

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) was prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines. The City of Elk Grove is the lead agency for the environmental review of the proposed City of Elk Grove General Plan (proposed project) evaluated herein and has the principal responsibility for approving the project. This DEIR assesses the expected environmental impacts resulting from adoption of the proposed Elk Grove General Plan and associated impacts from subsequent development under the Plan.

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE EIR

The City of Elk Grove (City), acting as the lead agency, has prepared this Draft EIR to provide the public and responsible trustee agencies with information about the potential environmental effects of the proposed Elk Grove General Plan. As described in the CEQA Guidelines Section 15121(a), an EIR is a public informational document that assesses potential environmental effects of the proposed project, as well as identifies mitigation measures and alternatives to the proposed project that could reduce or avoid its adverse environmental impacts. Public agencies are charged with the duty to consider and minimize environmental impacts of proposed development where feasible, and an obligation to balance a variety of public objectives, including economic, environmental, and social factors.

CEQA requires the preparation of an environmental impact report prior to approving any project, which may have a significant effect on the environment. For the purposes of CEQA, the term "project" refers to the whole of an action, which has the potential for resulting in a direct physical change or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378[a]). With respect to the proposed City of Elk Grove General Plan, the City has determined that the proposed plan is a "project" within the definition of CEQA.

1.2 KNOWN RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES

For the purpose of CEQA, the term "Responsible Agency" includes all public agencies other than the Lead Agency that have discretionary approval power over the project or an aspect of the project. The following agencies are identified as potential Responsible Agencies:

- Sacramento County Local Agency Formation Commission
- Sacramento County Air Quality Management District
- Caltrans District 3
- Sacramento Metropolitan Utility District
- City of Elk Grove Community Services District
- County Sanitation District-1
- Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District
- Elk Grove Unified School District
- California Department of Fish and Game
- California Department of Conservation
- Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

1.3 TYPE OF DOCUMENT

The CEQA Guidelines identify several types of EIRs, each applicable to different project circumstances. This EIR has been prepared as a Program EIR pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168. Program EIRs are defined by the CEQA Guidelines (Section 15168) as:

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A program EIR is an EIR which may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related either:

- (1) Geographically,*
- (2) A logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions,*
- (3) In connection with issuance of rules, regulations, plans or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program, or*
- (4) As individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar environmental effects which can be mitigated in similar ways.*

This EIR will be used to evaluate subsequent projects under the proposed City of Elk Grove General Plan. Additional environmental review under CEQA would be required and would be generally based on the subsequent project's consistency with the General Plan and the analysis in this EIR, as required under CEQA.

1.4 INTENDED USES OF THE EIR

This EIR is intended to evaluate the environmental impacts of the project to the greatest extent possible. This EIR should be used as the primary environmental document to evaluate all subsequent planning and permitting actions associated with projects in the City. Subsequent actions that may be associated with the project are identified in Section 3.0 (Project Description) of this document.

1.5 ORGANIZATION AND SCOPE

Sections 15122 through 15132 of the CEQA Guidelines identify the content requirements for Draft and Final EIRs. An EIR must include a description of the environmental setting, an environmental impact analysis, mitigation measures, alternatives, significant irreversible environmental changes, growth-inducing impacts, and cumulative impacts. The environmental issues addressed in the Draft EIR were established through review of environmental documentation developed for the project, environmental documentation for nearby projects, and public agency responses to the Notice of Preparation.

This Draft EIR is organized in the following manner:

Section 1.0 – Introduction

Section 1.0 provides an introduction and overview describing the intended use of the EIR and the review and certification process.

Section 2.0 - Executive Summary

This section summarizes the characteristics of the proposed project and provides a concise summary matrix of the project's environmental impacts, General Plan policies, and possible mitigation measures.

Section 3.0 - Project Description

This section provides a detailed description of the proposed project, including intended

objectives, background information, and physical and technical characteristics.

Section 4.0 - Environmental Setting, Impacts and Mitigation measures

Section 4.0 contains an analysis of environmental topic areas as identified below. Each subsection contains a description of the existing setting of the project area, identifies project-related impacts, and recommends appropriate General Plan policies and mitigation measures.

This section also includes an introduction to the environmental analysis that describes the general assumptions used to evaluate project-specific and cumulative environmental impacts. However, specific analyses are provided in each environmental issue area section.

The following major environmental topics are addressed in this section:

- Agricultural Resources
- Population, Housing, and Employment
- Land Use
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Transportation and Circulation
- Noise
- Air Quality
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Geology and Soils
- Biological Resources
- Cultural and Paleontological Resources
- Public Services and Utilities
- Visual Resources

Section 5.0 - Cumulative Impacts Summary

This section discusses the cumulative impacts associated with the proposed project. As required by CEQA Section 15130, an EIR shall discuss cumulative impacts of a project when the project's effect is cumulatively considerable.

Section 6.0 - Alternatives to the Project

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6 requires that an EIR describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, which could feasibly attain the basic objectives of the project and avoid and/or lessen the environmental effects of the project. This alternatives analysis provides a comparative analysis between the project and the selected alternatives.

Section 7.0 - Long-Term Implications of the Project

This section contains discussions and analysis of various topical issues mandated by CEQA. These include significant environmental effects that cannot be avoided if the project is implemented, significant irreversible environmental changes and growth-inducing impacts.

Section 8.0 - Report Preparers

This section lists all authors and agencies that assisted in the preparation of the report by name, title, and company or agency affiliation.

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Appendices

This section includes all notices and other procedural documents pertinent to the EIR, as well as all technical material prepared to support the analysis.

1.6 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

The review and certification process for the EIR will involve the following general procedural steps:

NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND INITIAL STUDY

In accordance with Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, the City prepared a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR for the project on June 21, 2002. The City was identified as the Lead Agency for the proposed project. This notice was circulated to the public, local, state, and federal agencies, and other interested parties to solicit comments on the proposed project. A scoping meeting was held on July 2, 2002, to receive additional comments. Concerns raised in response to the NOP were considered during preparation of the Draft EIR. The NOP and responses by interested parties are presented in **Appendix 1.0**. Also, an Initial Study for the project was prepared and released for public review along with the NOP. Its conclusions supported preparation of an EIR for the project. The Initial Study is also included in **Appendix 1.0**.

DRAFT EIR

This document constitutes the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR contains a description of the project, description of the environmental setting, identification of project impacts, and mitigation measures for impacts found to be significant, as well as an analysis of project alternatives. Upon completion of the Draft EIR, the City will file the Notice of Completion (NOC) with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research to begin the public review period (Public Resources Code, Section 21161).

PUBLIC NOTICE/PUBLIC REVIEW

Concurrent with the NOC, the County will provide public notice of the availability of the Draft EIR for public review, and invite comment from the general public, agencies, organizations, and other interested parties. The public review and comment period should be no less than thirty (30) days or longer than ninety (90) days. The review period in this case is forty-five (45) days. Public comment on the Draft EIR will be accepted both in written form and orally at public hearings. Although no public hearings to accept comments on the EIR are required by CEQA, the City expects to hold a public comment meeting during the forty-five (45) day review period prior to EIR certification. Notice of the time and location of the hearing will be published prior to the hearing. All comments or questions regarding the Draft EIR should be addressed to:

Patrick Angell
City of Elk Grove Development Services, Planning
8400 Laguna Palms Way
Elk Grove, CA 95758

RESPONSE TO COMMENTS/FINAL EIR

Following the public review period, a Final EIR will be prepared. The Final EIR will respond to written comments received during the public review period and to oral comments made at any public hearing.

CERTIFICATION OF THE EIR/PROJECT CONSIDERATION

The City will review and consider the Final EIR. If the City finds that the Final EIR is "adequate and complete", the City will certify the Final EIR. Upon review and consideration of the Final EIR, the City of Elk Grove City Council may take action to approve, revise, or reject the project. A decision to approve the project would be accompanied by written findings in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 and Section 15093. A Mitigation Monitoring Program, as described below, would also be adopted for mitigation measures that have been incorporated into or imposed upon the project to reduce or avoid significant effects on the environment. This Mitigation Monitoring Program will be designed to ensure that these measures are carried out during project implementation.

MITIGATION MONITORING

CEQA Section 21081.6(a) requires lead agencies to adopt a reporting and mitigation monitoring program to describe measures that have been adopted or made a condition of project approval in order to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment. The specific "reporting or monitoring" program required by CEQA is not required to be included in the EIR, however it will be presented to City Council for adoption. Throughout the EIR, however, mitigation measures have been clearly identified and presented in language that will facilitate establishment of a monitoring and reporting program.

1.7 SCOPE OF THE EIR

Pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines, the scope of this DEIR includes specific issues and concerns identified as potentially significant physical effects on the environment. Based on both the Initial Study and the NOP comments, this EIR addresses the following topics in depth:

Environmental issue areas identified for study in this EIR include:

- Agricultural Resources
- Land Use
- Population, Employment, and Housing
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Transportation and Circulation
- Noise
- Air Quality
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Geology and Soils
- Biological Resources
- Cultural and Paleontological Resources
- Public Services and Utilities
- Visual Resources
- Growth Inducement

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The complete text of the NOP is contained in **Appendix 1.0**.

The City of Elk Grove determined that the preparation of an EIR was appropriate due to potentially significant environmental impacts that could be caused by implementing the proposed City of Elk Grove General Plan. This DEIR evaluates the existing environmental resources in the vicinity of the City, analyzes potential impacts on those resources due to the proposed project, and identifies mitigation measures that could avoid or reduce the magnitude of those impacts. This EIR provides a general review of the environmental effects of development of the City based on proposed land use designations and estimated public service demands. This EIR will be used to evaluate the direct and indirect environmental effects of subsequent development under the General Plan (e.g., residential subdivisions, rezones, commercial structures, park sites, recreation facility development, infrastructure improvements).

1.8 COMMENTS RECEIVED ON THE NOTICE OF PREPARATION

The City received several comment letters on the Notice of Preparation for the City of Elk Grove General Plan DEIR. A copy of each letter is provided in **Appendix 1.0** of this DEIR. The City received letters from the following federal, state, and local agencies, and other interested parties.

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), District 3
- Delta Protection Commission
- State of California Department of Food & Agriculture
- State of California Department of Fish and Game
- County Sanitation District-1
- Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD)
- Sacramento Regional Transit District
- Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC)
- County of Sacramento Department of Water Resources
- County of Sacramento Public Works Agency
- County of Sacramento Planning and Community Development Department
- City of Sacramento Planning Division
- Elk Grove Unified School District
- Elk Grove Community Services District, Administrative Services Department
- Elk Grove Community Services District, Department of Parks and Recreation
- Cosumnes River Preserve
- South County Citizens for Responsible Growth (SCCRG)
- Taylor, Hooper, & Wiley
- Petrovich Development Company
- Elk Grove Milling, Inc.
- Bill Mosher
- Joe and June Daehling
- James and Elizabeth Grundman
- Vidya and Satpal Shergill
- Cari Seymour
- Gyan Kalwani
- Russell Newland
- Susan Allewelt Rosenberg
- Sarah Johnson
- Dayle A. Imperato
- Frances Johnson (on behalf of Souza Family)

- Lisa Dixon

The following summarizes the concerns in these letters.

- Consideration of the boundaries and recognition of the Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge and the Cosumnes River Preserve needs to be considered.
- Impacts to Interstate 5 and State Route 99 need to be considered along with their associated interchanges.
- Adoption of Caltrans' System Planning Transportation Concept Reports into the General Plan needs to be considered.
- Establishment of fair share mitigation fee programs needs to be addressed.
- Compliance and consistency with the Land Use and Resource Management Plan for the Primary Zone of the Delta.
- Use of the Department of Conservation's Important Farmland maps, Conversion Reports, and Williamson Act maps and statistics should be considered to describe the agricultural land resource setting.
- Evaluation of potential impacts to special-status species and species identified as rare, threatened, or endangered should be addressed.
- Consistency with local and regional land use plans, such as Watershed Plans and Habitat Conservation Plans, should be addressed.
- Growth inducing impacts with respect to wildlife resources should be considered.
- Impacts to sewer infrastructure, with regards to the CSD-1 and SRCSD systems, should be addressed.
- Impacts to existing and planned transit services, including bus and light rail, should be addressed.
- Airport planning boundaries and land use compatibility policies for height, noise, and safety established by the existing CLUPs for the Mather, Franklin Field, and Elk Grove (Sunset Sky ranch) airports, should be addressed.
- Impacts regarding the potential for groundwater overdraft should be addressed.
- Mitigation for traffic impacts within the Elk Grove Triangle should be addressed.
- Consistency with lands between the Urban Policy Area and the Urban Services Boundary in Sacramento County is needed.
- Preservation of the Laguna Creek corridor as natural open space needs to be addressed.
- The Joint Powers Authority (JPA) for fire and emergency services within Sacramento County needs to be discussed.

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- Impacts to the provision of additional school facilities as a result of increased development should be addressed.
- Cooperation with the Elk Grove CSD when discussing hazardous materials, open space, water supply, traffic, and infrastructure financing, is needed.
- Issues to groundwater and the floodplain in the Cosumnes River area should be discussed.
- Consistency with community plans in the Planning Area needs to be addressed on the Conceptual Land Use Map.
- More specific land uses in the Urban Study Areas should be addressed.
- A quantitative analysis on the City's lack of a jobs-housing balance is needed.
- Thresholds of significance are needed that identify quantitative and qualitative performance levels of a particular environmental effect.
- Evaluation of the Sheldon Lakes project as a reasonably foreseeable project is needed.
- An environmental study of the impacts of the "downzoning" of the Sheldon area is needed.
- Impacts to scenic vistas within the Elk Grove area should be addressed.
- More attention to interrelated impacts between land use planning, transportation planning, and air quality is needed.
- Economic impacts related to the loss of the "right to farm" should be discussed.
- Further discussion of the Sonada Nursery as a hazardous waste site is needed.