

# Phase 1 General Plan Update Riverside Housing and Public Safety Update And Environmental Justice Policies

Quick Tips to Respond to the Draft Environmental Impact Report

Disclaimer: The following is intended to serve as a guide and is not intended to be legal advice.  
Please seek professional help from a lawyer if you have legal questions or concerns.

Please visit: [Project Website](#) for additional information on the Housing Element Update

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## What is a General Plan and the Housing and Public Safety Elements?

All cities in California are required to have a Housing Element as part of their adopted General Plan. The Housing Element is the City's plan for meeting the housing needs of all segments of Riverside's population and provides a strategy for promoting the construction of safe, decent, and affordable housing, per state law. State law requires regular updates to the Housing Element to ensure relevancy and accuracy. The City is also updating the Public Safety Element to strategically address safety issues within Riverside.

## What is an Environmental Impact Report (EIR)?

An EIR is a document that assesses and discloses the potential effects a Project (i.e., any action taken by a government agency) may have on some aspect of the physical environment, a requirement of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The EIR must answer a series of questions, organized into environmental topics like air quality, biological resources, transportation, etc., with a detailed analysis of how the project might create negative environmental consequences. The EIR must also identify ways the project can be modified to reduce these environmental effects through recommendation of mitigation measures. It is important to remember that an EIR is **not intended to approve or deny a project** – its primary purpose is to inform the public and decisionmakers of the potential environmental consequences of a project. A Draft EIR (DEIR) is circulated for public review and comment before it can finally be adopted with any changes as a Final EIR. This handout provides a quick guide to help you provide comments on the City's Phase 1 General Plan (DEIR). Lack of knowledge or expertise should not prevent you from commenting on the DEIR.

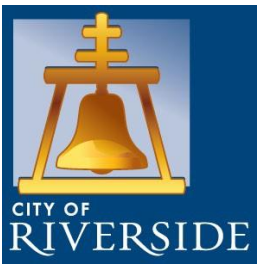
## What Do I Read First?

- Read the Project Description for a detailed overview of all components of the Project that will be analyzed in the DEIR.
- Read the Executive Summary for a brief summary of the proposed project and the DEIR conclusions.
- Read the DEIR Alternatives.
- Review the detailed analysis for those areas you are most familiar with or concerned about.

## Tips to respond effectively

1. **Evaluate the project objectively** – and be **SPECIFIC** with your comments. Generalities with no details are difficult for the City to respond to effectively.
2. **Identify your issues** – and provide your comments on each issue separately. Use headings if possible to help focus your concerns. Try not to mix topics.
3. List your concerns and try to **avoid personal statements** that you might include in a letter of support or non-support. Present facts when possible. Focus on the sufficiency of the DEIR, not your personal opinion of the project.
4. **Identify ways to avoid impacts or reduce the severity** of impacts. Provide ways to improve the alternatives that meet the objectives of the project. Point out outdated information or errors in logic. Point out any inconsistencies in the document or the data. Give specific examples if possible.
5. If you think that a **potential significant impact is missing**, or that **proposed mitigation has not been identified or is not adequate**:
  - a. Describe the potential significant impact you think is missing;
  - b. Explain why the potential significant impact will occur;
  - c. Explain the effect of the potential significant impact;
  - d. Explain what mitigation measure or change is recommended; and
  - e. Explain why the recommended changes will mitigate the potential significant impact.

***Para asistencia en español, llame al 951-826-5371***



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6. If you reference a document or study, **provide the City with a copy, if possible, or a link** on the internet. Do not assume the City has the document you are citing.
7. Include your **name and address** on your comment letter.
8. **Submit your letter before the deadline.** If you can, send your comments in early, so the City has time to consider your concerns.
9. Send your comments to the City **to the contact person:**  
Matthew Taylor, Senior Planner  
**Email** – [mtaylor@riversideca.gov](mailto:mtaylor@riversideca.gov)  
**Hard copy** - City Hall - 3900 Main Street, Riverside, CA 92522
10. Keep a copy of your **comments for your records.**
11. Include **your name or a contact person**, who would be available for questions or consultation.

### How Do I Get Through All This?

You do not have to read everything to participate in the process. Focus on what interests you. You could split up the various chapters with other members of your interest group. You could also consider writing one comment letter with multiple signatures.

### Common Terms

- Existing condition = setting = baseline for impact analysis
- No impact = no change in outcome from existing conditions
- Less Than Significant impact = an acceptable outcome
- Significant Impact = an unacceptable outcome = impact that exceeds the significance threshold = adverse
- Mitigatable = a significant impact that will be reduced to less than significant levels by the mitigation
- Unavoidable = a significant impact that will not be reduced to less than significant levels by the mitigation
- Draft EIR = Contains the detailed impact analysis
- Final EIR = Contains the Draft EIR (by reference) + all comments on the Draft EIR + responses to the comments + changes and clarifications to the Draft EIR

### Why should you provide comments?

- This is your chance to participate in the public process and give the City feedback on the DEIR. Your input is invaluable to the City and we appreciate your time and efforts in responding.
- The General Plan Phase 1 Update will lay out policies and actions for the City. This is your opportunity to voice your concerns!
- Any comments you provide to the City will be considered and addressed.

### What is the timing of the Update?

The Phase 1 General Plan Update, including the Housing Element update and rezoning of Opportunity Sites, must be completed by October 15, 2021. The City Planning Commission will hold a public hearing in September 2021 and City Council will hold a public hearing in October 2021. Both the Draft and Final EIRs will be completed as part of this process.

### Want to learn more?

Please visit the project website at [www.riversideca.gov/housingupdate](http://www.riversideca.gov/housingupdate) for more information and updates.

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