
5.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND ASSUMPTIONS USED

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The following is an introduction to the project-specific and cumulative environmental analysis and general assumptions used in the analysis. The reader is referred to the individual technical sections of this Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) regarding specific assumptions, methodology, and significance criteria used in the analysis.

ANALYSIS ASSUMPTIONS GENERALLY USED TO EVALUATE THE IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT

BASELINE ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS ASSUMED IN THE DRAFT EIR

Section 15125(a) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines requires that an EIR include a description of the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project, as they exist at the time the Notice of Preparation (NOP) is published. The CEQA Guidelines also specify that this description of the physical environmental conditions is to serve as the baseline physical conditions by which a lead agency determines whether impacts of a project are considered significant. For the proposed Project, the physical environment as it existed at the time the NOP was published serves as the baseline.

The environmental setting conditions of the Project area and the surrounding area are described in detail in the technical sections of this Draft EIR (see Sections 5.1 through 5.13). In general, these setting discussions describe the setting conditions as they existed when the NOP for the Project was released in April 2013.

PROJECT BUILDOUT ASSUMPTIONS

The Draft EIR impact analysis is based on the maximum buildout conditions allowed by the land use designations and zoning districts proposed within the Project area. **Table 2.0-2** (see Section 2.0, Project Description) identifies the potential population and employment that would be generated with development of the Project area. Operational impacts of the Project are based on Project buildout.

The Project includes a Sports Complex Overlay intended to allow the future development of large sports complex and supportive uses within the Project area. The Notice of Preparation for the Project provided a location of the overlay in the northeastern portion of the Project area. However, since circulation of the NOP, the land use plan has been amended to not include a location for the overlay. The City will continue to work with property owners in the Project area to find a suitable location for the sports complex.

Because the location and details of the sports complex are not currently known, a comprehensive analysis of the sports complex is not possible at this time. For instance, without details of the size of stadium, number of fields, type of field (e.g., natural versus artificial turf), and number and size of support uses, the intensity of the sports complex cannot be estimated. The location of the sports complex is also important to the analysis to determine the types of uses that would be adjacent to this use and what uses within the Project area would be replaced by the sports complex. Topics such as demand for utilities or services cannot be accurately determined at this time, and the Draft EIR does not speculate as to impacts in these areas. CEQA Guidelines Section 15145 addresses speculation in and EIR: "If, after thorough investigation, a lead agency finds that a particular impact is too speculative for evaluation, the agency should note its conclusion and terminate discussion of the impact." In those instances in which there is not sufficient information to determine the effects associated with the sports complex, the Draft EIR advises the reader of the speculative nature of the impact and terminates the discussion.

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APPROACH TO THE PROJECT ANALYSIS

Sections 5.1 through 5.13 of this Draft EIR contain a description of current setting conditions (including applicable regulatory setting), an evaluation of the direct and indirect environmental effects resulting from implementation of the proposed Project, identification of measures that mitigate the identified significant environmental effects, and, if applicable, identification of whether significant environmental effects of the proposed Project would remain after application of proposed mitigation measures. The individual technical sections of the Draft EIR follow the following format.

Existing Setting

This subsection includes a description of the physical conditions associated with the technical area of discussion, consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15125. As identified above, the existing setting is based on conditions as they existed when the NOP for the Project was released.

Regulatory Framework

This subsection describes applicable federal, state, regional, and local plans, policies, laws, and regulations that apply to the technical area of discussion.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The Impacts and Mitigation Measures subsection of each technical section identifies direct and indirect environmental effects associated with implementation of the proposed Project and identifies proposed measures to mitigate environmental effects, where applicable. Environmental effects are determined by comparing the existing environmental setting with build out of the proposed Project. A statement is included in each impact discussion identifying the level of significance the impact will have before and after mitigation. Standards of significance are identified and utilized to determine whether identified environmental effects are considered "significant" and require the application of mitigation measures. Each environmental impact analysis is supported by substantial evidence included in the discussion.

Feasible mitigation measures that could minimize significant adverse impacts are discussed, after which the impact discussion notes whether the impact has been mitigated to a less than significant level or remains significant and unavoidable. CEQA requires that mitigation to lessen the environmental impact must be feasible. CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4(a)(1) states, "An EIR shall describe feasible measures which could minimize significant adverse impacts..." Feasible is defined as "capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, social, and technological factors" (CEQA Section 21061.1).

Off-site Improvements to Accommodate the Project

As discussed in Chapter 2, Project Description, the Project area was included in the Elk Grove General Plan as an area for future development. Consequently, long range infrastructure plans for the City included infrastructure to support development of the Project area and as other projects were proposed in the vicinity of the Project area, those projects included infrastructure that would accommodate demand from the proposed Project and the impacts of the infrastructure were considered in the environmental documents for those projects.

Off-site Water Improvements

The proposed project will require connection to existing water pipes along Bilby Road, Bruceville Road, Big Horn Boulevard, and Lotz Parkway. These pipes were assumed in the Laguna Ridge Specific Plan, the Sterling Meadows project, the Lent Ranch (Promenade) project, and East Franklin Specific Plan and the impacts associated with these water lines were analyzed in their respective environmental documents. The SCWA Zone 40 Water System Infrastructure Plan also identified a number of well sites within the Laguna Ridge Specific Plan and Sterling Meadows project that would serve the proposed Project, as well as other development in the area.

Off-Site Sewer Improvements

The ultimate outfall for most of the sewage collected in the Project area would be the Laguna Ridge South Lift Station, which was analyzed as part of the Laguna Ridge Specific Plan. The Project may require the one or more of the following improvements as part of the development of the Laguna Ridge South Lift Station:

- Extend the existing, unused force mains in Bruceville Road from their current terminus to the new pump station site
- If additional capacity is needed, extend and upsize these existing, unused force mains, or
- Construct a new force main parallel to the existing force mains in Bruceville Road to an available outfall north of the Project (e.g., Whitelock Parkway).

The final list of improvements will be determined through the preparation of the Level III Sewer Study for the Laguna Ridge South Lift Station.

If future shed shifts are proposed for areas on the eastern portion of the Project area, allowing for a portion of the Project to sewer to the existing Elk Grove Promenade Lift Station, improvements to existing sewer facilities within the Elk Grove Promenade Sewer Study area will likely be necessary. These potential improvements include, but not limited to, the following:

- Upsizing and/or addition of pumps at the lift station site
- Expansion of the existing wet well at the lift station site
- Upsizing of the existing forcemain(s) and/or installation of parallel forcemain(s) from the lift station to the existing outfall at East Stockton Boulevard

The determination of improvements necessary to support a possible shed shift will be identified as part of a subsequent Level III Sewer Study for the area that would be sewer to the Elk Grove Promenade Lift Station.

Off-site Drainage Improvements

As part of the drainage system for the Project, it is proposed that some excavation be performed to deepen the existing channel downstream of Bruceville Road. The off-site excavation is intended only to provide extra depth in the on-site channel and is not intended to provide a significant increase in capacity downstream of Bruceville Road. It is estimated that the

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pilot channel would extend approximately 3,200 feet downstream of Bruceville Road and the average depth of excavation would be approximately 1.8 feet.

APPROACH TO THE CUMULATIVE IMPACT ANALYSIS

Definition of Cumulative Setting

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(a) requires that an EIR “discuss cumulative impacts of a project when the project’s incremental effect is cumulatively considerable.” CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b) states, “The discussion of cumulative impacts shall reflect the severity of the impacts and their likelihood of occurrence, but the discussion need not provide as great detail as is provided for the effects attributable to the project alone. The discussion should be guided by standards of practicality and reasonableness, and should focus on the cumulative impact to which the identified other projects contribute rather than the attributes of other projects which do not contribute to the cumulative impact.”

For this Project, the cumulative setting conditions considered in this Draft EIR generally encompass the cumulative setting conditions considered in the City of Elk Grove General Plan (adopted November 2003 and including amendments through February 2014) and include buildout of the Laguna Ridge Specific Plan, Sterling Meadows, the Elk Grove Promenade/Lent Ranch Marketplace adjacent to the Project as well as other proposed development projects in the City, unless otherwise noted (see **Table 5.0-1**). However, the cumulative setting varies for each environmental issue area, depending on the resources affected and any relevant boundaries, such as the Sacramento Valley Air Basin for air quality resources. Each technical section of the Draft EIR includes a description of the geographic extent of the cumulative setting for that resource based on the characteristics of the environmental issues under consideration as set forth in Section 15130(b) of the CEQA Guidelines.

**TABLE 5.0-1
CUMULATIVE PROJECTS**

Project	Characteristics	Location	Status
Laguna Ridge Specific Plan	1,900-acre special planning area planned to include 7,767 housing units, 265 acres commercial, office and civic uses, 165 acres of parkland, 70 acres of open space, and 100 acres of schools	Southwestern Elk Grove	Approved
Sterling Meadows	200-acre site to be developed with 1,179 residential units, 5.8 acres commercial uses, and 18.4 acres of parkland	North of Kammerer Road and west of SR 99 and Promenade Parkway	Approved
Lent Ranch Marketplace/Elk Grove Promenade	295-acre site to be developed with approximately 280 acres of various types of commercial uses and 280 multi-family residential units; includes the approved Elk Grove Promenade, a 1.1 million square foot open air regional mall	North of Kammerer Road and immediately west of SR 99	Approved
Civic Center and Community Park	20-acre Civic Center and 56 acres of recreational uses	East of Big Horn Boulevard and South of Elk Grove Boulevard	Active

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Project	Characteristics	Location	Status
Silverado Village	Rezone, Tentative Subdivision Map, and Special Plan area	Waterman Road and Bond Road	Active
Sheldon Park Estates	Tentative Subdivision Map and Rezone	9345 Sheldon Road and 8643 Waterman Road	Active
Calvine Meadows	Rezone and Tentative Subdivision Map	9450 Calvine Road	Active
Souza Dairy	Rezone and Tentative Subdivision and Large Lot Maps	10220 W. Stockton Boulevard	Active
Poppy Keys North (formerly Reardon 40)	General Plan Amendment, Specific Plan Amendment, Rezone and Tentative Subdivision Map	Poppy Ridge Road (LRSP)	Active
Triangle Point 8	General Plan Amendment, Rezone, Tentative Parcel Map and Design Review	9430 Mosher Road	
HO Map	Rezone and Tentative Parcel Map	8706 Grant Line Road	Active
Elk Grove American Muslim Community Center	Condition Amendment to CUP	9011 Elk Grove Florin Road	Active
Laguna Springs Corporate Center Phase 4	Design Review	Longleaf Drive and Monetta Drive	Active
Dibenedetto Estates	Tentative Subdivision Map	Elk Grove Boulevard	Active
Stathos Cove	Tentative Subdivision Map and Rezone	6901 Elk Grove Boulevard	Active

Source: City of Elk Grove 2014

Consideration of Cumulative Impacts

Each technical section in the Draft EIR considers whether the Project's effect on anticipated cumulative setting conditions is cumulatively considerable (i.e., a significant effect). The determination of whether the Project's impact on cumulative conditions is considerable is based on applicable public agency standards, consultation with public agencies, and/or expert opinion. Section 6.0, Cumulative Impacts Summary, provides a summary of the cumulative impacts associated with the development of the Project.

The City had proposed an amendment to the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI) that would have added approximately 7,900 acres to the City's SOI in the areas generally south of Kammerer Road and Grant Line Road. In November 2013, the City withdrew the application from consideration by the Sacramento Local Area Formation Commission (LAFCo) and is not considered a reasonably foreseeable project for cumulative conditions. Therefore, this EIR does not assume City-related development in those areas.

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EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT

As discussed in the Notice of Preparation prepared for the proposed Project (see **Appendix A**), the following issue areas were determined to result in no impact or less than significant impacts and will not be further evaluated in the EIR.

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

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REFERENCES

City of Elk Grove. 2014. *Planning Department Active Project Report*.
<http://www.egplanning.org/projects/active-project-report-02-13-14.pdf>

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