed in compliance with the USACE's Guidelines for Landscape Planting and Vegetation Management at Levees, Floodwalls, Embankment Dams, and Appurtenant Structure (ELT 1110-2-583), Section 4, Design Considerations, which would be reviewed and approved through the 408 permitting processes.</p>
	<p>Urban Stormwater Treatment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on the urban stormwater treatment is vague. Is this in reference to an Irvine Ranch Water District San Joaquin Marsh style natural water treatment system? There is also the opportunity to utilize low impact development (LID) techniques to treat storm and dry weather runoff along and adjacent to the trail. There is 	<p>Refer to Section 4.7, Hydrology and Water Quality. The project would be designed to comply with the North Orange County TGD and Model WQMP to achieve MS4 permit compliance. Furthermore, the project would be designed in compliance with the USACE's Guidelines for Landscape</p>

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	<p>also the potential to allow more native vegetation to grow in the channel itself outside of the impounded reaches. Vegetation can help to improve water quality, as well as providing habitat for wildlife and is visually appealing. If a Safe Harbor Agreement is established for this development any vegetation could be managed as needed for flood and other purposes without falling afoul of endangered species legislation.</p>	<p>Planting and Vegetation Management at Levees, Floodwalls, Embankment Dams, and Appurtenant Structure (ELT 1110-2-583), Section 4, Design Considerations, which would be reviewed and approved through the 408 permitting processes.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 2.4.15 Public Services – Additional substantiation should be included to confirm fire and police services can maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives with the “influx of local community and tourists.” 	<p>Refer to Section 6.4, Effects Found Not to Be Significant. Also, the City of Anaheim would be required to enter into a separate Maintenance and Operations Agreement with the City of Orange, County of Orange, and Orange County Water District for the long-term maintenance and operation of the project. See Mitigation Measure HYD-1.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 2.4.17 Transportation – The project should evaluate how the anticipated influx of local community and tourist will affect or interfere with an adopted emergency responses plan or emergency evacuation plan. In addition, the project description should include the anticipated number of trips for construction and operation generated by the project. Specifically, the analysis should evaluate whether the number of existing off-street parking facilities can accommodate the anticipated influx of local community and tourist. 	<p>Refer to Section 4.9, Transportation. The project improves the existing active transportation facilities along the project boundaries and would be compatible with the adjacent OCVIBE project.</p>
	<p>OC Environmental Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects that, as part of a common plan of development, disturb one or more acres are required to obtain coverage under the General Permit for Discharges of Storm Water Associated with Construction Activity, Order 2009-0009-DWQ (and subsequent Order 2022-0057-DWQ) and implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and monitoring program consistent with permit requirements. 	<p>Refer to Section 4.7, Hydrology and Water Quality.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific mention should be made of whether the project qualifies as a Priority Development Project under the city’s municipal stormwater permit (Santa Ana Regional Board Order R8-2009-0030), or instead is a Non-Priority Project which would require preparation of a Non-Priority Water Quality Project Plan. 	<p>Refer to Section 4.7, Hydrology and Water Quality. The project would be designed to comply with the North Orange County TGD and Model WQMP to achieve MS4 permit compliance.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New development projects that create 10,000 square feet or more of impervious surface require the development of a Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP). Specific mention should be made of applicable city WQMP requirements for projects to comply with their municipal stormwater permits. 	<p>Refer to Section 4.7, Hydrology and Water Quality. The project would be designed to comply with the North Orange County TGD and Model WQMP to achieve MS4 permit compliance.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific mention should be made of the Orange County Stormwater Program’s Drainage Area Management Plan (DAMP). The DAMP is Orange County’s principal policy and program guidance document for stormwater management and includes a 2017 Technical Guidance Document to be followed in preparing the project’s WQMP. 	<p>Refer to Section 4.7, Hydrology and Water Quality. Section 4.7.1.1, Regulatory Setting.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific mention should be made of the potential water quality impacts from the project and identification of the anticipated pollutants to be generated or mobilized by the project should be provided. 	<p>Refer to Section 4.7, Hydrology and Water Quality. The project would be designed to comply with the North Orange County TGD and Model WQMP to achieve MS4 permit compliance, which would address water quality concerns.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In collaboration with the Orange County Water District (OCWD) and the OC Sanitation District (OC San) efforts to minimize urban runoff impacts to Orange County waters, OC Public Works continues to research low-flow, dry-weather season diversion project opportunities. OC Public Works is participating in the OC San Urban Runoff Optimization Study, which will identify, evaluate, and develop additional urban runoff diversion opportunities. Should any potential sanitary sewer diversions be considered for the surrounding storm drains around the OC River Walk Project, a permit from OC San would be required along with coordination with the Orange County Stormwater Program’s Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), which is administered by OC Environmental Resources. Diverted urban flows that are discharged into the sanitary sewer system would also be counted towards the collective 10 million gallons per day fee-waived allowance that is shared among the Orange County Permittees (County of Orange, Orange County Flood Control District (OCFCD), and cities). Other types of diversion projects, such as the Chantilly storm drain to Burris Basin, should also be coordinated with OC Public Works and potentially the Orange County Stormwater Program’s Watershed Improvement Projects Subcommittee (WIPS) referenced in the project’s engineering feasibility study. 	<p>Comment is noted. The City will coordinate with OCSAN related to review and permit for any potential sanitary sewer diversions surrounding storm drains around the OC River Walk Project, along with coordination with the Orange County Stormwater Program’s Technical Advisory Committee.</p>

Table 1-1. NOP Comment Summary

Commenting Agency	Summary of Comments	Responses/EIR Sections Where Issues Addressed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The OC River Walk Project is supplied by treated water from the OCWD's Groundwater Replenishment System that will be discharged into the Santa Ana River. National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting is anticipated to be required from the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board such as through an individual NPDES permit or other de minimis discharge permit. The discharge operations for the project and associated NPDES permit should be coordinated with OCFCD through the encroachment permit, in addition to other impacted regulatory agencies. 	<p>Refer to Section 4.7, Hydrology and Water Quality, Section 4.7.4.1.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project should evaluate how large high-flow offsite discharges, such as an emergency response from a fire, sanitary sewer release, illegal discharge, or water main break, would be addressed in the surrounding drainages if diverted or cut off from the Santa Ana River. For example, a large-scale fire and multi-agency water pollution response event occurred in this reach of the Santa Ana River in February 2022. 	<p>Refer to Section 4.7, Hydrology and Water Quality, Section 4.7.4.1.</p>
	<p>OC Parks – Trail and Adjacent Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All costs and responsibilities for OC River Walk elements that are proposed on County property, including but not limited to planning, permitting, construction, operation, maintenance and public safety, shall be borne by the City, and be fully compatible with flood control requirements and subject to a land lease acceptable to and approved by the Orange County Board of Supervisors. 	<p>The City of Anaheim would be responsible for the implementation of the OC River Walk Conceptual Master Plan, including but not limited to planning, permitting, construction, operation, maintenance, and public safety, as described and discussed throughout the EIR. The project is required to be fully compatible with flood control requirements and subject to and approved by the Orange County Board of Supervisors, as applicable.</p> <p>Furthermore, the City of Anaheim would be required to enter into a separate Maintenance and Operations Agreement with the City of Orange, County of Orange, and Orange County Water District for the long-term maintenance and operation of the project. See Mitigation Measure HYD-1, Section 4.7, Hydrology and Water Quality.</p>

Table 1-1. NOP Comment Summary

Commenting Agency	Summary of Comments	Responses/EIR Sections Where Issues Addressed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The term “alternative modes of transportation” is used throughout the document as something encouraged on the trails through the project area but is not defined. In the event this is intended to include motorized modes of transit such as e-bikes and e-scooters, it should be noted that on this portion of the trail system only Class 1 and 2 e-bikes are permitted. 	<p>The project would be operated in compliance with the existing SART operating rules and would therefore only permit Class 1 and Class 2 e-bikes, as stated.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The “Active (AT) Transportation” improvements described as it relates to the Santa Ana River Trail (SART) and other proposed trail segments is not well defined, so additional detail is needed, including defined conceptual development plans to identify/depict those improvements, to understand the impact of those improvements. 	<p>Refer to Chapter 2, Project Description, Section 2.4, and the OC River Walk Conceptual Master Plan (May 2025), available on the City’s website.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional detail is needed on which trail areas are proposed to be expanded to understand the level of physical impact that would occur within the trail areas, in order for the County to comment as it relates to our existing easements. 	<p>Refer to Chapter 2, Project Description, Section 2.4, and the OC River Walk Conceptual Master Plan (May 2025), available on the City’s website.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional detail is needed on the new pedestrian bridge identified that provides bike and pedestrian access across the river, as it is not clear how this bridge will interface with the existing trail locations. 	<p>Refer to Chapter 2, Project Description, Section 2.4, and the OC River Walk Conceptual Master Plan (May 2025), available on the City’s website.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscaping enhancement is identified as being a component of the project, but it is not clear what the enhancement will include and in what areas landscaping would be occurring as it is not defined in the plan. Additional detail regarding how the City will address this is needed for OC Parks to provide necessary feedback. 	<p>Refer to Chapter 2, Project Description, Section 2.4, and the OC River Walk Conceptual Master Plan (May 2025), available on the City’s website.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placing the SART on the East levee South of Katella to Orangewood may cause concern for multiple agencies. The service road is heavily used by OC Public Works (OCPW), OC Flood Control District (OCFCD), OC Watershed, OC Sheriff, and other agencies and contractors that utilize the Collins Yard, the OCFCD Storage yard, the OCPW and OC Parks SART Storage facility, and the OC Sheriff Training Facility. The East side, due to its heavy utilization as a service road, generates concerns related to incompatible use and potential safety concerns. 	<p>Comment is noted. Section 2.1.1, Existing Land Uses, describes the current uses of the maintenance road on the east side.</p>

Table 1-1. NOP Comment Summary

Commenting Agency	Summary of Comments	Responses/EIR Sections Where Issues Addressed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important for the City to address unwanted activities related to security, debris removal, and transient management as it relates to the addition of features accessible to the public and plan methods to minimize those impacts. Additional detail is needed on the proposed new trail areas and how additional improvement to the existing trail will interface with the surrounding uses, for the County to provide necessary feedback. Operating hours for the River Walk were not identified. The SART is closed at sunset, therefore if the design will encourage or allow use of the trail system outside the existing hours of operation, the City would need to make considerations for operating the River Walk that would take that into account. 	<p>The City of Anaheim would be required to enter into a separate Maintenance and Operations Agreement (MOA) with the City of Orange, County of Orange, and Orange County Water District for the long-term maintenance and operation of the project. The MOA will specify maintenance and operating details related to security, debris removal, and transient management. See Mitigation Measure HYD-1.</p> <p>Refer to Chapter 2, Project Description, Section 2.4, and the OC River Walk Conceptual Master Plan (May 2025), available on the City's website.</p> <p>Any recreation elements would generally operate between 5:30 a.m. and 10:30 p.m., which aligns with the City of Anaheim's standard operating schedule. The City of Orange's standard park operating hours are from 5 a.m. to 11 p.m. The SART operating hours will not change. It should be noted that the actual operating hours would be determined as part of the future maintenance and operations agreement(s). See Mitigation Measure HYD-1, Section 4.7, Hydrology and Water Quality.</p>
<p>California Department of Transportation, Regional-LDR-Transit Planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider incorporating bicycle parking if there are opportunities to do so. Continue to incorporate Complete Streets in project development, including connections to existing and proposed active transportation facilities in the project vicinity. Consider the need for more accessible and connected transportation system for achieving Caltrans' vision for equity. Consider the need for equitable access to amenities and resources, and consider referencing the City's own General Plan Environmental Justice Element. Any work performed within Caltrans right-of-way (R/W) will require discretionary review and approval by Caltrans and an encroachment permit will be required for any work within the Caltrans R/W prior to construction. Project plans and traffic control plans must be stamped and signed by a licensed engineer. 	<p>The project plans are conceptual at this time. Bicycle parking will be incorporated where feasible during the final site design phase.</p> <p>The project would improve the existing Santa Ana River Trail and provide more accessible and safe bike and pedestrian trail connection, thereby supporting the Complete Streets planning policy.</p> <p>The project would be open to all residents and visitors. Providing improved pedestrian and bike access would support providing more accessible and connected transportation system and community recreation amenities.</p> <p>Caltrans is listed as one of the responsible agencies and review and approval of access and encroachment permits within Caltrans R/W will be processed.</p>

Table 1-1. NOP Comment Summary

Commenting Agency	Summary of Comments	Responses/EIR Sections Where Issues Addressed
California Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics	Indicates that the Fullerton Municipal Airport is 10.5 miles from the project site.	The project site is approximately 10.5 miles from the Fullerton Airport, and is outside of Fullerton Airport Land Use Plan airport influence area.
Southern California of Association of Governments	SCAG provided information related to Connect SoCal (2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategies) to determine consistency with the project.	SCAG approved the 2024-2050 Connect SoCal in April 2024, after the NOP/IS was released. Appropriate discussion and consistency with the 2024-2050 is included in Chapter 3, Environmental Setting.
Native American Heritage Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommends consultation with California Native American tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the project site. • Includes requirements under Assembly Bill 52 and Senate Bill 18. 	See Section 4.10, Tribal Cultural Resources.

1.5.2 Draft Environmental Impact Report and Public Review

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15105, this Draft EIR is being circulated for public review and comment for a period of 45 days. During this period, the public and public agencies can submit comments on this EIR's accuracy and completeness to the lead agency. The 45-day public review period for this Draft EIR will be from July 24, 2025, through September 8, 2025. The public can review this Draft EIR at the following address during normal business hours (Monday through Friday, Business Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) or on the City of Anaheim's website at www.anaheim.net/876/Environmental-Documents.

Anaheim City Hall
Community Services Department, Parks Division
200 South Anaheim Boulevard, Suite 433
Anaheim, California 92805

The City of Anaheim encourages all comments on this Draft EIR to be submitted in writing. Comments or questions regarding this Draft EIR should be addressed to the following:

City of Anaheim – City Hall
Community Services Department, Parks Division
Attn: Ana Straabe, Principal Project Planner
200 South Anaheim Boulevard, Suite 433
Anaheim, California 92805

(714) 765-4463
AStraabe@anaheim.net

1.5.3 Final Environmental Impact Report and Certification

Upon completion of the Draft EIR public review period, a Final EIR will be prepared. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15132, the Final EIR will consist of (1) the Draft EIR; (2) the comments and recommendations received on the Draft EIR; (3) a list of people, organizations, and public agencies that commented on the Draft EIR; (4) the City of Anaheim’s responses to significant environmental points raised by the public and agency comments submitted during the review and consultation process; and (5) any other information the City of Anaheim has added to the Draft EIR. The Final EIR will also include a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program prepared in accordance with CEQA (California Public Resources Code, Section 21081.6). Before the City of Anaheim can review the project for approval, it must first certify that the EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA, that it has reviewed and considered the information in the EIR, and that the EIR reflects the independent judgment of the City of Anaheim. The City of Anaheim will also be required to adopt Findings of Fact and a Statement of Overriding Considerations (if any significant, unavoidable impacts are identified). If no significant, unavoidable impacts (assuming the City of Anaheim finds the proposed mitigation measures to be feasible) are identified, the City of Anaheim will not be required to adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations if it approves the project (California Public Resources Code, Section 21081).

1.6 Documents Incorporated by Reference

CEQA Guidelines, Section 15150, allows for incorporation by reference of “all or portions of another document which is a matter of public record or is generally available to the public.” Incorporation by reference is used principally as a means of reducing the size of EIRs. This EIR relies in part on data, environmental evaluations, mitigation measures, and other components of EIRs and plans prepared by the City of Anaheim for areas in the project vicinity. These documents are listed here and used as source documents for this EIR. These documents are available for public review during normal business hours (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) at The City of Anaheim’s Community Services Department located at 200 S. Anaheim Boulevard Suite 443, and on the City of Anaheim’s website at www.ocriverwalk.com.

- City of Anaheim General Plan (City of Anaheim 2004a)
- City of Anaheim General Plan EIR (City of Anaheim 2004b)
- City of Orange General Plan (City of Orange 2010a)
- City of Orange General Plan EIR (City of Orange 2010b)
- County of Orange General Plan (County of Orange 2012 [as updated])
- Orange County Water District Recycled Water Conveyance Improvement Project Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (OCWD 2022)
- Addendum No. 11 to the Revised Platinum Triangle Expansion Project Final Subsequent Environmental Impact Report No. 339 (City of Anaheim 2022)

- Addendum No. 13 to the Revised Platinum Triangle Expansion Project Final Subsequent Environmental Impact Report No. 339 (City of Anaheim 2024).
- OC River Walk Engineering Feasibility Study (PACE 2021).
- OC River Walk Conceptual Master Plan (PACE 2025)

1.7 Scope of the Environmental Impact Report

Based on a review of the project and comments received during the NOP public review period and preparation of an Initial Study (Appendix A), the City of Anaheim determined that an EIR that addresses the following environmental issue areas should be prepared. Other environmental issues identified in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines have been scoped out from further analysis, as they were determined to have no impact or less than significant impact in the Initial Study prepared during the Notice of Preparation process. Environmental issues found to have no or less than significant impacts are also included in Section 6.4, Effects Found Not to Be Significant.

- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Noise
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources

The specific topics evaluated are detailed in Chapter 4, Environmental Analysis, of this EIR (Sections 4.1 through 4.10).

This EIR evaluates direct impacts, reasonably foreseeable indirect impacts, and cumulative impacts resulting from planning, construction, and operation of the project using the most current information available and in accordance with the provisions set forth in CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines. In addition, this EIR recommends potentially feasible mitigation measures, where possible, and project alternatives that would reduce or eliminate significant, adverse environmental effects.

Chapter 5, Alternatives, of this EIR was prepared in accordance with Section 15126.6 of the CEQA Guidelines. CEQA requires that the lead agency adopt mitigation measures or alternatives, where feasible, to substantially lessen or avoid significant environmental impacts that would otherwise occur. However, project modification or alternatives are not required where significant environmental impacts would not occur.

This EIR evaluates the alternatives to the project as detailed in Chapter 5.

- **Alternative 1: No Project/No Improvements Alternative.** Under the No Project/No Improvements Alternative, none of the Group A, B, C, or D improvements as defined in Chapter 2, Project Description, would occur. Group A includes Impoundments,

Storm Drain Diversions, and Embankments; Group B includes New Pedestrian/Bike Bridges; Group C includes New Trails and Trail Improvements; and Group D includes Enhanced Community Recreation Amenities.

- **Alternative 2: Group A and C Impoundments and Trails Alternative.** Under this Alternative, only the Group A and Group C improvements as defined in Chapter 2 would be constructed.

1.8 Organization of the Environmental Impact Report

This EIR is organized into two parts. The Draft EIR addresses the potential environmental impacts of the physical development of the project and associated technical appendices in part 1. When the EIR is finalized, the Final EIR will contain the public, organization, and public agency comments received on the Draft EIR, the City of Anaheim’s responses to those comments, a summary of EIR revisions or enhancements, and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the project.

This Draft EIR includes the following:

Executive Summary. Summarizes the project, environmental impacts that would result from implementation of the project, proposed mitigation measures that would avoid or reduce impacts, and the level of significance of impacts both before and after mitigation.

Chapter 1, Introduction. Provides an introduction and overview of this EIR process and describes the intended use and scope of this EIR and the review process.

Chapter 2, Project Description. Provides a detailed description of the project, including its location; background information; project objectives; technical, economic, and environmental characteristics; and intended uses for this EIR.

Chapter 3, Environmental Setting. A description of the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project as they existed at the time the notice of preparation was published, from local and regional perspectives. These provide the baseline physical conditions from which the lead agency determines the significance of the project’s environmental impacts.

Chapter 4, Environmental Analysis. Describes the baseline environmental setting and provides an assessment of potential project impacts for each environmental issue area presented. Each section is divided into nine subsections: Environmental Setting; Thresholds of Significance; Plans, Programs, and Policies; Environmental Impacts; Cumulative Impacts; Level of Significance before Mitigation; Mitigation Measures; Level of Significance after Mitigation, and References.

Chapter 5, Alternatives. Describes and compares the proposed alternatives to the project.

Chapter 6, Other CEQA Considerations. Provides information required by CEQA regarding impacts that would result from the project, including a summary of cumulative impacts; secondary impacts,

including potential impacts resulting from growth inducement; and significant, irreversible changes to the environment.

Chapter 7, Individuals and Agencies Consulted. Lists the individuals and agencies that were consulted during the preparation of this EIR.

Chapter 8, References. Provides a list of references used in preparation of the analysis presented in this EIR.

Appendices. Includes various documents and data that support the analysis presented in this EIR.

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