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DATE: November 13, 2025

TO: State Clearinghouse, Public Agencies, Property Owners, Residents, and Interested Parties

FROM: City of San Juan Capistrano
32400 Paseo Adelanto
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
Contact: Laura Stokes, Planning Manager

SUBJECT: **Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report and Scoping Meeting for the Legacy Ranch Project**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of San Juan Capistrano (City), in its capacity as lead agency for the Legacy Ranch Project (proposed project), has determined that a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) should be prepared for the proposed project. The City will prepare a Draft EIR to analyze the impact of the proposed project in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Pub. Resources Code, Section 21000 *et seq.*).

In accordance with the provisions of the State CEQA Guidelines (Cal. Code of Regs., Section 15082(a), this Notice of Preparation (NOP) provides responsible and trustee agencies, nearby property owners, and other interested parties with a description of the proposed project and information on its potential environmental effects. The City also invites input and/or comments from public agencies and the general public as to the scope and content of the environmental information that will be studied in connection with this project.

PROJECT LOCATION: As shown on the attached **Figure 1**, the approximately 65.5-acre project site is located at 30291 Camino Capistrano, within the Northwest Open Space (NWOS) Specific Plan Area in San Juan Capistrano, Orange County (Assessor's Parcel Numbers [APNs] 121-050-03, -04, -14, -17, -18, -19, -20, and -29). The project site is bounded by single- family residential uses to the north, Camino Capistrano to the east, The Groves Apartments (multi-family residential) to the south, and an Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA)-owned rail line to the west utilized by the Metrolink commuter rail service and Amtrak's Pacific Surfliner route. Regional access is provided by Interstate 5 (I-5) east of the site, with direct access via Camino Capistrano, a Secondary Arterial roadway per the City's General Plan. **Figure 2** depicts the project site and land use in the surrounding areas.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The proposed project would develop the project site with the Legacy Ranch, which would consist of nine cores: Equestrian Core, Farm Stay Core, Chapel Core, Swanner House Core, Agricultural Core, Event Barn Core, Community Building Core, Natural Core, and Trail Core. Each core would incorporate community amenities, as described in more detail below. Most of the proposed uses and activities are currently identified as permissible uses in the NWOS Specific Plan; however, the following proposed uses and activities are not currently permitted:

- Up to four equestrian caretaker residences (adjunct to the equestrian facilities)
- Up to 70 overnight farm stay units and accessory uses and structures, including eating and drinking establishments open to the general public

- Retail farm stands
- Public passive recreation amenities

As such, the proposed project includes an Amendment to the NWOS Specific Plan in order to develop the Legacy Ranch on the project site. The amended NWOS Specific Plan would add the new land uses and activities identified above as permitted uses of the NWOS Specific Plan.

In addition, the proposed project is pursuing a CUP for use of the project site as a venue for group activities and community events, such as organized gatherings with a shared purpose (e.g., recreational, educational, cultural, or social), occurring between 8:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. The CUP would also allow food and beverage services, including the service of alcoholic beverages in full compliance with all applicable permits and regulations of the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) and the use of amplified sound equipment, provided it does not exceed the noise limits established in the City of San Juan Capistrano's Noise Ordinance. The CUP would permit a maximum of 500 combined on-site guests and participants at any one time, inclusive of individuals attending events at the Swanner House. Any single or combined activity/event exceeding 500 participants at any one time would require a separate Special Activities Permit pursuant to San Juan Capistrano Municipal Code Section 9-3.547. The Special Activities Permit would provide for an increased number of attendees/participants in excess of the CUP threshold for a time period not to exceed 32 days per calendar year.

The proposed project would also amend the development standards of the NWOS Specific Plan, including reducing the required setback from the railroad track from 50 feet to 20 feet, removing the required internal setbacks from the Swanner House and Dr. Joe Cortese Dog Park, and reducing the required setback from the existing trails from 25 feet to 5 feet. The proposed project would preserve the existing uses on the project site, including the Swanner House, Dr. John Cortese Dog Park, and Putuidem Village, and would provide greater access to each of these existing uses. The attached **Figure 3** depicts the nine proposed Legacy Ranch cores on the project site and the proposed amenities within each core.

Access, Circulation, and Parking: Access to the proposed Legacy Ranch would be provided by three ingress/egress driveways from Camino Capistrano, including the existing access driveway south of the Swanner House and two proposed driveways that would provide access to the Community Building Core and entry road parking areas. Overall, the proposed project would provide a total of approximately 500 dedicated parking spaces. For large events, an additional approximately 1,225 temporary parking spaces could be provided by utilizing other areas throughout the project site. The location of temporary parking would be determined as part of securing a Conditional Use Permit, which may require the need for valet parking or a Special Activities Permit, which could further include additional temporary parking off-site and use of valet parking services.

The proposed project would also include a pedestrian bridge over Trabuco Creek that would connect the Community Building Core to the rest of the Legacy Ranch, internal decomposed granite roads, pedestrian paths, and new trail connections to the Trabuco Creek Trail throughout the project site.

Landscaping and Open Space: The proposed project would include active and passive recreational facilities and extensive open space. Some existing trees and vegetation on the project site would be maintained and the proposed project would include new landscaping throughout the project site.

In addition, the approximately 14-acre existing conservation covenant encompassing Trabuco Creek and both its banks would be untouched by the proposed project. Development of proposed structures would be set back from the covenant boundary by an approximately 100-foot buffer, consistent with the NWOS Specific Plan Development Standards. Although the proposed pedestrian bridge over Trabuco Creek itself would traverse the 100-foot buffer and the Trabuco Creek conservation covenant, the footings for the proposed bridge are planned to be located outside of the jurisdictional boundary of the creek area.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED: Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15063, the City has determined that an EIR will be required for this project. An Initial Study for the

proposed project, which is available for review online, at the City's Development Services Department, and at the San Juan Capistrano Library (as listed below), has been prepared to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project. Based on the conclusions in the Initial Study, the following topics will be scoped out of the EIR: agriculture and forestry resources; land use and planning; mineral resources; population and housing; public services; recreation; and wildfire. These topic areas were adequately analyzed in the Initial Study, which will be included as an appendix to the focused EIR. Therefore, the focused EIR will analyze whether the proposed project would have a significant environmental impact in the following areas:

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

CORTESE LIST NOTICE: Per Public Resources Code § 21092.6(a), the project site is not included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code § 65962.5 (California Department of Toxic Substances Control list of various hazardous sites).

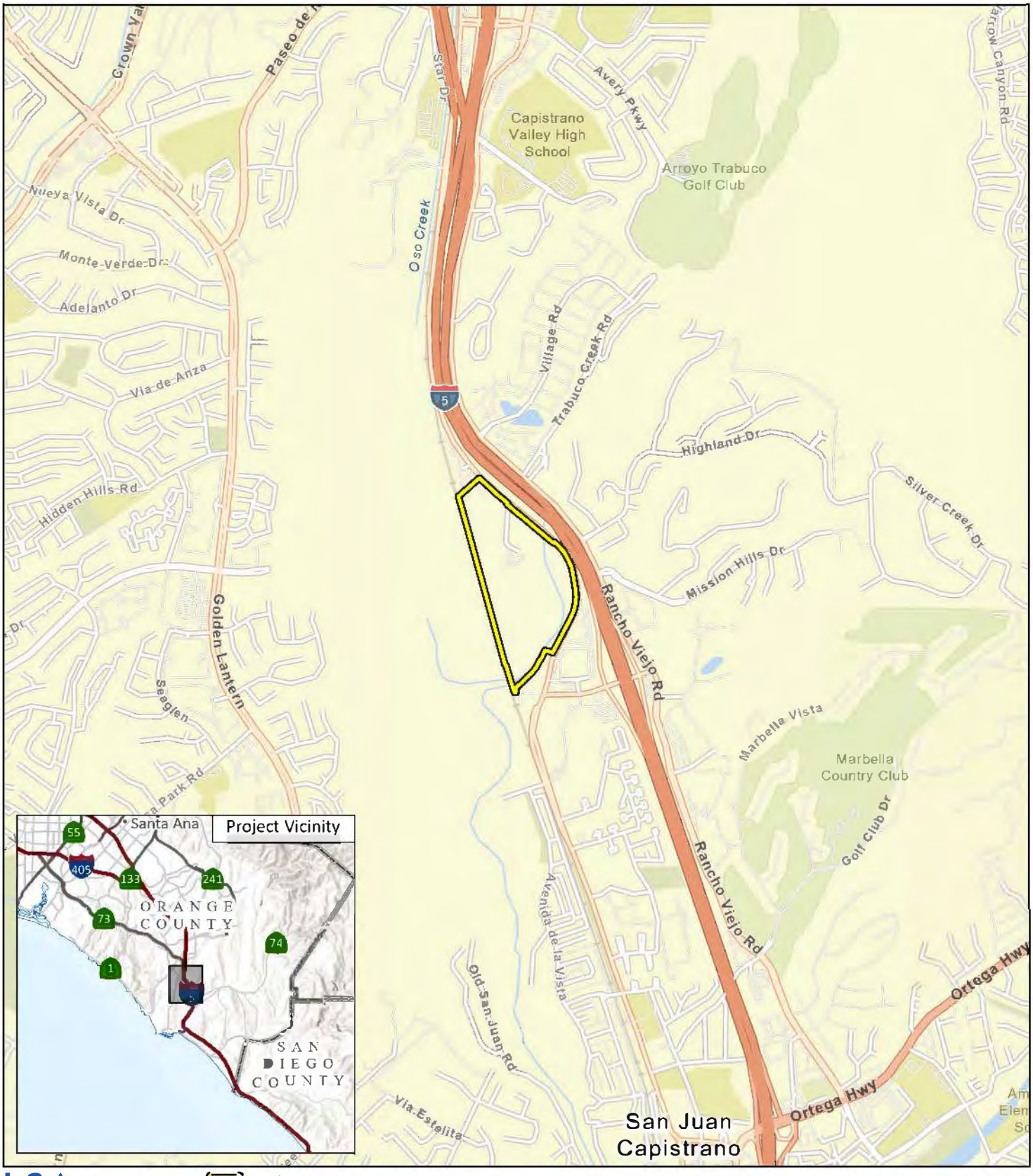
PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING: The City will hold a scoping meeting from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on November 19, 2025, at the La Sala Auditorium at 31495 El Camino Real – Entrance North of the Library, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675. The purpose of the scoping meeting is to present the proposed project, describe the Draft EIR process, and receive public comments. The City invites interested parties to participate in the scoping meeting to learn more about the project, ask questions, and submit comments.

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY: This Notice of Preparation (NOP) and the Initial Study prepared for the proposed project is available for review at the following locations

- City of San Juan Capistrano, Development Services Department, 32400 Paseo Adelanto, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
- San Juan Capistrano Library, 31495 El Camino Real, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
- City's website at the following address: https://sanjuancapistrano.org/221/Environmental-Documents

WRITTEN COMMENTS: All interested parties, including the public, responsible agencies, and trustee agencies, are invited to provide comments and input on the scope and content of the environmental analysis to be addressed in the Draft EIR. Responsible and trustee agencies should provide comments and input related to the agencies' respective areas of statutory responsibility. Comments received during the scoping period will be considered during preparation of the Draft EIR. The NOP comment period begins on November 13, 2025, and ends on December 15, 2025. Written comments must be submitted to the City of San Juan Capistrano by December 15, 2025, at 5:30 p.m., to be timely for consideration in the preparation of the EIR. Please direct your comments by e-mail or U.S. mail to:

Laura Stokes, Planning Manager
City of San Juan Capistrano
32400 Paseo Adelanto
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
(949) 443-6313
E-Mail: Lstokes@sanjuancapistrano.org



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FIGURE 1

SOURCE: Esri (2025)

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Legacy Ranch Project

Project Location and Regional Vicinity



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Project Site

FIGURE 2

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SOURCE: Google Imagery (2025)

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Legacy Ranch Project

Aerial Photograph of the Project Site and Surrounding Land Uses



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FIGURE 3

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SOURCE: Almquist 2025

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Legacy Ranch Project
Proposed Amenities