

CORTE MADERA INN REBUILD PROJECT
DRAFT
RECIRCULATED ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT NO. 2

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NUMBER 2014042069



Prepared for
Town of Corte Madera

November 2016

Prepared by
Amy Skewes-Cox, AICP

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In conjunction with
ENVIRONMENTAL COLLABORATIVE
NATALIE MACRIS
TOM CAMARA GRAPHICS
WORDSMITH WORD PROCESSING

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1. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

1.1 OVERVIEW OF RECIRCULATED EIR NO. 2

This document is a Recirculated Environmental Impact Report (REIR) prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA), as amended. The Town of Corte Madera is the lead agency for the project evaluated in this REIR.

This REIR is a recirculation of a portion of the Draft EIR (DEIR) (State Clearinghouse Number 2014042069) that addressed the Corte Madera Inn Rebuild Project and that was circulated for public review from November 17, 2014 to January 20, 2015. The DEIR was posted on the Town's website on November 17, 2014. Comments were received and a Final EIR (FEIR) was begun to respond to public and agency comments on the DEIR. During the FEIR process, it was determined that a portion of the DEIR should be significantly revised, and thus a first REIR was prepared in order to meet the requirements of CEQA. The first REIR was circulated from July 17, 2015 to August 31, 2015, and was also posted on the Town's website. The first REIR addressed changes to the traffic impact analysis and a new alternative. The FEIR, which provided responses to comments on the DEIR and the first REIR, was issued in November 2015.

Now, this second REIR, known as REIR No. 2, has been prepared to show changes to the Biological Resources section of the DEIR (Section 4.3) that are necessary to reflect new information that became available after circulation of the DEIR and first REIR. The new information resulted in identification of a new environmental impact related to sensitive natural communities.

According to Section 15088.5(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, "A lead agency is required to recirculate an EIR when significant new information is added to the EIR after public notice is given of the availability of the draft EIR for public review under Section 15087 but before certification.... New information added to an EIR is not 'significant' unless the EIR is changed in a way that deprives the public of a meaningful opportunity to comment upon a substantial adverse environmental effect of the project or a feasible way to mitigate or avoid such an effect (including a feasible project alternative) that the project's proponents have declined to implement."

CONTENTS OF REIR No. 2

This REIR No. 2 provides the following components that are intended to supplement the DEIR on the Corte Madera Inn Rebuild Project (State Clearinghouse Number 2014042069):

- Revisions to Section 4.3, Biological Resources, of the DEIR to address new information that became available after circulation of the DEIR and first REIR related to the on-site pond.
- Minor text revisions to Section 4.3, Biological Resources, mainly to provide additional information on the black-crowned night heron, an issue that was addressed in comments on the DEIR and in the FEIR.

REVISED BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ANALYSIS IN REIR No. 2

This REIR No. 2 addresses new information and new analyses related to conditions at the on-site pond, specifically related to the presence of submerged aquatic vegetation dominated by widgeon-grass (*Ruppia maritima*). Questions were raised about the conclusions in the DEIR related to vegetation conditions and the wetland status of the pond. Consequently, new studies were completed and the Biological Resources section has been revised. Additional information on the scope and process of preparing the revised Biological Resources section is provided in the "Introduction" of the revised section, which is provided in its entirety in Chapter 2 of this REIR No. 2.

Most of the changes made to the revised Section 4.3 (see Chapter 2 of this REIR No. 2) are to address the new information related to the on-site pond. In the revised Section 4.3, new text added as part of this REIR No. 2 is shown with underlining, and deleted text is shown with ~~strikeout~~.

Additional changes were previously made to Section 4.3 to respond to comments on the original DEIR that were addressed in the FEIR. In the revised Section 4.3 (see Chapter 2 of this REIR No. 2), changes that were made as a part of the FEIR are shown with double underlining.

PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT ON REIR No. 2

The Town has already closed the comment period for the original DEIR and the first REIR. The Town is now recirculating a portion of the DEIR (this REIR No. 2) and seeks public comment on only those portions of the DEIR that have been revised and are the subject of this REIR No. 2 in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5. These comments will be addressed in an updated FEIR. Other comments received during the REIR No. 2 public review period will not be addressed in the updated FEIR.

After the REIR No. 2 public review period has ended, responses to the comments on this REIR No. 2 will be prepared and the updated FEIR will be issued. The updated FEIR will address comments on the following three components: 1) the original DEIR, 2) the first REIR, and 3) REIR No. 2. See further discussion in Section 1.3, Public Review, below.

1.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

PROJECT ADDRESSED IN DEIR

As discussed in the DEIR, Reneson Hotels Inc., the project applicant, proposes the demolition of an existing hotel building and restaurant and the construction of a new 187-room hotel (the project) on the 5.47-acre Best Western Corte Madera Inn site (the project site) at 56 Madera Boulevard in Corte Madera.¹ No restaurant would be provided on the project site, and the project would result in

¹ Since the original application evaluated in the DEIR, the project was revised to include 174 rooms, with corresponding reductions in the number of proposed parking spaces (from 257 to 235 spaces) and the floor area ratio (from 0.55 to 0.5333).

a net gain of 77 hotel rooms. The primary access to the site would be from a single, relocated driveway on Madera Boulevard near a Highway 101 off-ramp.

As part of the proposed project, the existing 0.64-acre pond located at the northeastern edge of the site would be filled. New landscaping would be added throughout the site, concentrated near the building and around the perimeter of the property. The perimeter would also include surface parking.

The project would require a General Plan amendment and a rezoning to allow the proposed floor area ratio (FAR).² The General Plan amendment would change the Town of Corte Madera General Plan land use designation of the site from "Mixed-Use Commercial," which allows a maximum commercial FAR of 0.34, to "Motel/Hotel Highway Commercial," which would allow a maximum FAR of 0.55. This would be an entirely new General Plan designation for the Town. The rezoning would change the zoning of the site from C-3³ Highway Commercial with a Baylands Risk Zone and Natural Habitat Special Purpose Overlay to Motel/Hotel Highway Commercial with an FAR limit of 0.55 and the same Baylands Risk Zone and Natural Habitat Special Purpose Overlay. This would be an entirely new zoning designation for the Town. Design review, Preliminary Development Plan, and Precise Development Plan approvals would also be required prior to the issuance of any grading or building permits.

PUBLIC REVIEW OF DEIR AND FIRST REIR

The DEIR on the original project was made available for public review from November 17, 2014 to January 20, 2015. The general public was advised of the availability of the DEIR through notification via email and Notices of Availability mailed to neighbors of the project site. Public agencies and interest groups were also notified by mail. The DEIR was posted on the Town's website on November 17, 2014. A public hearing on the DEIR was held on December 9, 2014, to obtain oral public comments on the DEIR. During the public review period on the DEIR, written comments were also made on the DEIR. Public comments on the DEIR were addressed in the FEIR, which was published in November 2015.

The first REIR (addressing traffic circulation changes and a new project alternative) was circulated from July 17, 2015 to August 31, 2015, and was also posted on the Town's website. Written and oral comments received during the public review period for the first REIR were also addressed in a separate section of the FEIR published in November 2015.

Since publication of the FEIR, public hearings were held by the Corte Madera Planning Commission between December 2015 and April 2016 to discuss the merits of the proposed project and the adequacy of the EIR. At its April 26, 2016 meeting, the Corte Madera Planning Commission recommended that the Town Council of the Town of Corte Madera certify the EIR. On

² Floor area ratio (FAR) refers to the ratio of square footage of building area to the size of the site. Therefore, an FAR of 0.34 on a 1-acre site (43,560 square feet) would allow a building square footage of 14,810 square feet.

³ On October 18, 2016, the Town Council of the Town of Corte Madera adopted a zoning ordinance amendment rezoning the project site to MX-1 (Mixed Use – Tamal Vista Corridor) from C-3. This new zoning district for the project site will become effective on November 18, 2016.

April 28, 2016, new information was received from the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and Town Council hearings on certification of the EIR were put on hold while this new information could be addressed in a second REIR.

1.3 PUBLIC REVIEW

As stated in Section 15088.5(d) of the CEQA Guidelines, the lead agency need only recirculate the chapters or portions of the original DEIR that have been modified if the revision is limited to a few chapters or portions of the EIR. According to Section 15088.5(f)(2), when the EIR is revised only in part (which is the case herein), the lead agency may request that reviewers limit their comments to the revised chapters or portions of the REIR.

This REIR No. 2 will be circulated for review and comment by the public and other interested parties, agencies, and organizations for a 45-day period as indicated on the Public Notice of Availability of this document. The comment period for this REIR will be **November 15, 2016 to January 3, 2017**. More than 45 days have been allowed for the public review to account for the holiday period. During the public review period, written comments on the adequacy of REIR No. 2 may be submitted to:

Mr. Adam Wolff, Planning Director

Mailing Address: Town of Corte Madera Planning Department
300 Tamalpais Drive
Corte Madera, CA 94925-1418

Email Address: AWolff@tcmmail.org

Responses to all substantive comments received on the adequacy of REIR No. 2 and submitted within the specified review period will be prepared and included in the Responses to Comments/ FEIR. The FEIR will provide copies of written comments received, along with responses to the comments. The responses to comments on this REIR No. 2 will be prepared as a separate chapter of the FEIR (to distinguish the comments from those on the original DEIR and the first REIR). **Only comments related to the content of this REIR No. 2 will be addressed at this time.** The Town of Corte Madera Planning Commission will review the FEIR and make a recommendation, based on required findings, to the Corte Madera Town Council regarding certification of the EIR. Prior to any approvals for the project, the Corte Madera Town Council must certify the FEIR and adopt a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) for mitigation measures identified in REIR No. 2, the first REIR, and the DEIR, in accordance with the requirements of California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21001.

The comment period for the original DEIR and the first REIR is closed. No comments on the original DEIR or first REIR will be accepted at this time. Any comments on this REIR No. 2 should refer to it as such.

1.4 ORGANIZATION AND FORMAT OF REIR NO. 2

This REIR No. 2 is organized into the following chapters:

- **Chapter 1, Introduction and Summary:** Provides an introduction and overview that describes the contents and intended use of this REIR No. 2, project background, the REIR No. 2 process, and organization of the document.
- **Chapter 2, Revisions to DEIR Biological Resources Analysis:** Shows changes to the biological resources analysis in the DEIR (DEIR Table 2-2, Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures, and DEIR Section 4.3, Biological Resources). Changes made to Section 4.3 as part of this REIR No. 2 are shown using underlining for new text and ~~strikeouts~~ for removed text. Changes made to Section 4.3 that respond to comments on the original DEIR and that were addressed in the FEIR issued in November 2015 are shown with double underlining.
- **Appendices:** Appendices with biological information from the original DEIR and for this REIR No. 2 to cover technical biological information used in the analyses.

