

**CITY OF DAVIS**  
**ADVISORY COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**

DATE: September 3, 2015

TO: Bicycle, Transportation, Street Safety Commission (September 10)  
Finance and Budget Commission (September 14)  
Open Space and Habitat Commission (September 14)  
Recreation and Park Commission (September 17)  
Natural Resources Commission (September 28)

FROM: Michael Webb, Assistant City Manager  
Heidi Tschudin, Contract Project Manager

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**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

Staff recommends that each advisory commission undertake the following:

1. Receive a staff report regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Mace Ranch Innovation Center (MRIC).
2. Provide an opportunity for the public to comment on the DEIR (distributed to the Commission and public on August 13, 2015).
3. Provide written comments from the advisory commission prior to the extended community comment deadline of November 12, 2015.

*The DEIR is available online at the City's website located at [www.cityofdavis.org](http://www.cityofdavis.org), at the Department of Community Development and Sustainability, and at the Davis Branch Library and UC Library.*

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

The purpose of these meetings is to provide a summary overview of the MRIC DEIR and solicit comments regarding the adequacy of the subject DEIR as an informational tool for making decisions on the proposed project.

The state guidelines for determining the adequacy of an EIR state as follows:

*An EIR should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decisionmakers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences. An evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in the light of what is reasonably feasible. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR*

*should summarize the main points of disagreement among the experts. The courts have looked not for perfection but for adequacy, completeness, and a good faith effort at full disclosure. (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15151)*

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines require that formal written responses be prepared and made available for relevant comments received on the DEIR, including oral comments. These responses, plus the DEIR, will comprise the Final EIR for the MRIC project.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The MRIC project site is located northeast of Mace Boulevard and Interstate 80, on both sides of County Road (CR) 32A, within unincorporated Yolo County, east of the City of Davis city limits.

The 229-acre project site consists of:

- 212-acre MRIC site (Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 033-630-009; 033-650-009, and -026).
- 16.49-acre Mace Triangle site (APNs 033-630-006; -011; and -012).

There are two separate components to the proposed project:

1) MRIC site -- The proposed Innovation Center component of the project would include up to 2,654,000 square feet of innovation center uses and dedication of 64.6 acres of green space (including parks and open space) on a 212-acre site. Building space would be allocated in the following general manner: approximately 1,510,000 square feet for research/office/R&D uses; approximately 884,000 square feet for manufacturing and research uses; up to 260,000 square feet (10 percent) for supportive commercial uses, including a 160,000-square foot hotel/conference center and 100,000 square feet of supportive retail throughout the MRIC.

2) Mace Triangle site -- The City of Davis has included the 16.5-acre Mace Triangle within the overall project boundaries to ensure that an agricultural and unincorporated island is not created and to allow the continuation and expansion of existing uses. The EIR evaluates development of up to 71,056 square feet of general commercial uses including up to 45,900 square feet of research, office, and R&D, and up to 25,155 square feet of retail on the two privately owned parcels that make up a portion of the Mace Triangle properties.

Approval of the following entitlements is necessary for the project to proceed:

#### *Lead Agency Approvals – City of Davis*

- General Plan Amendment
- Rezoning

- Preliminary Planned Development (PPD)
- Site Plan and Architectural Review
- Development Agreement
- Action by the City Council to call for an election and set the baseline features of the project

*Responsible Agency Approvals – Yolo LAFCO*

- Combined Municipal Service Review (MSR) and Sphere of Influence (SOI) Amendment
- Annexation
- Detachment from the East Davis County Fire Protection District.

**SUMMARY OF DEIR**

An EIR is an informational document that examines and discloses the potential for adverse environmental impacts to result from any given action. Pursuant to CEQA, the City has prepared a Draft EIR which analyzes the potential adverse environmental impacts associated with development of the proposed MRIC project. The DEIR for the MRIC provides a detailed analysis of the potential for impacts in 15 topical areas under multiple scenarios including:

- Full project build-out
- Project build-out plus other cumulative growth

The DEIR also provides information about development of Phase 1 of the MRIC component alone.

A Final EIR (Response to Comments) document will be prepared following public review and comment. This subsequent volume will include responses to comments received on the DEIR, errata and/or other changes, modifications, or clarifications of the DEIR, identification of any other pertinent data or information, and a mitigation monitoring and reporting plan (MMRP). The City will consider this information when deliberating the project. Following certification of the Final EIR, the City may take action on the project application.

The DEIR identifies adverse environmental impacts that may result from development of the project as proposed. It also concludes that most of the identified impacts can be mitigated by specific actions called mitigation measures. However, some of the adverse impacts are likely to occur even with implementation of identified mitigation. These include impacts in the following areas:

- Visual character (Impacts 4.1-2 and 5-1)
- Agriculture (Impacts 4.2-1, 4.2-3, 4.2-4, and 5-3)
- Air Quality (Impacts 4.3-2 and 5-4)
- Biological Resources (Impacts 4.4-5 and 5-5)
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Impacts 4.7-1, 4.7-2, and 5-9)
- Traffic and Circulation (Impacts 4.14-2, 4.14-5, 5-21, 5-22, and 5-23)
- Population and Housing (Impacts 4.12-1 and 5-18)

- Cumulative Fire Protection Services (Impact 5-19)
- Growth Inducement (Impact 6.2.1)

### **DEIR Project Alternatives**

The DEIR examines seven project alternatives which provide additional important information and context for the community and Council to consider:

- No Project (No Build)
- Reduced Site Size
- Reduced Project
- Off-Site A (Davis Innovation Center Site)
- Off-Site B (Covell Property)
- Infill
- Mixed Use

The Draft EIR identifies the Mixed Use alternative as the environmentally superior alternative that also best meets all of the project objectives. The DEIR notes that because this alternative includes housing it is not consistent with the City's expressed goal of having only non-residential uses within the innovation center. While the Mixed Use Alternative is identified as the Environmentally Superior alternative under CEQA, the ultimate decision regarding feasibility of the alternatives lies with the City Council.

### **Cumulative Growth**

The DEIR evaluates impacts of the project combined with other reasonably foreseeable development. This DEIR assesses two cumulative scenarios, as follows:

- "CEQA" Cumulative Analysis – This scenario assumes full build-out of MRIC/Mace Triangle, General Plan, Nishi, and the Davis Innovation Center.
- "Modified" Cumulative Analysis – This scenario assumes full build-out of MRIC/Mace Triangle, General Plan, and Nishi. This scenario does not include the Davis Innovation Center.

The Davis Innovation Center was placed on hold by the applicant in May, with no indications of re-initiating the project. As such staff believes the Modified Cumulative Analysis presents a more realistic assessment of cumulative impacts.

### **Deadlines for Community and Agency Comments**

The DEIR was released August 13, 2015 for review and comment. The document is available online at the City's website located at [www.cityofdavis.org](http://www.cityofdavis.org), at the Department of Community Development and Sustainability, and at the Davis Branch Library and UC Library.

Comments from state and federal agencies will be accepted through the statutory review period ending September 28, 2015 (total 47 days). Pursuant to action taken by the City Council at their September 1, 2015 meeting, comments from the community will be accepted through an extended local review period ending November 12, 2015 (total 94 days). Pursuant to Section 15088a of the CEQA Guidelines, late comments will be considered only at the City's discretion.

All comments must be directed to:

MRIC Project Planner  
City of Davis Department of Community Development and Sustainability  
23 Russell Boulevard, Suite 2  
Davis, CA 95616  
[maceranchinctr@cityofdavis.org](mailto:maceranchinctr@cityofdavis.org)

### **OTHER ANALYSIS**

The City is also analyzing other important aspects of the project that do not get assessed directly through the DEIR. These include: fiscal and economic impacts, project design and architecture, community benefits, overall project merit. Reports addressing these topics will be released later in the process.

### **ROLE OF COMMISSIONS**

The chart on the next page summarizes the roles and responsibilities of the City's relevant advisory commissions. The focus of the subject round of advisory commission meetings is the adequacy of the DEIR regarding subject matter relevant to each commission. In January and February on 2016 there will be another round of advisory committee meetings which will focus on project design and merits within the relevant subject matter of each commission.

### **OTHER UPCOMING PUBLIC OUTREACH**

The City is currently scheduling public workshops to discuss the project. A calendar of these dates will be released soon.

### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Under the recently revised schedule, the Planning Commission will likely consider this project in February and March of 2016 and will be asked to make a recommendation to the City Council regarding final action on the project. The City Council will likely consider and take action on this project in April 2016.

### **PUBLIC VOTE**

Because this project involves annexation and conversion of agricultural land to urban uses, it is subject to the City's Measure R public vote requirement. If the City Council takes action to approve the project, it will be placed on the ballot for action by the voting citizens of Davis. Based on the recently revised schedule the earliest this could occur is November 2016.

<b>ADVISORY COMMISSION</b>	<b>RELEVANT SUBJECT MATTER</b>	<b>COMMISSION FOCUS</b>	<b>SCOPE OF PROJECT INPUT</b>
Bicycle, Transportation, Street Safety	Transportation; transit; bicycle and pedestrian circulation; vehicular circulation; street design; traffic operations and enforcement; traffic safety; parking; transportation infrastructure	Local citizen commission formed to allow community input on relevant subject matter	Within relevant subject matter, advisory comments on:  1) Policy consistency  2) Regulatory consistency  3) Design
Finance and Budget	City finances and budget; economic issues		
Natural Resources Commission	Water quality and supply; wastewater treatment; water conservation; air quality; solid waste and recycling; renewable energy; energy conservation; global warming; toxics and hazardous substances; natural resources		
Open Space and Habitat	Open space; habitat; natural areas; wildlife; agricultural land conservation; land acquisition; regional parks; trail systems; environmental education and interpretation; project site design related to open space and habitat; project O/M related to open space and habitat		
Recreation and Park	Public recreation and park planning; public art as related to design or theme of a park		
Planning	Land use; development; CEQA; general plan; specific plans; zoning; subdivisions	City planning agency authorized by state statute. Advisory to City Council on all matters related to land use and development with binding authority where authorized	Purview extends over all aspects of land use applications including:  1) Policy consistency  2) Regulatory consistency  3) Planning and design  4) CEQA compliance