
2.0 Specific Plan Context and Setting

2.1 OVERVIEW

This chapter provides a history of the process to prepare this document, describes the regulatory authority for specific plans, provides an analysis of consistency with the General Plan and relationship with other documents, discusses existing conditions that served as a basis for the formulation of the land use diagram and the policies and standards contained within this document.

This Specific Plan is a policy and regulatory document. As a policy document, this Plan amplifies the broader goals and policies contained in the General Plan through the establishment of policies for the Plan Area. As a regulatory document, the Specific Plan identifies the land use designations or zoning for all land in the Plan Area and lists development standards applicable solely to the Plan Area, while incorporating certain existing zoning standards of the Zoning Code by reference.

2.2 PROJECT HISTORY

The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors first initiated the Specific Plan process for Laguna Ridge on October 11, 1995 by Resolution No. 95-1211. The Plan Area was initially referred to as the Poppy Ridge Specific Plan and encompassed only the area west of Big Horn Boulevard. The Specific Plan and Community Plan process for Laguna Ridge was re-directed by the Board of Supervisor's on July 18, 1997 by Resolution No. 97-0751 to include the area east of Big Horn Boulevard. On August 27, 1997, the Board approved the funding agreement and directed the creation of a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC).

Public participation is an important element in the Specific Plan process. Accordingly, the County implemented a special community participation program to facilitate local citizen and property owner involvement in the formulation of the land use plan. The CAC included representatives from the sponsoring property owners, local residents, members of the Franklin/Laguna Advisory Council, a member of the Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS), an area business representative, and others.

The CAC's purpose was to discuss opportunities and constraints inherent to the planning area, identify issues, and guide the development of the Plan's primary elements. Another CAC objective was to work with County Planning staff and property owners to formulate the guiding principles of the Specific Plan.

In September 1997 the CAC for Laguna Ridge began discussion of the Plan Area and preparation of a Specific Plan. The CAC conducted thorough deliberations in a series of workshops that culminated in a favorable recommendation for a proposed land plan which is consistent with the land use plan contained within this document. The CAC also recommended the adoption of several guiding principles.

- § Create a plan that is consistent with the General Plan policies.
- § Create a strong sense of identity, community, neighborhood and human scale.
- § Create a plan with a mix of land uses, including a balance of residential and employment opportunities as well as providing support commercial and neighborhood-oriented services.
- § Reinforce existing commercial corridors. Designate sufficient commercial and employment oriented land uses to create job opportunities and improve the jobs to housing balance.

- § Provide a diverse range of housing densities to accommodate the employees of the major employment centers in City of Elk Grove.
- § Encourage high quality urban design and efficient use of energy and resources.
- § Prepare a transportation plan for the area. Show secondary roadway connections to provide connectivity. Encourage telecommuting and satellite offices to improve air quality.
- § Provide landscaped parkways and pedestrian connections across the Plan Area from Bruceville Road to Highway 99, and north-south to provide linkages between land uses.
- § Provide flexibility to respond to changes in economic, market and social factors while maintaining land use compatibility.

In April 1998 a Land Use Plan endorsed by the CAC was presented to the County Board of Supervisors. The Board directed several changes to the plan, and directed planning staff to prepare an alternative that would include less commercial along Elk Grove Boulevard, and areas with lower residential densities. The two alternatives were not substantially different in the total number of dwelling units since commercial acreage was exchanged for residential acreage. At the end of 1998 the applicant decided to move forward with the preparation of technical studies for sewer, water and drainage solutions. A number of environmental studies were also initiated in advance of the Environmental Impact Report(EIR). This work continued through 1999 and into 2000.

On July 1, 2000, the City of Elk Grove incorporated. Because the Laguna Ridge Specific Plan area lies within the adopted City Limits, jurisdiction for this project passed from the County of Sacramento to the City of Elk Grove. When the City incorporated, the Sacramento County General Plan and Zoning Ordinance remained in effect, however the City initiated the process of organizing city staff and preparing a new General Plan and Zoning Ordinance to set it's own direction. During the same time, work continued on the preparation of the Specific Plan and EIR. In October of 2001 an initial draft of the specific plan and EIR was released for public review.

A number of comments were made on the EIR and draft Specific Plan, and the land use map was revised to include additional RD-20, more SC and BP land uses along Elk Grove Boulevard and Highway 99, and a more precise definition of residential densities and secondary roadways. On June 26, 2002, a revised Specific Plan was released for public review. It was determined that the revisions to the specific plan and land use map were significant enough to require reanalysis and revisions to the technical and environmental studies, and reanalysis by the EIR. A revised Draft EIR was re-released for public review on July 2, 2003. The draft Specific Plan and EIR entered the public hearing process in the fall of 2003 during which time it was requested the applicant provided additional parkland and details regarding phasing.

2.3 REGULATORY AUTHORITY AND COMPLIANCE

2.3.1 SPECIFIC PLAN AUTHORITY

Specific Plans are authorized and described in California Government Code Section 65450 et seq. As set forth in the Government Code Section 65451, Specific Plans are required to contain the following information:

- "(a) *A specific plan shall include a text and a diagram or diagrams which specify all of the following in detail:*
- (1) *The distribution, location, and extent of the uses of land, including open space, within the area covered by the plan.*

- (2) *The proposed distribution, location and extent and intensity of major components of public and private transportation, sewage, water, drainage, solid waste disposal, energy, and other essential facilities proposed to be located within the area covered by the plan and needed to support the land use described by the plan.*
- (3) *Standards and criteria by which development will proceed, and standards for the conservation, development and utilization of natural resources, where applicable.*
- (4) *A program of implementation measures including regulations, programs, public works projects and financing measures necessary to carry out paragraphs (1), (2) and (3)."*

This Specific Plan document and the supporting studies provide text and diagrams for the items listed above. A land use diagram; major infrastructure items such sewer, water and drainage; guidelines and standards; and implementation and financing measures have been included.

- (b) Section 65454 states: *"No specific plan may be adopted or amended unless the proposed plan or amendment is consistent with the General Plan."*

An analysis of consistency with the existing General Plan and policies is included within the Specific Plan document.

2.3.2 SEQUENCE AND TIERING OF ENTITLEMENTS

The LRSP provides policy and design direction for development of the entire Plan Area consistent with the City's General Plan. The LRSP establishes specific land uses on individual parcels with the intent that these land uses will be entitled concurrent with approval of the Specific Plan. The new zoning will be as identified on the Land Use Diagram and development standards are contained within this document. The Specific Plan also summarizes the proposed phasing and financing of infrastructure necessary to serve the proposed land uses. Detailed phasing and financing information is provided in the Capital Improvement Plan and Financing Plan documents, which were prepared in support of this specific plan document. Subsequent project detail will be provided through the Tentative Subdivision Map or development plan review process.

2.3.3 COMPLIANCE WITH CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared for the LRSP to evaluate environmental impacts and provide mitigation measures. The LRSP is intended to function together with the Mitigation Monitoring Report Program (MMRP) contained in the EIR. Mitigation measures contained in the EIR have been incorporated as policies or standards of the LRSP or will be placed as conditions of approval on subsequent development applications.

In accordance with California Government Code Section 65457, subsequent residential development proposals within the Plan Area, if consistent with this Specific Plan and the mitigation measures in the EIR prepared for this Plan, will be within the scope of the certified EIR. City staff will determine whether further environmental analysis is required for any project within the LRSP. In some instances, further environmental analyses may be required even when the project is consistent with the Specific Plan if the project deviates from the EIR project description to the extent that new, significant environmental impacts are identified. This issue is addressed further in Section 7.0 of this Plan.

2.3.4 SEVERABILITY

If any regulation, condition, program, or portion of the Laguna Ridge Specific Plan is held invalid by a California or Federal Court of competent jurisdiction, such portions shall be deemed separate, distinct, and independent provisions, and the invalidity of such provisions shall not affect the validity of the remaining provisions thereof.

2.4 POLICY SETTING - THE ELK GROVE GENERAL PLAN

The goals and policies of the City of Elk Grove General Plan govern the Laguna Ridge Specific Plan area. The function of the General Plan is to provide guidance to the development and management of land within the City. The General Plan contains goals, policies, and objectives to which all projects must adhere. The General Plan summarizes its policies and implementation strategies as they relate to the City's goals and objectives. The General Plan includes the following elements: Land Use, Public Facilities & Finance, Circulation, Conservation & Air Quality, Housing, and Parks, Trails & Open Space.

The General Plan Land Use Exhibit illustrates the boundary of the LRSP to identify that a separate document provides further guidance for this area. The Laguna Ridge Specific Plan is consistent with this general layout.

2.4.1 GENERAL PLAN POLICY ANALYSIS

In accordance with Government Code Section 65454, a Specific Plan must be consistent with the adopted General Plan. In instances where the specific plan varies from the adopted General Plan, the General Plan may be amended to maintain consistency between the two documents. The EIR for Laguna Ridge provides a detailed analysis of how the specific plan is consistent with the City's General Plan.

2.5 COMPLIANCE WITH SPECIFIC PLAN ORDINANCE

In March 1993, the County of Sacramento adopted Ordinance SCC-0908, which amended the Sacramento County Code to include provisions guiding the preparation of Specific Plans. The City of Elk Grove adopted the Specific Plan Ordinance along with the other components of the County code. As stated in Section 21.14.030 of the Ordinance, its purpose is:

"...to provide an application tool for use in implementing the General Plan on an area-specific basis. A Specific Plan prepared in accordance with the requirements set forth herein is intended to serve as a policy and/or regulatory document, with policy direction and project development concepts consistent with the General Plan, and the development standards and zoning included to address the unique situations within the Specific Plan area to provide regulatory controls."

The Specific Plan Ordinance and its accompanying Specific Plan Procedures and Preparation Guide specify all aspects of Specific Plan preparation, including fees, initiation procedures, the preparation process, form and content, and consideration by the Planning Commission and [City Council], among other topics. The Laguna Ridge Specific Plan has been formatted to be consistent with the Specific Plan Ordinance. In addition to the Executive Summary (Chapter 1) and this chapter, the Specific Plan is organized into seven additional chapters, or a total of nine chapters. Section 1.4 in the Executive Summary summarizes the contents of these chapters.

2.6 ZONING ORDINANCE

The Zoning Ordinance of the City of Elk Grove has been established to promote and protect the public health, safety, and general welfare. Among the various objectives of the Zoning Ordinance include the promotion of development at appropriate densities in order to conserve and enhance the City's physical scale and character as defined in the General Plan. The City of Elk Grove Zoning Ordinance includes land use, development densities and development standards. With the adoption of the LRSP the Plan Area will be re-zoned to the land uses identified on the Land Use Plan and will be subject to the special development standards as described in this document in place of the land use and site development standards listed in the zoning ordinance. In the case where this specific plan document does not discuss a particular zoning topic (e.g. parking requirements) the City's existing zoning ordinance shall apply. The zoning designations proposed by the LRSP are consistent with the General Plan.

2.7 EXISTING CONDITIONS AND SITE ANALYSIS

2.7.1 PROJECT SETTING

The Laguna Ridge Specific Plan is located in the southwest area of the City of Elk Grove. Located approximately 1-1/2 miles west of the Elk Grove central business district and 14 miles south of downtown Sacramento, the LRSP lies within portions of Sections 1,2,3,10,11, & 12 of Township 6 North Range 5 East as shown on the Florin Quadrangle prepared by the United States Geological Survey in 1968 and photo revisited in 1980. See Figure ES-1 Laguna Ridge Specific Plan Boundary and City of Elk Grove.

2.7.2 EXISTING PARCELIZATION

At the time of adoption of this Specific Plan the Plan Area was comprised of 67 Assessor's Parcels totaling approximately 1,900.2 acres. There are 1,700 acres (89%) controlled by owner's participating in the funding of this Specific Plan process while non-participating owners control approximately 200 acres (11%). The existing parcelization within LRSP will change with the submittal of Tentative Subdivision Maps. The parcels included in and subject to the LRSP are listed by Table 2-1.

2.7.3 PHYSICAL SETTING

The project area is essentially flat with elevations ranging from 45-feet on the east to 35-feet on the west, mean sea level (MSL). Elevation contour lines generally trend north/south through the project area. Based on this observation, the project area generally slopes gently downward to the west. The project area has local relief of approximately 10 feet. The greatest surface relief occurs in the middle of the property, the site of a proposed drainage channel. Several intermittent natural and man-made channels currently drain the property.

The project site contains annual grasslands interspersed with occasional groups of native and non-native trees and seasonal drainages typical of northern City of Elk Grove. The dominant species of grasses includes wild ripgut brome, yellow star thistle, soft chess, and Fitch's tarweed. The dominant tree species include Blue Oak, Valley Oak, Eucalyptus, Northern California Black Walnut, and English Walnut.

TABLE 2-1
PARCELS WITHIN LRSP

| | | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 132-0050-048 | 132-0050-035 | 132-0290-036 | 132-0290-038 |
| 132-0280-001 | 132-0270-001 | 132-0290-030 | 132-0290-039 |
| 132-0290-012 | 132-0050-011 | 132-0290-027 | 132-0290-026 |
| 132-0050-044 | 132-0270-001 | 132-0280-011 | 132-0050-028 |
| 132-0050-052 | 132-0270-002 | 132-0280-013 | 132-0050-064 |
| 132-0050-053 | 132-0270-003 | 132-0290-011 | 132-0050-065 |
| 132-0050-055 | 132-0270-010 | 132-0050-049 | 132-0050-028 |
| 132-0050-056 | 132-0270-013 | 132-0290-010 | 132-0050-058 |
| 132-0050-057 | 132-0270-015 | 132-0280-002 | 132-0290-003 |
| 132-0050-059 | 132-0270-016 | 132-0290-042 | 132-0270-007 |
| 132-0050-060 | 132-0050-031 | 132-0280-005 | 132-0270-017 |
| 132-0050-061 | 132-0290-031 | 132-0280-006 | 132-0290-002 |
| 132-0050-062 | 132-0280-008 | 132-0280-007 | 132-0050-066 |
| 132-0290-001 | 132-0290-009 | 132-0050-029 | 132-0270-011 |
| 132-0050-009 | 132-0050-029 | 132-0270-014 | 132-0050-006 |
| 132-0050-054 | 132-0050-024 | 132-0050-050 | 132-0050-063 |
| 132-0050-034 | 132-0290-029 | 132-0290-004 | |

2.7.4 SURROUNDING LAND USES

The land uses surrounding the project site consists of both urbanized development and agricultural uses. The land areas to the west, north and east of the LRSP have been developed, or are approved for development. Maps and improvement plans are in various stages of preparation for a majority of the properties that are currently vacant.

The area on the north side of Elk Grove Boulevard is essentially built-out. The northwest corner of Big Horn Boulevard and Elk Grove Boulevard has a commercial center which includes a fueling station and mini-mall. There is also extensive residential development north of Elk Grove Boulevard. Directly northeast of the LRSP at the intersection of SR-99 and Elk Grove Boulevard, is the Elk Grove Auto Mall (Phase I) and it is essentially built-out. Phase II of the Auto Mall is located within the LRSP, but was processed and approved separately to allow the development of additional auto commercial uses, and buildings are either built-out or currently under construction. A commercial center containing a Wal-Mart store exists north of the Elk Grove Auto Mall across Elk Grove Boulevard.

State Highway SR-99 serves as the eastern boundary of the project area. A large community park is located east of Highway 99, and this park is surrounding by existing residential development, mostly consisting of RD-5 zoning. There is also some RD-7, LC, and RM-1 zoning. Almost all of this area has been built-out.

Bruceville Road serves as the western boundary of the Plan Area. The East Franklin Specific Plan (EFSP) lies directly to the west. The County of Sacramento adopted the East Franklin Specific Plan (EFSP) in April 2000, tentative subdivision maps were subsequently approved by the City of Elk Grove and significant portions of it are currently under construction. It is designated for mostly single-family residential development.

To the south, across Bilby Road, is an area designated on the Elk Grove General Plan as the Southeast

Policy Area. This area is currently utilized for agriculture purposes but is within the City Limits.

Approximately 2,500 feet to the southeast of the LRSP is the Lent Ranch Mall Site. Lent Ranch Mall proposes the development of a regional shopping mall, other retail, and commercial and office uses, as well as multiple family residential uses.

2.7.5 CIRCULATION

The existing transportation system in the vicinity of the LRSP is heavily dependent on the roadway system for the movement of people and goods and automobiles are the primary travel mode for most trips in the Elk Grove area. This is typical of most communities. There is limited bus service within the area. The existing road network within the Plan Area consists of Elk Grove Boulevard, which has been constructed as a six lane divided facility and a number of two lane roads. These two lane roads include Bruceville Road, West Stockton Boulevard, Poppy Ridge Road and Bilby Road.

The existing two-lane roadways have narrow shoulders and speed limits of 35 to 55 miles per hour. These roads provide access to the agricultural and residential uses in the vicinity of the project site through driveways and collector streets with stop sign control. Several roadway segments do not currently meet the City of Elk Grove's standards or the standards presented in *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets* (1994) published by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). The standards for cross-sections require 12-foot travel lanes and 6-foot usable shoulders. With the development of the LRSP, these roadways will be expanded and improved to provide an arterial roadway network of four-lane divided roadways. Collector and local streets will serve individual neighborhoods within the Plan Area.

2.7.6 INFRASTRUCTURE

The Laguna Ridge Specific Plan Area currently has minimal infrastructure. The area receives water service from private wells. Currently, sanitary sewer service is not provided to the area. Existing residents use septic or leach fields. Pacific Gas and Electric currently provides gas service to the area and electricity is provided by Sacramento Municipal Utility District. Chapter 6 discusses the infrastructure systems that will be constructed to support the project.

2.7.8 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Existing uses within the LRSP Plan Area consist of non-irrigated grazing, irrigated pastures and farming, hay fields, dairy operations and rural residential homes. Though much of the area has been disked several times a year in conjunction with these agricultural activities and the natural habitat modified, the site has some environmental issues. These issues and other environmental resources are discussed in Chapter 6, Resource Management. In summary, potential issues include:

- Approximately 4.83 acres within the surveyed area are considered wetlands.
- The existing lands may contain potential habitat for sensitive species, such as the Western Pond Turtle, Swainson's Hawk, and the Burrowing Owl.
- There are numerous native Oak trees and other species within the project area.
- The project will convert 40 acres of Prime Farmland, 1,734 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance, 43 acres of Unique Farmland, and 52 acres of Farmland of Local Importance to urban uses.

[INSERT EXHIBIT 2.1 Existing Conditions]