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# 1 Introduction

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## 1.1 Environmental Review Process

On May 15, 2017, the Town of Loomis (Town) issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the proposed Loomis Costco Warehouse and associated fueling station (proposed project), in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970 (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15000 et seq.).

The project applicant, Costco Wholesale, is proposing to construct a warehouse retail store with an associated fueling station. Costco is a membership-only retail/wholesale business. The warehouse retail site would sell merchandise for commercial and personal use. Other goods and services provided would include tire sales and installation, sales of motor vehicle fuel including diesel, optical exams and sales, a photo center and processing, hearing aid testing and sales, food service preparation and sales, alcohol sales and tasting, and propane refueling. During seasonal sales promotions, temporary outdoor sales may occur within the parking field adjacent to the warehouse. The 17-acre project site is located in the Town of Loomis, southeast of the intersection of Sierra College Boulevard and Brace Road.

A Draft EIR (DEIR, State Clearinghouse #20170052077) for the proposed project was circulated for a 45-day public review period from June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018 through July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Based on public and agency comments received during the public review period on the 2018 DEIR related to transportation, the project applicant (Costco Wholesale) elected to revise the site plan to include additional options for site access. Options included an additional driveway from Brace Road and an additional access point from a to-be-constructed segment of Granite Drive. To assist the public and decision-makers in understanding the implications of offering additional access point options to the site, the Town provided a Recirculated DEIR for review from December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019 through February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

This Final EIR (FEIR) has been prepared by the Town in accordance with Sections 15089 and 15132 of the CEQA Guidelines.

## 1.2 Requirements for Responding to Comments

Public Resources Code Section 21091(d) requires a lead agency that has completed a DEIR to consult with and obtain comments from public agencies that have legal jurisdiction with respect to the proposed action, and to provide the general public with opportunities to comment on the DEIR.

Lead agencies are required to provide responses to comments at least 10 days before considering certification of the FEIR (CEQA Guidelines Section 15088[b]). For the Costco DEIR, the Town elected to recirculate the entire document and to revise the document in response to prior comments received. In accordance with the CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5(f)(1), the Town advised reviewers in the text of the Recirculated DEIR (RDEIR, page 1-3) that the previous comments do not require a written response in the FEIR, and that any comments intended for the Town's consideration must be submitted for the Recirculated EIR. No formal responses are provided to comments submitted on the previously circulated 2018 DEIR; however, substantive comments were addressed through the revisions and text changes in the Recirculated DEIR.

The CEQA Guidelines, Section 15088(a), state that written responses to comments received on the DEIR must describe the disposition of significant environmental issues. In particular, the major environmental issues raised when the lead agency's position differs from recommendations and objections raised in the comments must be addressed.

Responses are not required on comments regarding the merits of the proposed project or on issues not related to a proposed project's environmental impacts. Section 15088(c) of the CEQA Guidelines states that the level of detail contained in the response may correspond to the level of detail provided in the comment (i.e., responses to general comments may be general). A general response may be appropriate when a comment does not contain or specifically refer to readily available information, or does not explain the relevance of evidence submitted with the comment. Consistent with the requirements of CEQA and Section 15088 of the CEQA Guidelines, a reasoned response to all comments on environmental issues raised on the Recirculated DEIR are provided in this FEIR.

The FEIR to be considered for certification by the Town includes the Responses to Comments in their entirety, along with the balance of this FEIR and the 2019 Recirculated DEIR.

## 1.3 Requirements for Certification and Future Steps in Project Approval

The Town Council will consider the comments on the Recirculated DEIR and the responses to comments, as well as the whole of the administrative record, and will determine whether the EIR should be certified as adequate under CEQA. If so, the Town will adopt a resolution certifying the EIR, pursuant to Section 15090 of the CEQA Guidelines.

Once the EIR is certified, the Council will consider approval of the proposed project, and will adopt Findings pursuant to Section 15091 of the CEQA Guidelines, for each significant impact. For each significant environmental impact identified in the EIR, the Town must issue a written finding reaching one or more of three permissible conclusions. According to Section 15091 of the CEQA Guidelines, the three possible findings are:

1. Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the final EIR.
2. Such changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and not the agency making the finding. Such changes have been adopted by such other agency or can and should be adopted by such other agency.
3. Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the final EIR.

In addition, if one or more significant impacts is determined to be unavoidable, the Council must adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations, consistent with the CEQA Guidelines Section 15093, which finds that the benefits of the proposed project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effect, and explains the reasons and evidence supporting the Town's conclusion why the adverse environmental effects may therefore be considered acceptable.

If the Town determines to approve the proposed project, the Town will adopt a Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program (MMRP), consistent with Section 15097 of the CEQA Guidelines, that describes when each of the mitigation measures adopted for the project will be implemented, identifies the responsible implementing party, and provides a mechanism for monitoring or reporting on implementation.

## 1.4 Organization and Format of the Final EIR

Chapter 1, "**Introduction**," provides an overview of the EIR process, discusses the CEQA requirements for responding to comments on the DEIR, presents the requirements for project certification and approval, and presents the organization of the FEIR.

Chapter 2, "**Staff-Recommended Project Description**," describes the final project description to be considered as a part of the EIR for certification by the Town.

Chapter 3, "**Comments and Responses**," contains a list of all agencies, organizations, and persons who submitted comments on the Recirculated DEIR during the public review period, copies of the comment letters submitted, and individual responses to the comments as required by Section 15132 of the CEQA Guidelines.

Chapter 4, "**Corrections and Revisions to the Recirculated DEIR**," presents specific changes that were made to the text of the Recirculated DEIR in response to comments raised on significant environmental issues, or where clarification, further explanation, or correction was needed. Changes in the text are indicated by strikethrough (~~strikethrough~~) where text has been removed and by underline (underline) where text has been added. This chapter also contains errata to the Recirculated DEIR appendices.

Chapter 5, "**References**," identifies the new or supplemental documents and personal communications cited in this document.