

Industrial Building Project

The information below summarizes what we have learned about the proposed industrial building project through review of the project materials and, importantly, direct conversations with the Developer.

Information regarding the project's design, construction, operations, traffic assumptions, environmental features, construction timeline and potential community contributions primarily reflects information provided by the Developer during those discussions.

The section regarding the WeTheMeadows Writ of Mandate is based on our review of the lawsuit filed on August 6, 2026. Where appropriate, we have distinguished between allegations made by WeTheMeadows in the lawsuit, information provided by the Developer, and information sourced through discussions with qualified land-use attorneys.

Misinformation & Misconceptions

There has been a significant amount of information circulated within The Meadows about the industrial building project. Some of the concerns are understandable, but several claims leave out important context or create a misleading impression of what the project's environmental impact report ("EIR"), construction plans and pending lawsuit actually mean.

Below are four of the most common claims — and the additional context homeowners should know.

01 — “The Project Will Have Unavoidable Impacts on VMT and Greenhouse Gas Emissions”

What’s Missing From This Claim

The term “unavoidable impact” sounds alarming when presented without context. One of the most important things to understand is the baseline against which the project is being measured.

The existing office buildings have been largely vacant or unoccupied for an extended period of time. As a result, the EIR uses a baseline reflecting the site's existing conditions as a fully unoccupied space.

That distinction is critical.

When an essentially idle property is used as the baseline, putting the property back into productive use will necessarily increase activity compared with doing almost nothing with the property.

In practical terms, virtually any meaningful reuse of the site would increase vehicle trips, VMT, energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions compared with an unoccupied property.

That does not mean every potential use would have the same impact.

The relevant question is therefore not simply:

“Does the project increase VMT or GHG compared with an unoccupied property?”

It is:

“How does the proposed industrial building compare with the realistic alternatives for this property?”

Vehicle Trips

Different potential uses of the property have substantially different parking requirements, occupant/resident loads, and employee densities:

- Multifamily: approximately 2.5 parking spaces per 1,000 sq. ft.
- Office: approximately 2.0 spaces per 1,000 sq. ft.
- Warehouse: approximately 1.5 spaces per 1,000 sq. ft.

Office uses can have significantly greater employee density than warehouse uses. Office employees may also generate multiple vehicle movements during the workday — commuting to work, leaving for lunch and returning — while warehouses generally have substantially fewer employees per square foot.

Typical warehouse employees generally generate approximately one round trip per day, resulting in substantially fewer employee vehicle trips.

Vehicle Miles Traveled & Greenhouse Gas Emissions

One of the largest contributors to operational greenhouse gas emissions is daily vehicle travel.

California's environmental analysis focuses heavily on Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) rather than simply counting the number of vehicles entering and leaving a property.

VMT methodology considers factors such as:

- Nearby shopping centers
- Civic uses

- Residential areas
- Bicycle infrastructure
- Overall land-use mix

This is important because environmental impact depends not just on how many trips occur, but also on how far those vehicles travel.

Why Can Multifamily Produce Higher GHG Emissions?

It may seem counterintuitive that replacing the project with housing could produce greater greenhouse gas impacts.

The financially viable multifamily alternative discussed with the Developer would likely consist of 3–4 story residential buildings with approximately 250+ units.

At roughly 2.5 vehicles per unit, that could mean hundreds of additional vehicles associated with the property, along with substantially greater daily residential activity.

The larger occupied building footprint and much higher number of full-time occupants would also increase operational energy consumption.

Simply replacing the industrial building with housing therefore does not necessarily mean lower VMT or greenhouse gas emissions.

Why Not Just Convert the Property to Housing?

There is also a practical problem with the suggestion that the Developer should simply abandon the approved project and build housing instead.

Rezoning the property for residential use would be highly speculative:

- Rezoning could take 4+ years.
- There is no guarantee the City would approve residential development.
- A buyer would effectively be purchasing unentitled land and assuming the entitlement risk.
- That uncertainty would substantially affect the property's value.
- Most homebuilders would be reluctant to assume that level of entitlement risk.

Housing therefore is not simply an alternative that the Developer can substitute for the current project.

Trucks & Air Quality

Another concern frequently raised is that truck traffic associated with a warehouse use will necessarily result in substantial diesel pollution.

California has increasingly strict regulations governing truck emissions, and the truck fleet is continuing to transition toward newer and zero-emission vehicles.

The project will also include four electric truck charging stations, intended to support the transition toward electric trucks.

As California's truck fleet continues transitioning toward newer and zero-emission vehicles, emissions associated with truck traffic should continue to decline.

The New Building Is Also More Efficient Than What Exists Today

The existing office building was constructed in the 1990s.

The proposed building would incorporate modern building and energy requirements, including:

- Modern, energy-efficient HVAC systems
- Lower energy consumption
- Quieter mechanical equipment
- Reduced air emissions
- Compliance with current Title 24 requirements

The existing property also consists largely of buildings surrounded by asphalt parking areas. The proposed project incorporates additional landscaping and modern materials and design requirements intended to reduce heat impacts.

The Developer also intends to pursue LEED certification, which addresses areas including energy efficiency, water efficiency, material sourcing, and sustainable construction practices.

Bottom Line

Calling the project's VMT and GHG impacts “unavoidable” without explaining the baseline creates an incomplete picture.

The property is currently largely unoccupied. Any realistic redevelopment or reuse will create more activity than an empty building.

The more meaningful comparison is between the environmental impacts of the proposed project and the realistic alternative uses of the property — including office and multifamily — rather than comparing an operating project to a largely vacant site.

02 — “Construction Will Create Significant Noise and Dust”

What’s Missing From This Claim

Construction will obviously create some temporary noise and dust. But that does not mean construction will occur without controls designed to mitigate those impacts.

Dust Control

During grading and excavation:

- Water trucks will continuously wet exposed soil to reduce airborne dust.
- Water trucks will follow earth-moving equipment throughout construction as necessary.

Construction Hours

Typical construction hours are expected to be:

- Approximately 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM
- No nighttime construction
- No weekend construction

Noise Mitigation

Construction equipment will be required to comply with applicable California requirements, including:

- CARB-approved equipment
- Newer, lower-emission engines
- Quieter, lower-frequency backup alarms where applicable

Construction will create temporary impacts. The important context is that those impacts have been anticipated and measures are planned to reduce them.

03 — “The Industrial Building Will Be Less Than 100 Feet From Meadows Homes”

What’s Missing From This Claim

The distance sounds alarming when presented by itself, but it leaves out important context about the existing development surrounding The Meadows.

The proposed building will actually be farther from Meadows homes than existing buildings within the office park.

The proposed building will also be approximately the same height as the existing office buildings, rather than introducing an entirely new building scale to the area.

There is also important history behind why some Meadows homes are located as close to the office park as they are.

When Toll Brothers developed The Meadows, it requested and received easements affecting the Developer's property so that Toll Brothers could construct homes in their current locations.

In other words, the proximity between these homes and the neighboring commercial property did not arise because the Developer later decided to move a building next to an established residential neighborhood. The commercial property was already there, and Toll Brothers subsequently developed The Meadows next to it with the cooperation of the neighboring property owner.

Without those agreements, according to the Developer, those particular homes could not have been constructed in their current locations in the first place.

That history is important context when evaluating claims about the project's proximity to The Meadows.

04 — “Filing the Lawsuit Will Stop the Industrial Building From Being Built”

This Is Incorrect

Filing a lawsuit does not automatically stop construction.

WeTheMeadows' August 6 Writ specifically asks the Court to stay the City's approvals and issue an injunction preventing the Developer from proceeding with construction. But those are remedies WeTheMeadows is requesting from the Court — not remedies it received simply by filing the lawsuit.

For construction to actually be stopped through the litigation, WeTheMeadows would need to obtain a court order providing injunctive or similar relief.

There is currently no such court order.

Meanwhile, the Developer has indicated that it intends to continue with permitting and be ready to start construction irrespective of the lawsuit being filed.

Construction Timeline

The Developer has provided the following anticipated construction timeline.

Phase 1 — Approximately 4–5 Months

- Demolition
- Site clearing
- Excavation
- Utility work
- Foundation preparation

Phase 2 — Approximately 1 Month

- Structural wall panels installed
- Crane operations

Phase 3 — Approximately 4–5 Months

- Concurrent interior and exterior construction
- Building systems installation
- Finishing work

Building and grading permits remain in process, with construction potentially beginning in the 1st quarter of 2027, assuming the necessary permits are issued.

WeTheMeadows Writ of Mandate

On August 6, 2026, WeTheMeadows filed a Petition for Writ of Mandate against the City of Lake Forest, challenging the City's certification of the Environmental Impact Report and approval of the industrial building project.

IPT Enterprise Business Center, LLC, the Developer, is named as the Real Party in Interest.

What Is Actually Being Alleged?

The lawsuit primarily argues that the City's environmental review was inadequate in several areas, including:

- Air quality and human health
- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Traffic and Vehicle Miles Traveled
- Truck traffic and pedestrian safety
- Noise
- Nighttime lighting
- Cumulative impacts from other proposed warehouse projects
- Consistency with the Lake Forest General Plan
- Assumptions regarding the future tenant and loading docks

- Consideration of project alternatives
- Additional mitigation measures

These are substantially the same categories of concerns WeTheMeadows raised throughout the City's environmental review and during its appeal to the City Council.

The Writ itself recounts that WeTheMeadows submitted extensive comments concerning toxic air emissions, heavy diesel trucking, traffic safety, noise and nighttime lighting during the EIR process; submitted additional comments after the Final EIR was released; and subsequently appealed the Planning Commission's approval to the City Council.

Most importantly, the Writ itself states:

“the issues raised in this petition were fairly presented to the City before its final action.”

In other words, the Writ does not appear to introduce materially new categories of environmental objections or newly discovered impacts that were unavailable when the City considered the project and WeTheMeadows' appeal.

What is new is the lawsuit itself.

The Writ takes objections already raised during the City's environmental review and approval process and now asks a court to determine that the City's analysis, responses, mitigation measures and ultimate approval failed to comply with CEQA and the Lake Forest General Plan.

Filing the lawsuit does not establish that those allegations are correct. They are WeTheMeadows' allegations, and the City and Developer have an opportunity to respond.

What WeTheMeadows Is Asking the Court to Do

Among other things, the Writ asks the Court to:

- Order the City to rescind approval of the project
- Stay the City's environmental findings
- Stay certification of the EIR
- Stay the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
- Stay the Site Development Permit
- Prohibit construction until the project and its approvals comply with CEQA
- Issue an injunction preventing the Developer from undertaking pre-construction or construction activities
- Award WeTheMeadows its costs and attorneys' fees

The Writ requests a hearing on June 8, 2027, or as soon as is convenient for the Court.

Importantly, asking the Court for a stay or injunction is not the same thing as obtaining one.

The filing of the Writ itself does not automatically stop construction.

Effect of Litigation on Construction

Construction can continue while the lawsuit is pending unless a court issues an order preventing it.

CEQA litigation can potentially continue for years, while the Developer has indicated that it intends to continue moving through the permitting and construction process unless legally prevented from doing so.

The practical result is that filing the lawsuit does not necessarily mean the industrial building project will remain idle while the case works its way through court.

Community Contributions & the Zero-Sum Problem

The Developer has indicated that it is willing to provide financial contributions directly to The Meadows to address community concerns associated with the project.

One idea now being discussed is for the Developer to fund an escrow account dedicated to improvements within The Meadows, with the final amount still to be determined.

Potential improvements discussed have included:

- New or improved security gates
- Replacement outdoor furniture or equipment
- Landscaping improvements
- A landscaped “green wall” or other visual screening
- Other capital improvements selected for the benefit of the community

This creates an opportunity to negotiate tangible improvements that could remain with The Meadows long after construction is completed.

The Zero-Sum Problem

The Developer has indicated that the amount it is ultimately willing to contribute to The Meadows will depend, in part, on how much it is required to spend defending the WeTheMeadows lawsuit.

Put simply:

Every dollar the Developer spends on attorneys defending this lawsuit is a dollar that will not be available for contributions to our community.

From the Developer's perspective, this is effectively a zero-sum game.

That creates a real tradeoff for homeowners.

WeTheMeadows is pursuing litigation based largely on environmental and land-use arguments already presented during the City's environmental review, Planning Commission proceedings and City Council appeal. The Writ itself acknowledges that the issues in the petition were presented to the City before final action.

At the same time, the Developer has indicated a willingness to provide a financial contribution that could fund actual improvements within The Meadows.

The question for homeowners is therefore no longer simply whether they support or oppose the industrial building project.

It is also what outcome is realistically achievable from this point forward.

Community Benefit Discussion

At various community meetings, including those where Harrison attended, the Developer offered the opportunity to jointly find solutions that would not only help mitigate community concerns, but could also provide a tangible benefit to The Meadows.

Examples of solutions discussed included:

- New security gates
- Replacement outdoor furniture or equipment
- A landscaped "green wall" to screen views
- Other improvements intended to directly benefit The Meadows

Residents from The Meadows who were in attendance, including Harrison, were not receptive to the solution proposals.

Despite Harrison attending those discussions, neither Harrison nor WeTheMeadows subsequently reached out directly to the Developer to discuss alternatives or determine whether a larger community-benefit package could be reached.

The Developer has since indicated that it remains willing to make a contribution and could potentially go substantially further — including establishing a funded escrow account dedicated to improvements within The Meadows, with the amount pending to be determined.

That opportunity now exists alongside the lawsuit.

The Developer has also made clear that the amount ultimately available for community contributions will decrease as its legal expenses defending the WeTheMeadows litigation increase.

Put simply, money that could potentially be negotiated for improvements within The Meadows is instead being spent on attorneys because no agreement was reached and WeTheMeadows chose to pursue litigation.

This is particularly important because the Writ primarily raises issues that WeTheMeadows itself acknowledges were already presented to the City before final project approval. The Planning Commission approved the project, the City Council denied WeTheMeadows' appeal, and WeTheMeadows has now taken those arguments to court.

There is still an opportunity to engage directly with the Developer and determine what benefits and financial contributions can actually be secured for The Meadows.

But that opportunity is not unlimited.

The longer the litigation continues and the more the Developer spends defending it, the less money the Developer has indicated will remain available for our community.

The Meadows already has significant capital needs — including security, landscaping, gates, furniture, equipment and other necessary community improvements. The Developer has indicated that it is willing to help fund those expenditures through a negotiated contribution, potentially including a dedicated escrow account.

But the Developer has also made clear that this is a zero-sum calculation: the more money it spends defending the lawsuit, the less money it is willing to contribute to The Meadows.

As homeowners, we should be asking a simple question:

Would we rather have the Developer spend that money fighting our community in court — or investing it back into our community?