



PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION



GENERAL INFORMATION

Project Title: California Health Care Facility, Ventura

Lead Agency: California Prison Health Care Receivership Corporation (CPR) (under the Federal Receivership for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) medical care system)

Wendy Saunders
CEQA project manager for CPR
URS/Bovis Lend Lease Joint Venture
2400 Del Paso Road, Suite 255
Sacramento, CA 95834
Email: CHFCVenturaPublicComments@ursbljv.com

Project Location: The 96-acre project site (APN 147-0-050-205) is located at 3100 Wright Road within unincorporated Ventura County. Currently, the existing Ventura Youth Correctional Facility (VYCF) occupies the project site.

CEQA Requirement: This Notice of Preparation is intended to satisfy the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code, Division 13, Sections 21000–21177) and the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Sections 15000–15387).

Potential Approvals Required:

The following agencies may have jurisdiction over elements of the proposed project:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,
- California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation,
- California Department of Transportation,
- California Division of the State Architect,
- California Department of Toxic Substances Control,
- California Department of Fish and Game,
- California Department of Public Health,
- State Water Resources Control Board,
- Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, and
- Ventura County Air Pollution Control District.

PROJECT NEED

In April 2001, a class action lawsuit, *Plata v. Schwarzenegger*, was filed by prison inmates against the State of California, contending that CDCR was in violation of the Eighth Amendment (cruel and unusual punishment) to the United States Constitution by providing inadequate medical care to prison inmates. In the *Plata* case, the federal court found that the current prison infrastructure does not support a constitutional level of health care. This was also found in a number of cases since 2001, including the *Coleman* case, relative to mental health care; the *Perez* case, relative to dental care; and the *Armstrong* case, relative to CDCR's disabled inmates. In response to these cases, a federal court placed the California prison health care system in receivership in 2001. California's prison medical delivery system is now administered by the California Prison Receiver (Receiver), J. Clark Kelso. CPR is charged with creating a system in which prison custody and health care staff, together, can guarantee that inmates' access to health care and services in California prisons meets constitutional standards.

In order to fulfill the court's mandate, new correctional health care facilities must be constructed statewide. CPR has identified the need to construct new health care facilities that, in total, will provide approximately 5,000 medical and 5,000 mental health patient beds. Therefore, at this time, CPR is planning to build up to seven health care facilities. The facilities will be built throughout the state, with consideration given to proximity to patient demand. Furthermore, locations must be near large urban areas to help guarantee access to a qualified pool of skilled professionals, such as nurses, doctors, therapists and administrative staff. Therefore, VYCF has been identified as a potential location for an approximately 1,500-bed health care facility.

In accordance with CEQA, CPR will serve as the lead agency and will prepare an EIR to evaluate the environmental effects associated with construction and operation of a new health care facility at the project site. The proposed health care facility would include space for administrative and clinical functions as well as housing for patients. The EIR will identify the significant adverse environmental impacts of the proposed project and require the adoption of all feasible mitigation measures or alternatives to avoid or substantially reduce the project's significant impacts to the extent feasible. In accordance with Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, CPR has prepared this notice of preparation to provide responsible and trustee agencies and other interested parties with information that describes the proposed project and the issue areas that will be evaluated in the EIR.

PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING

The 96-acre proposed project site is currently occupied by VYCF at 3100 Wright Road in unincorporated south Ventura County. VYCF is located 4.5 miles northwest of the City of Camarillo, 8 miles east of Ventura, 2.5 miles east of El Rio, 5.25 miles northeast of Oxnard, and 50 miles northwest of Los Angeles (see the regional location map) on state-owned property. Wright Road provides direct access to VYCF, and U.S. 101 provides regional access (see Figures 1 and 2).

Currently, approximately 250 juveniles (wards) are housed at VYCF. Originally built in 1961, VYCF was initially used by the Ventura School for Girls. In 1970, the Ventura School for Girls became co-educational. In addition, the California Department of Forestry fire camp, located on-site, houses approximately 80 wards. VYCF currently employs a staff of approximately 425.

VYCF is surrounded on all sides by agricultural lands (orchards and row crops) and scattered rural residences. To the east is a golf course and a single-family residential community. The VYCF is currently zoned as Agricultural Exclusive and Open Space (OS).

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED FACILITIES

CPR proposes to construct a sub-acute medical care facility on the project site with approximately 1,500 patient beds. The facility would consist of housing clusters, diagnostic and treatment centers, outdoor recreation fields, a gatehouse, a warehouse and support building, a central plant, an armory, and parking areas. A lethal electrified fence (e-fence) would surround the secured area and a guard tower would be provided at the vehicle sally port. The project would include exterior lighting. Parking would be provided for staff personnel and visitors.

Construction of the proposed project would require site grading; new roads, tunnels, and walkways to connect the buildings; storm drains; and new water, sewer, natural gas, and electrical utilities for project buildings.

The facility would house inmates ranging from Level I (minimum security) to Level IV (maximum security) prisoners with medical and/or mental health needs. Between 15 and 25 patients are anticipated to check into and out of the facility each week, although during the start-up period of the facility the number of patients checking in is anticipated to be much higher.

The proposed medical care facility would employ between 1,300 and 1,600 staff working around the clock over several different shifts with the highest number of staff working between 6 a.m. and 2 p.m. Total daily staffing would be less than the total number of persons hired. The facility would operate 24 hours per day/7 days per week, and therefore staff would rotate among the various shifts and days of operation. Approximately 75 to 100 visitors are anticipated per day.

Overall, implementation of the proposed project would result in demolition of existing buildings on the VYCF campus and the construction of one- to three-story buildings totaling approximately 1.1 million square feet of gross floor space.

Figure 1. Regional Location

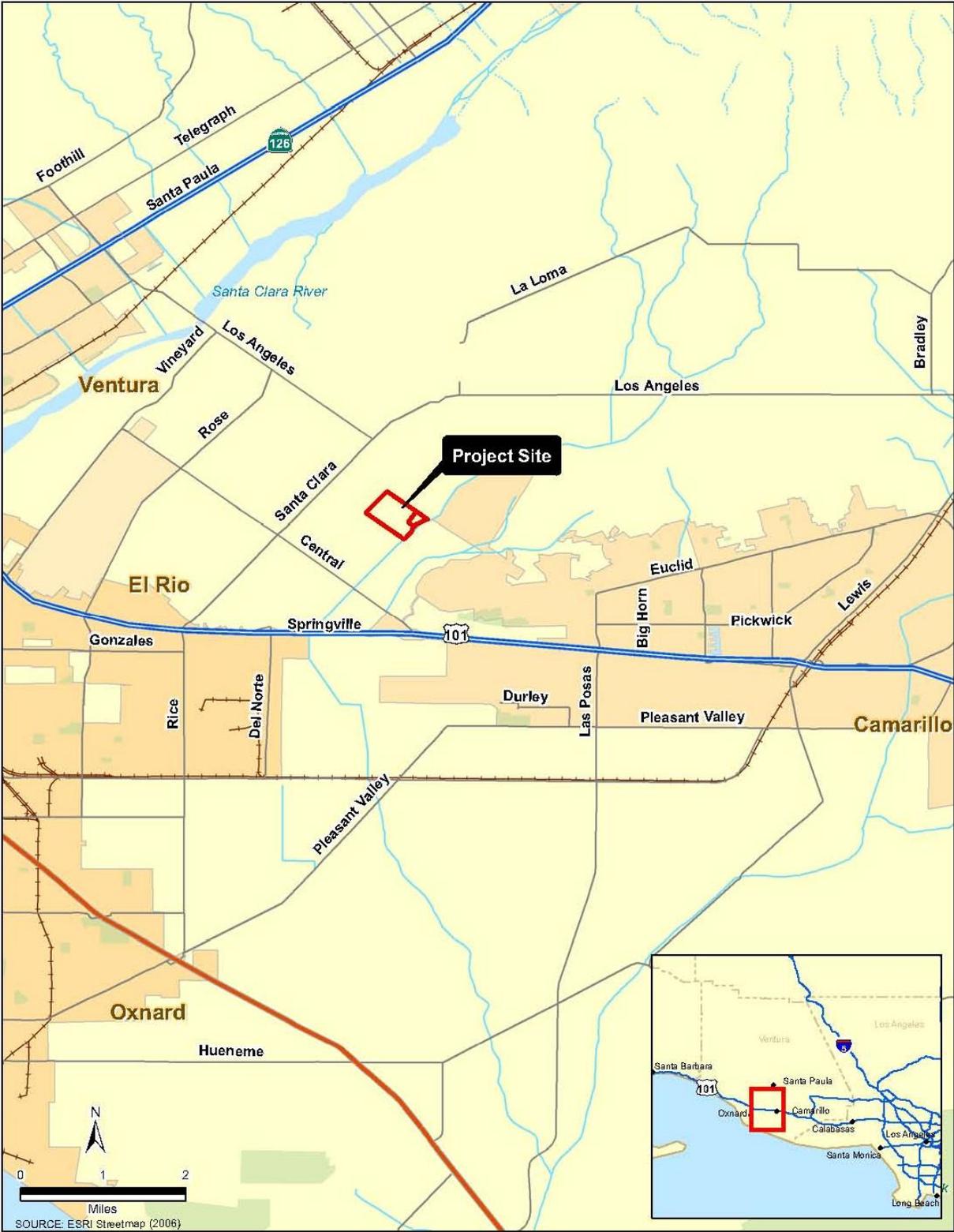


Figure 2. Site Vicinity Map



DEMOLITION, REMEDIATION, AND PROJECT CONSTRUCTION

The proposed project would replace the existing VYCF on the site. The existing VYCF will be closed, and all wards will be relocated to other facilities within the Department of Juvenile Justice system. All structures associated with the existing youth correctional facilities would be demolished and some of the existing trees may also be removed.

Additionally, remediation activities are anticipated to remove soils on portions of the project site that show elevated levels of petroleum hydrocarbons, semi-volatile organic compounds, and chlorinated pesticides. Additional soil sampling is currently being conducted to verify the extent of contamination; remediation is preliminarily anticipated to require the removal of soils from the project site.

Aside from remediation and demolition, ground disturbance would result from site grading and installation of on- and off-site infrastructure improvements. Construction vehicles would access the site from Wright Road. Staging is expected to be accommodated on-site.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The EIR will evaluate the probable direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts associated with construction and implementation of the California Health Care Facility, Ventura project as described below. Feasible mitigation measures will be recommended to reduce potentially significant and significant impacts.

Aesthetics and Visual Resources

According to the Ventura County General Plan, Resources appendix, the proposed project is not located close to any scenic resources or scenic routes. The project includes a guard tower and one- to three-story buildings, which could obstruct views of visual resources identified in the area. Furthermore, the proposed project may require the removal of existing mature trees on the site. New security lighting may increase nighttime levels of artificial lighting. The EIR will provide an assessment of aesthetic and visual impacts on surrounding sensitive viewers as well as any lighting and glare impacts.

Agricultural Resources

The agricultural land surrounding the site is used predominantly for row crops and growing orchards. The southeastern portion of the VYCF property is designated as Prime Farmland, which refers to soil suitability. The southeastern portion of the VYCF has been used for agricultural purposes in the past. A Land Evaluation and Site Analysis will be conducted as part of the EIR to determine the proposed project's direct and indirect impacts on agricultural resources, if any.

Air Quality

The EIR will evaluate construction and operational impacts on local and regional air quality. All impact analyses will be consistent with the technical requirements and methodologies outlined in the Air Pollution Control District's *Ventura County Air Quality Assessment Guidelines*. The EIR

will also include a discussion of the project's potential to generate greenhouse gas emissions and thereby contribute to global climate change.

Biological Resources

The proposed project would involve demolition of existing structures and removal of trees that could be used as nesting habitat by special-status bird species. The new facilities would be developed on previously disturbed areas of the existing VYCF and disked vacant land (not in agricultural production), and the facility would be surrounded by an e-fence, which could lead to animal mortalities. Sensitive biological resources may be found in previously disturbed areas and animal mortalities can occur as a result of the e-fence. Therefore, the proposed project's potential to affect such resources will be analyzed in the EIR.

Cultural Resources

The proposed project would require existing VYCF structures to be demolished and the site would be completely graded prior to construction of the new facility. The existing buildings are not 50 years of age and therefore are not presumed to be historically significant. All required cultural resources documentation, including archaeological, historical, and paleontologic assessments, will be prepared in support of the EIR.

Geology, Soils, Mineral Resources, and Paleontological Resources

Construction of the health care facility on the project site could result in impacts related to geotechnical hazards, including the seismicity of the area, the potential for liquefaction and subsidence, the erodibility of the site's soils, soil stability characteristics, and the shrink/swell potential of the site's soils, as applicable. In addition, it is currently unknown whether potential mineral resources exist at the site and whether development of the proposed project would restrict access to any such resources. Furthermore, it is currently unknown whether the project site soils have the potential to contain paleontological resources. If such resources exist on the site, construction activities associated with remediation, demolition, and grading could result in potentially significant impacts. The EIR for the proposed project will evaluate potential impacts related to geology, soils, and mineral resources.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Some areas of the VYCF contain soils with potentially elevated levels of petroleum hydrocarbons, semi-volatile organic compounds, and chlorinated pesticides. Remediation of the affected soils is required. Demolition of VYCF could involve exposure of workers to asbestos containing materials (ACMs), lead based paint (LBP), as well as mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) from fluorescent lighting fixtures. Furthermore, operation of the proposed health care facility would involve disposal of medical waste. The EIR will evaluate the potential for the proposed project to result in impacts associated with hazards and hazardous materials. The EIR will evaluate the potential for the proposed project to result in impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The EIR will describe the project's potential effects on the hydrology and water quality characteristics of the area, including water supply, alteration of drainage patterns, erosion, stormwater discharges, and flooding.

Land Use and Planning

State-owned property and state-directed construction projects are not subject to local building regulations or approval. Developments on state-owned property are built to comply with the state building code (Title 24). Such properties are also not subject to general planning laws that establish zoning and land-use designations. However, the EIR will discuss the proposed project's consistency with the relevant county general plan environmental goals and plans, adjacent land uses and general plan designations, and pending and/or approved projects in the vicinity.

Noise

The EIR will describe the proposed project's construction and operational noise levels and will compare these levels to applicable noise thresholds to determine whether the project would result in a significant noise impact.

Population and Housing

The EIR will evaluate the project's effect on population and housing in the local area based on projections regarding project employment and employee distribution by place of residence.

Public Services

The EIR will evaluate the proposed project's potential to create an adverse impact on police and public safety, fire, and educational services due to an increase in population and increased demand generated by the project.

Recreation

The proposed project could potentially contribute to regional population growth due to the jobs created by the health care facility, which could indirectly result in increased use of parks and other recreational facilities. This issue will be analyzed in the EIR.

Transportation and Traffic

The EIR will evaluate the proposed project's impact on regional and local transportation facilities based on a transportation analysis that will assess both construction-related impacts (heavy truck trips and construction worker trips), as well as operational impacts (employee trips, patient transport, access, parking and visitor travel to and from the site). The traffic study will be prepared for the proposed project in consultation with Ventura County; surrounding cities, including the City of Camarillo; and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans).

Utilities and Service Systems

The EIR will analyze the current capacity of the drainage, water, wastewater, natural gas, and electrical systems and the proposed project's potential impact on these systems. In addition, an

analysis of local water supply conditions will be provided. The EIR will describe the existing dry utilities (gas, electric, phone, etc.) as well as water, wastewater, and drainage facilities in the project vicinity and provide an impact analysis of on-site and off-site utility line construction. The EIR will also describe the existing solid waste facilities that serve the site and the project's impact on those facilities.

Growth Inducement

The EIR will evaluate the proposed project's potential for growth inducement resulting from expansion or extension of infrastructure improvements, as well as new demand for housing and goods and services. The effect of primary and secondary increases in employment and economic activity will be discussed.

Cumulative Impacts

The EIR will evaluate the potentially significant cumulative impacts of the proposed project in relation to recently completed, present, and probable future related projects in the vicinity of the project site. A list of cumulative projects will be prepared in consultation with Ventura County, City of Oxnard, and the City of Camarillo. The EIR will also discuss ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or provide additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding area.

ALTERNATIVES EVALUATED IN THE EIR

In accordance with the CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6, the EIR will describe a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed project that are capable of meeting most of the projects objectives, but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project. The EIR will also identify any alternatives that were considered but rejected by the lead agency as infeasible and briefly explain the reasons why. The EIR will also provide an analysis of the No Project Alternative.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Interested individuals, groups, and agencies may provide CPR with written comments on topics to be addressed in the EIR for the proposed project. Because of time limits mandated by state law, comments should be provided no later than **5 p.m. on January 14, 2009**. **Comments may also be provided at the public scoping meeting starting at 5:30 p.m. on December 10, 2008, at the following address:**

**Camarillo Community Center Auditorium
1605 East Burnley Street
Camarillo, CA 93010**

Agencies that will need to use the EIR when considering permits or other approvals for the proposed project should provide CPR with the name of a staff contact person. Please send all comments to:

Wendy Saunders
Senior CEQA/Community Relations Manager for the California Prison Health Care Receivership
URS/Bovis Lend Lease Joint Venture

2400 Del Paso Road, Suite 255
Sacramento, CA 95834

Fax: (916) 779-6399

Email: CHFCVenturaPublicComments@ursbljv.com