

4.12 CULTURAL RESOURCES

This section describes the cultural and historical resources within the City of Cerritos. Identification of cultural and historical resource impacts that could result from implementation of the proposed General Plan Update and appropriate mitigation measures are provided.

4.12.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CERRITOS

In the early 1800s, the Cerritos of today was part of a large ranch, Rancho Los Nietos, owned by Manuel Nieto. The land was later divided into five separate ranchos. In the late 1800s the area was purchased and developed into farmland, including dairy farms. Soon dairy farming in the area reached an all time high. On April 24, 1956 Dairy Valley became an incorporated City. However, by the mid-1960s the value of land and increased property taxes made dairy operations difficult. In 1965 residents voted to change zoning in the City from agricultural to residential. Previous dairy lands became subdivided to develop housing tracts. On January 10, 1967, the name of Dairy Valley was changed to Cerritos. The name identified the City with its Spanish heritage and reflected the Rancho Los Cerritos land grant.

By April 1968, over 2,000 new homes were built or were in the process of being built. Construction had already begun on the San Gabriel River Freeway (I-605) and the Artesia Freeway (SR-91). By 1970, the population reached 15,865 residents, and the remaining dairy farms left the area.

The City of Cerritos made conscious decisions regarding the future of its development. The Los Cerritos Redevelopment Agency was established on November 17, 1970. Approximately 940 acres of underdeveloped pasturelands were identified as redevelopment areas. Development plans included concentration of automobile dealerships as well as a large retail and business center. The City developed the first large park in its vast park system. Public buildings such as City Hall, the Performing Arts Center and the recently completed Cerritos Library were built for the citizens of Cerritos.

PRESENT DAY HISTORICAL RESOURCES

The City of Cerritos does not have any historic resources listed on the National Register of Historic Places or on the California Historic Resources Inventory maintained by the State Office of Historic Preservation.

LOCAL RESOURCES

Cerritos has created and maintained a “community forest” throughout the City. Through planning and the provision of landscaping that unifies City parks, streetscapes and medians, the “community forest” has become an essential aspect of the City’s character. In addition, Cerritos has established the Property Preservation Commission to guarantee adherence to the City’s tree preservation goals. The Commission serves as the City’s tree advisory board identifying and designating “Heritage trees” as significant to the community or having historic interest.

Currently, the City has two “Heritage trees”. The California Pepper Tree, located at the Cerritos Senior Center is one of the oldest living trees in Cerritos. This tree was originally planted by the family of First Lady Patricia Nixon on the their farm in approximately 1915.

A Deodar Cedar Tree located in front of the Senior Center was donated by First Lady Patricia Nixon and planted by Boy Scouts at the dedication of the park in September 1969.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The City of Cerritos has chosen to preserve its cultural and historic resources through the establishment of a Local History Room within the Cerritos Library. The Cerritos Library maintains a collection of resources documenting the history of the City. The Local History Room includes display cases with historical exhibits and a mural depicting the community’s progress from the agricultural City of Dairy Valley to the suburban City of Cerritos. The Library’s local history collection includes “The Story of Cerritos: A History in Progress,” a book that covers the community’s history from the first Native Americans to settle in the area to the present time and a video program called “Recollections of Cerritos’ Past” featuring interviews with former leaders of Dairy Valley, dairy farmers and long-time residents. In addition, news clippings and photographs documenting the City’s history and a database chronicling the growth of the City are available to Library patrons.

PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The area has undergone significant transition and development. Today, Cerritos is approximately 99 percent built out. There are no known paleontological resources within the City of Cerritos.

4.12.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

In accordance with CEQA, the effects of a project are evaluated to determine if they will result in a significant adverse impact on the environment. An EIR is required to focus on these effects and offer mitigation measures to reduce or avoid any significant impacts that are identified. The criteria, or standards, used to determine the significance of impacts may vary depending on the nature of the project. Cultural impacts resulting from the implementation of the proposed General Plan Update could be considered significant if they cause any of the following results:

- ❑ Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5;
- ❑ Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5;
- ❑ Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature; and/or
- ❑ Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries (refer to Section 7.0, *Effects Found Not To Be Significant*).

Based on these standards, the effects of the proposed project have been characterized as either a “less than significant impact” or a “potentially significant impact.” Mitigation measures are recommended for potentially significant impacts. If a potentially significant impact cannot be reduced to a less than significant impact level through the application of mitigation, it is categorized as a significant and unavoidable impact.

4.12.3 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

- IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSED GENERAL PLAN UPDATE MAY RESULT IN THE DEGRADATION OR LOSS OF HISTORIC STRUCTURES OR RESOURCES, OR CULTURAL (ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL) RESOURCES.

Level of Significance Before Policies/Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact.

Impact Analysis: Cerritos is predominately built out with a majority of land dedicated to residential uses. No known historical, archaeological or paleontological resources are known to exist within the City. Although Cerritos does not have any national or State designated historic resources, they have locally identified and designated Heritage Trees as significant within the community or having historic significance. The City has recognized the importance of preserving its history and character through policies such

as ensuring all items of historic and cultural significance are preserved (CON-9.1) and the identification, recordation, mapping and evaluation of all potential historic and cultural resources (CON-9.2) within the City.

Implementation of the proposed General Plan Update would result in the development of approximately 27 acres of vacant land and approximately 46 acres of underutilized land. An evaluation of potential impacts regarding development of this land would be conducted on a project-by-project basis. Each incremental development is required to comply with all applicable Federal, State and local regulations concerning the preservation of historic resources. Therefore, potential impacts on historical structures or resources would be less than significant.

Policies in the Proposed General Plan Update:

- CON-6.1 Enforce the City's Tree Preservation Ordinance in order to preserve the City's existing urban forest.

- CON-6.4 Strive to identify and honor "Landmark" trees that have been identified as having significant historical or cultural significance as "Heritage Trees."

- CON-7.1 Provide access to information on Cerritos' history to schools, organizations, groups and individuals.

- CON-7.2 Encourage the involvement of all sections of the community in learning about the historic and cultural resources in Cerritos.

- CON-8.1 Ensure that all items of historic and cultural significance, including houses, are preserved for the enjoyment by all Cerritos residents.

- CON-8.2 Identify, record, map, and evaluate all potential historic and cultural resources within the City.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures beyond the policies identified in the proposed General Plan Update are required.

Level of Significance After Policies/Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact.

4.12.4 UNAVOIDABLE SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS

All historic and cultural impacts associated with implementation of the proposed General Plan Update would be less than significant by adherence to and/or compliance with policies in the proposed General Plan Update. No unavoidable significant historic or cultural impacts would occur as a result of buildout of the proposed General Plan Update.