

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR THE PECHANGA NORTHERN BOUNDARY FEE-TO-TRUST PROJECT

AGENCY: Bureau of Indian Affairs

ACTIONS: Finding of No Significant Impact

SUMMARY:

The Pechanga Band of Mission Indians (Tribe) submitted a request to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to transfer four parcels (APN 966-380-006, 966-380-007, 966-380-008, 966-380-009) (project site) into federal trust on behalf of the Tribe to be used for the development of Tribal housing (Proposed Action). The approximately 81-acre project site is located in unincorporated Riverside County, along the southeastern border of the City of Temecula and immediately north of the Pechanga Reservation. Based upon the entire administrative record including analysis in a June 2023 Environmental Assessment (EA), and mitigation imposed, the BIA makes a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) for the Proposed Action. This finding constitutes a determination the Proposed Action is not a federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore, in accordance with Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act, 42 U.S.C § 4321 et seq., an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required.

PURPOSE AND NEED:

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to protect and restore Tribal homelands, facilitate self-determination and self-sufficiency, and to provide additional housing for Tribal members. Additional details regarding the purpose and need can be found in EA Section 1.2.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Two alternatives are analyzed in the EA: the Proposed Action and a No Action Alternative. The Proposed Action is summarized above and includes the fee-to-trust transfer of four parcels of land totaling approximately 81 acres. The Tribe subsequently proposes to develop the parcel with approximately 112 single family houses. Under the No Action Alternative, no federal actions would occur, and the Tribe would not construct any housing. Additional details regarding the Proposed Action and Alternatives can be found in EA Section 2.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

Potential impacts to land resources, water resources; air quality; biological resources; cultural resources; socioeconomics; environmental justice; transportation; land use and agriculture; public services; noise; hazardous materials; and visual resources were evaluated in the EA, with the following conclusions for the Proposed Action (see EA Section 3 for detailed analysis and for specific mitigation measures):

Land Resources

Land resources impacts could occur during the construction and operation of the housing project. No significant impacts would occur.

Water Resources

Impacts to water resources would occur during construction and operation of the housing project. No significant impacts would occur.

Air Quality

Impacts to air quality would occur during construction and operation of the housing project. No significant impacts would occur.

Biological Resources

Impacts to biological resources would occur from the development of the housing project. Mitigation measures detailed in EA Section 4 would ensure impacts to biological resources are less than significant.

Cultural Resources

Impacts to cultural resources could occur from the development of the housing project. Mitigation measures detailed in EA Section 4 would ensure impacts to cultural resources are less than significant.

Socioeconomics

Impacts to socioeconomics would occur during the fee-to-trust transfer and during the construction/operation of the housing project. No significant socioeconomics impacts would occur.

Transportation and Circulation

Impacts to transportation and circulation would occur during construction and operation of the housing project. Mitigation measures detailed in EA Section 4 would ensure impacts to transportation and circulation are less than significant.

Land Use and Agriculture

Impacts to land use and agriculture would occur during construction and operation of the housing project. No significant impacts would occur.

Public Services

Impacts to public services would occur from the operation of the housing project. No significant impacts would occur.

Noise

Noise and vibration impacts would occur during construction and operation of the housing project. No significant impacts would occur.

Hazardous Materials

Hazardous materials impacts could occur during construction and operation of the housing project. No significant impacts would occur.

Visual Resources

Impacts to visual resource would occur from the development of the housing project. No significant impact would occur.

PUBLIC AVAILABILITY:

A Notice of Availability for the EA and the unsigned FONSI has been provided to agencies, organizations, and interested parties for a period of 30 days. Any comments received will be reviewed in full.

DETERMINATION:

It has been determined that the proposed Federal action to take approximately 40 acres of fee land into federal trust for the purpose of developing housing does not constitute a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, in accordance with Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act, 42 U.S.C § 4321 et seq., an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. This determination is supported by the findings described in this FONSI and the analysis contained in the entire administrative record, including the July 2023 EA and the mitigation imposed. This fulfills the requirements of NEPA as set out in the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing NEPA (40 C.F.R. 1500–1508), and the BIA NEPA Guidebook (59 IAM 3-H, August 2012).

Approved:

Date:

Regional Director
Bureau of Indian Affairs, Pacific Region