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DATE: July 2, 2026

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 Availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Legacy Ranch Project**

Pursuant to Public Resources Code Sections 21091 and 21092 and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15105 and 15087(a), notice is hereby given that a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) (SCH No: 2025110456) for the proposed Legacy Ranch Project (proposed project) is available for public review during the public comment period (July 3, 2026−August 17, 2026). The City of San Juan Capistrano (City) has prepared the DEIR to analyze environmental impacts associated with implementation of the proposed project; to discuss alternatives; and to propose mitigation measures for identified potentially significant impacts that will minimize, offset, or otherwise reduce or avoid those environmental impacts.

PROJECT LOCATION: 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 (senior living residential community) to the south, and an Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA)-owned rail line to the west used by 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.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The proposed project would develop the project site with the Legacy Ranch, which would consist of seven cores: Equestrian Core, Chapel Core, Swanner House Core, Agricultural Core, Event Barn Core, Community Building Core, and Trails/Natural Core. Each core would incorporate community amenities, including event space, equestrian uses, and opportunities for passive recreational activities. Most of the proposed uses and activities are currently identified as permissible uses in the NWOS Specific Plan; however, changes to permitted uses currently identified in the NWOS Specific Plan would include the following:

- Adding religious gatherings and removing caretaker quarters to the list of permitted events/uses at the Swanner House.

In addition to the permitted uses currently identified in the NWOS Specific Plan, the following proposed uses would be added as permitted uses:

- Farming-related retail stands and educational tours; and
- Passive recreation amenities.

Changes to the conditionally permitted uses currently identified in the NWOS Specific Plan would include the following:

- Changing the current conditionally permitted use pertaining to wedding venues to include all events venues, in addition to the Swanner House; and
- Changing the current conditionally permitted use to allow the sale and service of alcohol not involving the Swanner House.

In addition to the conditionally permitted uses currently identified in the NWOS Specific Plan the following proposed conditionally permitted uses would be added as conditionally permitted uses:

- Eating and Drinking Establishments; and
- Group, social, public and private event activities with 499 or fewer participants so long as the use does not restrict public access to the public trails, dog park, and Putuidem Village. Events may include ancillary services such as shuttle services, bus and trailer parking, food and beverage services, and amplified sound.

The following uses would be added as accessory uses to permitted or conditionally permitted uses:

- A maximum of four Caretakers Residences; and
- Offices.

In addition, the NWOS Specific Plan includes clarification that the allowed uses for the portion of the NWOS Specific Plan area owned by Orange County Flood Control District (OCFCD) shall be governed by its General Plan land use designation of Community Park (CP) and General Open Space (GOS).

The proposed project also includes an Amendment to the NWOS Specific Plan to allow for development of the Legacy Ranch on the project site. The amended NWOS Specific Plan would add the new land uses and activities identified above as permitted, conditionally permitted, and accessory uses of the NWOS Specific Plan.

In addition, the proposed project is pursuing a Conditional Use Permit (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 499 combined on-site guests and participants at any one time, inclusive of individuals attending events at the Swanner House.

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, reducing the required setback from the existing trails from 25 feet to five feet, and changing the Trabuco Creek setback to be 100 feet from the conservation covenant boundary instead of the creek edge. In addition, the following structures are permitted to be constructed within the required setbacks:

- Playgrounds;
- Public restrooms up to 1,500 square feet;
- Signage; and
- Shade structures with no more than 50 percent enclosed walls, 18 feet tall, and up to 500-square-foot setbacks may be reduced to 5 feet.

The proposed project also includes the preservation of 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 proposed project would also include a new 2,500-square-foot food service area within the dog park and 162 standard parking spaces associated with the dog park and the Putuidem Village.

Access, Circulation, and Parking: Access to the Legacy Ranch would be provided by two ingress/egress driveways from Camino Capistrano, including the existing access driveway south of the Swanner House and one proposed driveway that would provide access to the Community Building Core and entry road parking area. In addition, new internal asphalt roads would be constructed to provide access to the proposed parking areas within the Equestrian, Chapel, and Event Barn Cores.

Overall, the proposed project would provide a total of approximately 802 dedicated parking spaces throughout the proposed cores, including the 20 truck and trailer parking spaces within the proposed Equestrian Core. For large events, additional 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 CUP, which may require the need for 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. If present on the project site, existing trees that meet the criteria for designation as a Heritage Tree would be integrated into the landscape plan for the proposed project. In addition, the removal of any existing mature tree (i.e., a tree with a trunk diameter of six inches or more measured at three feet above grade) would require a Tree Removal Permit pursuant to Section 9-3.557 of the City's Municipal Code. Tree removal would meet the City's Tree Removal Permit requirements and conditions, including those related to the replacement of a mature tree.

In addition, the approximately 14-acre existing conservation covenant encompassing Trabuco Creek and both its banks would be untouched. 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 EFFECTS: 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), was prepared to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project. Based on the conclusions in the Initial Study, the following environmental topics were found not to be significant: 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 is included as an appendix to the DEIR.

The DEIR analyzed the following environmental topics to determine whether the proposed project would have a significant environmental impact:

- 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

The DEIR determined that all impacts related to the environmental topics listed above would either be less than significant or be reduced to less than significant with implementation of mitigation. No impacts were determined to be significant and unavoidable.

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).

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY: This Notice of Availability (NOA) and the DEIR 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 evaluation of environmental impacts that may result from adoption and implementation of the project. The 45-day review period for the DEIR begins on Friday, July 3, 2026, and ends on Monday, August 17, 2026. Written comments must be submitted to the City of San Juan Capistrano by August 17, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. Please direct your comments by e-mail or U.S. mail to:

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