
1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970 (as amended) to evaluate the environmental impacts associated with the Southeast Policy Area Strategic Plan Project (proposed Project). CEQA requires the preparation of an EIR prior to approving any project that 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 Project, the City of Elk Grove has determined that the proposed development is a project within the definition of CEQA.

The City, acting as the lead agency, has prepared this EIR to provide the public and responsible and trustee agencies with information about the potential environmental effects of the proposed Project. As described in 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 are obligated to balance a variety of public objectives, including economic, environmental, and social factors.

This section summarizes the purpose of the EIR, describes the environmental procedures that are to be followed according to state law, discusses the intended uses of the EIR, and describes the EIR's scope and organization, contact person, and impact terminology.

1.2 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. A program EIR is an EIR that may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related in one of the following ways:

- 1) Geographically
- 2) As 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
- 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

A program EIR enables the lead agency to consider broad environmental implications of development on a conceptual basis, recognizing that a series of actions will occur prior to development. Because they are prepared relatively early on, program EIRs allow greater flexibility in dealing with overall development options, basic environmental issues, and cumulative impacts.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Subsequent activities in the program must be examined in the light of the program EIR to determine whether additional environmental documentation must be prepared. The program EIR identifies and mitigates the effects of the overall program of development, and the lead agency incorporates feasible mitigation measures developed in the program EIR into subsequent actions to implement the project. Because the Project does not propose any development activities at this time, the program EIR analysis is based on broad development assumptions. Subsequent environmental analysis may be needed for future development within the Project area.

According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168(d), a program EIR can be used to simplify the task of preparing environmental documents on later parts of the program.

1.3 INTENDED USES OF THE EIR

This EIR has been prepared in accordance with CEQA. The EIR is intended to evaluate the possible environmental impacts that could occur if the Project area were to be developed in the future as provided for under the Southeast Policy Area Strategic Plan. This EIR, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15126, should be used as the primary environmental document to evaluate all planning and permitting actions associated with the Project. Please refer to Section 2.0, Project Description, for a detailed discussion of the Project.

KNOWN RESPONSIBLE 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 a project or an aspect of a project. The following agencies are identified as potential responsible agencies for this Project:

Federal Agencies

- US Army Corps of Engineers – Clean Water Act Section 404 permit
- US Fish and Wildlife Service – Biological Opinion

State Agencies

- California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Region – Section 401 certification, Construction Activity Stormwater permit, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit
- California Department of Education – approval of school site acquisition and construction plans
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife – Streambed Alteration Agreement

Local Agencies

- Sacramento County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) – approval to annex the Project area to the Sacramento Area Sewer District
- Elk Grove Unified School District – approval of school site acquisition and construction plans

KNOWN TRUSTEE AGENCIES

For the purpose of CEQA, the term “trustee agency” means a state agency having jurisdiction by law over natural resources affected by a project which are held in trust for the people of California. The following agency is identified as a trustee agency:

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW, formerly the California Department of Fish and Game) is a trustee agency with authority, in accordance with the provisions of Fish and Game Code Section 1802, to exercise administration over the fish and wildlife resources of California. The CDFW will provide comments and recommend measures for the conservation and prevention of damage to fish and/or wildlife resources of the State. The CDFW is also responsible for issuing a Streambed Alteration Agreement pursuant to Fish and Game Code Section 1602, if necessary, for activities that may substantially affect a stream.

1.4 EIR SCOPE AND ORGANIZATION

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 unavoidable environmental changes, growth-inducing impacts, and cumulative impacts. The environmental issues addressed in this program EIR were established through review of environmental documentation for nearby projects and responses to the Notice of Preparation (NOP).

Cumulative environmental effects of the proposed Project are generally based on information provided in the General Plan, General Plan EIR, and environmental documentation for other relevant projects in the City, with identification of the Project’s contribution to the cumulative conditions and updated information on the cumulative setting based on currently approved, proposed, and reasonably foreseeable development projects in the City and region.

The City determined the scope for this EIR based on the Notice of Preparation, comments in response to the NOP, agency consultation, and review of the Project application. The NOP determined that the following issue areas would result in no impact and are therefore scoped out of this EIR:

- Seiche, tsunami, and mudflow
- Mineral resources
- Airports, airstrips, and air traffic patterns
- Use of septic systems

This Draft EIR is organized in the following manner:

SECTION ES – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This section summarizes the characteristics of the proposed Project and provides a concise summary matrix of the Project’s environmental impacts and associated mitigation measures.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

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 – PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This section provides a detailed description of the proposed Project, including intended objectives, background information, and physical and technical characteristics.

SECTION 3.0 – DEMOGRAPHICS

Section 3 describes the existing population, employment, and housing levels in Sacramento County and evaluates population, employment, and housing changes caused by the proposed Project that could have the potential to cause physical environmental effects.

SECTION 4.0 – LAND USE

Section 4 addresses the land use and planning implications of the Project and discusses potential inconsistencies with land use plans.

SECTION 5.0 – ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING, IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Section 5.0 contains an analysis of environmental topic areas as identified below. Each subsection contains a description of the existing setting of the Project area, identifies standards of significance, identifies Project-related impacts, and recommends mitigation measures.

The following major environmental topics are addressed in this section:

- Aesthetics, Light, and Glare
- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology, Soils, and Seismicity
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Noise
- Public Services and Recreation
- Public Utilities
- Transportation

SECTION 6.0 – OTHER CEQA CONSIDERATIONS

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 and growth-inducing impacts. This section also summarizes the cumulative impacts associated with the Project. As required by CEQA Section 15130, an EIR shall discuss cumulative impacts of a project when the project's incremental effect is cumulatively considerable.

SECTION 7.0 –PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

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 its environmental effects. This alternatives analysis provides a comparative analysis between the Project and the selected alternatives, which include:

- **No Project Alternative:** CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e) requires that a “no project” alternative be evaluated in an EIR. Under this alternative, the Project would not be approved and current land use designations on the Project area would remain unchanged. Under this alternative, the proposed Project area could be developed consistent with existing land use and zoning designations on the Project area, which is zoned for agricultural uses (AG-80 and AG-20). The Project area is designated as a Land Use Policy Area, which the General Plan describes as areas within the City that the General Plan describes as needing more detailed land use planning at a future date.
- **Alternative 2:** Alternative 2, the Reduced Residential/Increased Office Alternative, would reduce the residential capacity and replace it with office use. Specifically, this alternative assumes that approximately one-third of the Project’s residential acreage (143 acres), distributed evenly over various residential densities, would be replaced with office uses. As a result, this alternative would have 504 fewer residential units than the proposed Project, which would be replaced with approximately 2,980,000 square feet (sf) of office space, based on the office space ratio assumptions used for the proposed Project.

SECTION 8.0 – REPORT PREPARATION

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

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 procedural steps:

NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND INITIAL STUDY

In accordance with Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, the City prepared a Notice of Preparation of an EIR for the Project on April 19, 2013. This notice was circulated to the public, local, state, and federal agencies, and other interested parties to solicit comments on the Project. The determination to prepare an Environmental Impact Report was made by the City of Elk Grove following preliminary review of the Project, and as a result, no initial study was prepared for the Project, and is not required, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15063(a). The NOP is presented in **Appendix A**. The City held a scoping meeting on May 9, 2013.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

DRAFT EIR PUBLIC NOTICE/PUBLIC REVIEW

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 State Office of Planning and Research to begin the public review period (Public Resources Code Section 21161). Concurrent with the NOC, the City will provide public notice of the availability (NOA) of the Draft EIR for public review and invite comment from the general public, agencies, organizations, and other interested parties.

The review period for this Draft EIR is 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 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:

Christopher Jordan, AICP
City of Elk Grove
8401 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 public hearings regarding the Project.

CERTIFICATION OF THE EIR/PROJECT CONSIDERATION

The Elk Grove Planning Commission will review and consider the Final EIR. If the Planning Commission finds that the Final EIR is "adequate and complete," the Planning Commission will make a recommendation to the City Council whether to certify the EIR, and the City Council will make a final decision as to what action to take. The Planning Commission and City Council will each hold a hearing on the Project as part of consideration of its requested entitlements. A decision to approve the Project would be accompanied by written findings in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 and, if applicable, a Statement of Overriding Considerations in accordance with Section 15093. A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP), 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 MMRP 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 an MMRP 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 the City Council for adoption. Throughout the EIR, mitigation measures are clearly identified and presented in language that will facilitate establishment of an MMRP. Any mitigation measures adopted by the City as conditions for approval of the Project will be included in the MMRP to verify compliance.

1.7 COMMENTS RECEIVED ON THE NOTICE OF PREPARATION

The City received comment letters on the Notice of Preparation for the Southeast Policy Area EIR (see **Table 1.0-1**). A copy of each letter is provided in **Appendix B** of this Draft EIR. The City received letters from the following agencies and interested parties.

**TABLE 1.0-1
LIST OF NOP COMMENT LETTERS**

| Agency | Date | Comment | Location Addressed in EIR |
|--|-----------|--|--------------------------------|
| Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD) | 5-8-2013 | <p>The comment requests that the EIR use Chapter 9 of the <i>SMAQMD Guide for Air Quality Assessment in Sacramento County</i> in the program-level analysis of the EIR.</p> <p>The comment requests that the EIR analyze the Project’s consistency with the SMAQMD State Implementation Plan (SIP), which uses different planning assumptions from the 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).</p> <p>The comment notes that, as allowed by State CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5, the Project may take advantage of “tiering” from the Elk Grove Climate Action Plan (CAP) by incorporating all applicable measures from the CAP.</p> | Section 5.3, Air Quality |
| Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District (SRCS D) | 5-10-2013 | <p>The comment notes that the SRCS D adopted the Interceptor Sequencing Study (ISS) in February 2013, which modified the previous SRCS D Master Plan 2000.</p> <p>The comment also notes that the 2010 System Capacity Plan Update (SCP) was approved in January 2012.</p> <p>The comment states that the Policy Area is located within the LSA Laguna Ridge Trunk Shed and that only the northern portion of this trunk shed has been constructed. Sewer trunk lines and the Laguna Ridge South Pump Station will need to be constructed to provide service to the Project. Some additional infrastructure will need to be constructed.</p> <p>The comment states that sewer studies, including points of connection and phasing information,</p> | Section 5.12, Public Utilities |

1.0 INTRODUCTION

| Agency | Date | Comment | Location Addressed in EIR |
|--|------------------|--|---|
| | | <p>will be needed to fully assess the impacts any project will have on flow demands.</p> <p>The comment states that on- and off-site impacts associated with the construction of sanitary sewers to provide service to development must be included in the EIR.</p> <p>The comment briefly describes the Sacramento Regional Water Treatment Plant's (SRWTP) secondary treatment process and provides some information about the SRCSD Water Reclamation Facility.</p> | |
| <p>Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB)</p> | <p>5-13-2013</p> | <p>The comment provides information on the types of permits that the Project will need to protect water quality. These include a Construction Storm Water General Permit, which will require the development and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP); Phase I and II Municipal Separate Storm Sewer (MS4) Permits; an Industrial Storm Water General Permit; a Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404 Permit (from the US Army Corps of Engineers [USACE]); CWA Section 401 Permit (also from the USACE); and Waste Discharge Permits.</p> | <p>Section 5.9, Hydrology and Water Quality</p> |
| <p>Jerry McLaughlin</p> | <p>5-14-2013</p> | <p>The comment expresses concern regarding several potential impacts of the Project, particularly with the proposed Soccer Field Complex that may be located within the Sports Complex Overlay area. The concerns include late night noise and lighting at the facility, hours of operation and measures to prevent unauthorized access of the complex, security, whether alcohol will be permitted at the facility, traffic, access to the complex, and parking.</p> <p>The comment also expresses concern about multi-family properties being proposed south of Poppy Ridge Road, directly adjacent to the commenter's residence. The commenter requests specific information on the number of units, income restrictions on units, height of the buildings, parking and access, and lighting at the site of the multi-family units.</p> | <p>The location of the Sports Complex Overlay is not known at this time. Given the lack of information to determine potential impacts, general potential impacts of the sports complex are discussed in each of the technical sections of this Draft EIR.</p> |
| <p>California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)</p> | <p>5-20-2013</p> | <p>The comment states that Caltrans anticipates the Project to result in significant impacts on State Route (SR) 99 and that a Traffic Impact Study (TIS) may be required.</p> <p>The comment states that the EIR must include an analysis of the Southeast Connector to determine the nexus to the Project and possible fair-share contribution toward the construction of the Connector.</p> <p>The comment also requests that Caltrans have the opportunity to review details on the possible sports complex facility to determine possible impacts on the State Highway System.</p> | <p>Section 5.13 Transportation</p> |

| Agency | Date | Comment | Location Addressed in EIR |
|---|------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| | | <p>The comment states that the proposed drainage facilities within the Project must be designed with sufficient detention/retention capacity to ensure there is no net increase in runoff, specifically to prevent adverse changes to water service elevations in the vicinity of SR 99 and Interstate 5.</p> <p>The comment requests to review a copy of the Project’s drainage report and any hydraulic models created for designing the drainage facilities.</p> | |
| <p>Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD)</p> | <p>5-29-2013</p> | <p>The comment states that the Project will have an impact on SMUD’s electrical system, and the estimated electrical demand would be approximately 80 megawatts.</p> <p>The comment states that the Project will result in the need for a new distribution substation, distribution facilities, and the extension of an existing 69kV line along Kammerer Road to serve the new substation. SMUD proposes to locate the new substation near the intersection of Big Horn Boulevard and Kammerer Road.</p> <p>The comment notes the location of existing SMUD facilities in the area.</p> | <p>Section 5.12, Public Utilities</p> |

1.8 IMPACT TERMINOLOGY

This Draft EIR uses the following terminology to describe environmental effects of the proposed Project:

- **Standards of Significance:** A set of criteria used by the lead agency to determine at what level or “threshold” an impact would be considered significant. Significance criteria used in this EIR include the CEQA Guidelines, factual or scientific information, regulatory performance standards of local (including City), state, and federal agencies, and City goals, objectives, and policies.
- **Less Than Significant Impact:** A less than significant impact would cause no substantial change in the environment. No mitigation is required.
- **Significant Impact:** A significant impact would cause, or would potentially cause, a substantial adverse change in the physical conditions of the environment. Significant impacts are identified by the evaluation of project effects using specified standards of significance. Mitigation measures and/or project alternatives are identified to reduce project effects to the environment.
- **Significant and Unavoidable Impact:** A significant and unavoidable impact would result in a substantial change in the environment that cannot be avoided or mitigated to a less than significant level if the Project is implemented.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

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